



# Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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## Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

### Toys

#### Many toys are good for all ages

All children, regardless of age, need playthings to build physical, mental, language, emotional, and social skills.

Some toys will appeal to children of all ages. These include music-related items, plush toys, and books.

For children two years and up, a well-rounded toy selection should also include playthings from each of the following groups:

- Pretend/dress-up play.
- Arts and crafts.
- Blocks.
- Science and nature exploration play.
- Outdoor toys for active play.
- Puzzles, games, and construction toys. □

### Health & Safety

#### Make breakfast a pleasant time of day

How can parents get child to eat a wholesome meal and still get out of the house on time?

- Be creative. For toddlers, straws, colorful plastic spoons, a special bowl or a fancy cup can turn a picky eater into a good one.

A little table and chair set up in the kitchen may be preferable to always being watched while sitting with the adults.

For infants who can sit up in a high chair, finger foods such as dry cereal or scrambled eggs in a wafer cone can keep their hands busy while you spoon in their baby food.

Cups with plastic tips can prevent spills as infants slowly but surely master the important task of drinking from a cup.

Avoid battles by offering a variety of foods and by praising any attempts at self-feeding.

- Think small. Little children can be overwhelmed by bowls of oatmeal that seem to have no bottom or a stack of French toast that never disappears.

Small portions of different foods—such as a fruit cup and silver-dollar sized pancakes—will have them eating up the offer-

ings and asking for more.

Allowing even babies to mix their own dish of oatmeal and applesauce increases the odds that they'll finish eating it.

- Try anything that works. One mother admits, "My daughter never did seem interested in a big dinner. So the next morning I would heat her favorite leftover—spaghetti and meatballs—and serve it to her for breakfast. It worked every time!"

Many toddlers eat peanut butter and jelly for lunch and breakfast. Another parent reports the only time of day his child eats green vegetables is in the morning ... "when he's too sleepy to fight about it."

You can also limit the number of food choices in the morning. This reduces the amount of time you need to stand by the kitchen cabinet pointing out cereal to a resounding chorus of "No!" □



## When is the best time to begin toilet training?

Toilet training is a learning process and some basic skills are necessary before parents begin.

- **Muscle control.** The sphincter muscles work to control the opening and closing of the bladder and bowel outlets. At the same time the child must be able to squeeze with the larger abdominal muscles.

To be toilet trained, children must be able to make these muscles work when they want them to. This generally takes about two years.

- **Communication.** Children can't always maneuver their clothing or use the toilet unassisted. So, they need to be old enough to be able to tell you in some way that they want to go to the bathroom.

- **Desire.** While a child may not necessarily want to be done with diapers, she does want to please her parents or to be like her friends or older siblings who are trained.

Whatever the reason, willingness on the child's part is essential.

As in many other areas of child development, the age to start training is highly individual.

Around the latter part of the second year is a good time to start watching for signs that a child is achieving the skills required. □

## How to cope with whining, tantrums, sulking, and clinging

Some children seem to whine all the time. It seems like nothing ever pleases them.

They will whine for an ice cream cone. When the parent delivers, they whine that it's not the right flavor or the right size. When the parent provides another flavor, they whine that it's melting and sticky. No matter what the parent does, it does not please the child.

Whining, like temper tantrums, sulking and clinging, is a negative behavior. If parents and other adults consistently reward negative behaviors, they will continue. If these behaviors are consistently ignored, they will stop.

Of course, ignoring these kinds

of behavior is easier said than done. But be patient. If you do not get involved, you will be surprised at how quickly your child will stop because she isn't getting your attention.

A sulky child is one who withdraws from any challenging situation. She will not try. A good way to deal with this is to insist on her trying her best, even if you must guide her through the task.

A clinging child is too dependent on her parents. She cannot do anything by herself. Parents of a dependent child can ignore the dependent behavior, but at the same time make her do things on her own and praise her highly when she does. □

## Help children feel good about themselves

Here are some simple ideas parents can use to help children feel good about themselves.

- **Have confidence in your child.** Trust in her to learn from her mistakes and to outgrow aggravating habits she may pick up as she grows. She won't always slam the screen door or leave her shoes in the middle of the room.

- **Pay more attention to her strengths than to her shortcomings.** You'll find you see more of whichever behavior you focus on most. So, thank her when she closes the door quietly.

- **Be alert to and encourage your child's natural talents.** Have patience with her in the areas in which she doesn't excel. If she is good at printing, ask her to make a poster for the refrigerator door. If she has trouble with numbers, tell her you'll help her with her homework.

- **Try to give her the benefit of the doubt when you find your confidence in her lacking.** After all, wouldn't you like for her to have the same kind of confidence in you? □

## The Same Game

The Same Game is a simple and quick game that helps polish classification skills. Play it anytime, anyplace.

Start with something easy: a shirt and a shoe. What's the same about both of them? (They're both articles of clothing—something to wear.)

A pencil and a crayon. What's the same about them? (They're both used to write or draw.)

A pickle and a Popsicle? (They're both something to eat—and they're both long and skinny.)

Get harder: A cookie and a plate. They're both round and they both break if you drop them, and they both belong in the kitchen. Would they both roll down a hill?

Change the game. A cup and a glass. What's **different** about them? Remember color, size, shape and what they're made of, what they're for, and what they're called.

Think of something yourself. Take two objects close at hand. There will always be something the same about them, even if it's only that they're in the same room.

Don't make it a test with set questions and answers. Just grab two things spontaneously and talk about them.

Finally, make up some really hard ones and solve them together. □

## Helping kids cope with divorce

Although divorce is common in our society, it is still a difficult, life-changing experience for everyone involved.

Here are some guidelines that both parents can follow to help their children cope with divorce:

- Communicate directly with the other parent. Don't use the kids as a go-between,
- Never fight with your ex or say anything negative to or about the other parent when your child is within hearing distance.
- Let your children talk about the other parent but don't question them about your ex's life.
- Don't make kids choose between parents or homes.
- Deal with problems, disciplinary issues and other crises when they happen. Avoiding them will just make them worse and harder to resolve when you have to address them.
- As household rules change to reflect your growing kids' ages, discuss the new rules with your ex-spouse and communicate them to your children.
- Make every effort to keep the promises you make to your kids. □

## Me first!

Six-year-olds (and some fives) want to be first in everything. Therefore, younger siblings who require care and attention often seem to threaten the older child's feeling of "firstness."

Six may appear at times to be consumed by "Me first!" For example, his whole day may be spoiled if a younger sibling gets to the breakfast table before he does. And he can also be most jealous of the very sibling of whom he is most proud.

He may also be jealous of any attention or present given a younger sibling by a guest, but is reassured of his position with some simple attention—an "I love you" smile or an arm around the shoulder.

The lecture approach ("You mustn't be jealous, that's not nice!") only aggravates the situation. At this stage his intense awareness exceeds his ability to manage self and events and he is terribly vulnerable. If his needs are met now, he can more easily discard his egocentric demands later.

Take heart. At least Six gets along fairly well with older siblings—as long as they don't treat him like "a little kid!" □

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Child's Day

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