



Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Learning the neighborhood

To help children learn important information about where they live, make it a game.

In addition to knowing their own addresses, they can learn your neighbors' names, which houses they live in, and where kids can go in the neighborhood if they need help.



To make the game interesting, kids can draw a map showing which children live where, and finally, count the houses on the block and color them the correct color. □

Infants/Toddlers

Learning new words

The ability to understand what is heard is called receptive language. At age 16-18 months of age, this language is still growing faster than expressive language, which is called speech.

At this age, Toddler is using mostly single words. The bulk of these words are nouns like "milk," "ball," or "dog," but she can also use adjectives like "hot," verbs like "want," and "go," or even questions, such as "whadda?"

These words represent thoughts and serve as actual sentences. "Car" may mean "We're going for a ride and I can't wait to look out the window to see the world!"

The first two-word sentences are pieced together with the words said together but not really connected, as "Boy. Run."

You will notice that Toddler talks at least to herself as much as to other people. She may appear astonished when someone responds to this self-talk.

Receptive language is learned mainly in a social context in which feelings and actions coincide with objects, people and their gestures.

When Dad says, "Come here," he holds out his arms to receive Toddler. When Mother says "Give it to me," she reaches out to accept the object. When Mother holds a cup to Toddler's lips, she says, "Drink your juice."

In other words, Toddler's receptive language is the product of simple associations which have been going on since she was about six months old.

Imitation plays a big role in the life of the toddler. She uses it for learning new words. The parent says, "See the monkey," and Toddler echoes the word "monkey." Or Toddler points to an object and her parent supplies its name.

There is a snowballing effect in learning language — the more a child is able to speak, the more she learns to speak.

Once Toddler discovers this power of speech, she has a new style of behaving and dealing with her world.

She demonstrates this mastery by talking with the adults in her life. And they generally love it! □

Let's do history!

When your children ask, “Where was I born?” and “How old was I when I started walking?” they’re asking questions about history. These two questions contain the two meanings of “history”:

1. The story of people and events.
2. The record of times past.

Here are some things you can do at home,.

- Share family history with your children. Share your memories and help your relatives and friends share family stories, too.

Encourage your children to tell their own stories.

- Read with your child about people and events that have made a difference in the world. Help your child pick other people and events you both find interesting to learn more about.
- Watch television programs about topics related to the past with your children. Get library books on the same topics. Ask the librarian for help. Do the books and television programs agree?
- When you celebrate holidays such as the Fourth of July,

Christmas, Passover, or Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday, explain to your child what is being celebrated and why. Help your child find stories or speeches about these holidays at the library or in a newspaper or magazine.

- Get to know the history of the town or city where you live. Your newspaper may list parades, museum and art exhibits, children’s theater, music events, history talks, and walks under “things to do.” Choose some of these activities to do with your children. □

Tips for getting kids to bed

Here are some ideas that may help at bedtime:

- Have a set bedtime. “When the big hand is on the six, it’s time to get ready for bed,” or “When the clock says these numbers...” can be part of the routine. In this way the clock, not the parent, is announcing the time to go to bed.

A warning of “ten minutes until bath time” is also useful so that fun isn’t suddenly interrupted. This helps children get used to the idea that there will be a change in the action soon. A kitchen timer works, too.

- Minimize television and rowdy activities close to sleeping time. As bedtime nears, it’s a good idea to slow down, reduce

activities and noise in preparation for sleep.

- A night time routine can work wonders. For instance, start with a warm, calm bath followed by a ritual goodnight to the dog, the piano, the spider plant, the clock, grandma and grandpa in a picture, the refrigerator ...

Once you find a routine that works well, stay with it. Children find this kind of activity soothing and comforting and can come to rely on its repetition each evening.

- If necessary, provide a small night light, a quiet radio, or a trusted companion, like a favorite stuffed animal.
- If your child doesn’t fall asleep at once, there’s no harm in

reading or playing quietly in bed, even after bedtime. A child can’t go to sleep on demand any more than an adult can.

Adults know that by lying quietly in bed long enough, sleep will come. Children haven’t had this much experience, and have to “learn” how to go to sleep.

A slow-paced environment, soothing bedtime routine—which may include a bath, a bedtime story, and ritual goodnight—and quiet conversation sets the stage for a good night’s sleep.

If you tiptoe in later, you’ll probably find your youngster was overtaken by the sandman. Then just switch off the light and whisper, “Sweet dreams...” □

Playing favorites

No parent wants to admit that he or she has a favorite child. In fact, it may not be a particular child who is favored but a stage of life.

For example, cuddling an infant can be fun . . . until he grows into a toddler who plays with the stereo controls. Or a mother or father may temporarily favor the child with whom she or he spends the most time alone.

That may be the oldest child if there is a significant gap between the first and second child. Or it may be the youngest who becomes the apple of a parent's eye when the others go off to school.

As the family mood changes, so can the favorite. During stressful times, a quiet, affectionate child is comforting to hold. But during picnics and holidays, the lively, creative child may be the life of the party.

To make it more complicated, any child in any family is likely to feel his parents "always" favor the other child.

Children misinterpret their parents' looks and gestures and then declare, "You like her better!" when it isn't true at all.

Each child has his or her own special place in the family. That's what makes families work, and it is a good message for parents to communicate to all children.

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Collecting interesting objects

Here's an activity for a day when kids can't seem to find anything else to do.

Provide each child with an empty egg carton and the following instructions.

1. Take a short walk around the house, through the yard or neighborhood, along the seashore or into a friendly woods.

2. Pick up interesting or unusual "bits of nature"—a shell, a pretty stone, an attractive leaf, a bird feather, etc. Collect one item for each section of the container.



3. When the container is full, return home for a discussion of the items, their origins, uses, where they were found, etc.

Try these variations or make up some of your own:

- Examine items using a magnifying glass.
- Guess what the unidentified objects might be; where they came from; what purpose they might serve.

- Make up stories about the different objects.

- Decide what category each object fits: animal, mineral, or vegetable.

- Save the containers and look at the objects again on the next rainy day.

To make the activity move smoothly:

- Assign partners so younger children have helpers.

- Make sure at least one adult accompanies the group and that someone else knows exactly where the group will be going and approximately when they will return.

- If someone finds a questionable object, leave it where it is and don't pick it up.

- Be prepared to return home early if children get tired.

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MusiKids

music classes
are available at
Child's Day

Ask us about a
free trial session!