



# Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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## Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Snack Time

### Healthy Snacks

- Low-fat chips (potato or tortilla) are available. Look for chips that have been baked, not fried.

- Popcorn is always a favorite, but don't add butter or margarine or too much salt. Air-popped is best.

- Low-fat cheese or farmer's cheese is good with crackers.

- Fresh fruit is not only sweet and good for you, it provides fiber and vitamins.

- Check out your cookbook for a low-fat vegetable dip and provide a colorful bunch of veggies when kids get hungry between meals. Carrot and celery sticks, and apples, too, are great for dipping.

- Tired of orange juice? Look for some interesting fruit juice mixes at the grocery store. Try something new or mix your own.

- Low-fat rice cakes fill up hungry kids in a hurry. Experiment to find flavors your kids like.

□

### Parenting

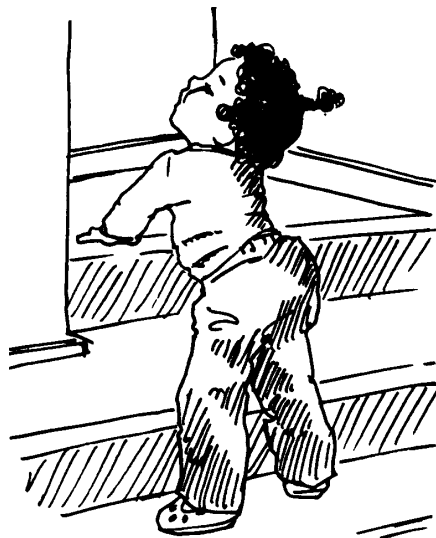
### Boosting parents' self-confidence

At one time or another, almost all parents question their self-confidence.

Parents want to be able to act decisively and confidently but the influence of neighbors, friends and relatives and what they will think can be upsetting.

Here's an idea that may help.

Most decisions revolve around two categories—**needs** and **wants**—and it is important to determine which is which.



**Needs** must be responded to in the interests of children's development.

**Wants** may be considered but they may also be rejected in the interest of health, safety or family priorities.

So, while children **need** good food, they may **want** only ice cream.

Parents who feel obliged to satisfy all of their child's wants may discover they are harboring a little tyrant.

Many parents are afraid of losing their child's love if they deny them all they want—children do often become frustrated and sometimes angry when their wishes are denied.

Yet it is impossible to satisfy children 100 percent without parents becoming irritated and indignant.

A compromise is, first, to recognize the difference between needs and wants.

Then, if you can feel secure in your love for your child, you can accept the consequences of your decisions—without fearing your child's rejection or criticism from relatives, friends or neighbors. □

### Simple and easy games

Games are more fun when kids become involved in making the rules—and the equipment needed to play. Here are some ideas for simple, low-cost entertainment.

#### Make-your-own Ring Toss

Using large paper plates, cut out the center, leaving the outside piece as a ring for tossing. Kids can decide what games they want to play and what the rules are.

Rings can be tossed at stationary objects (liter bottle) or a moving object (their foot or hand).

The rings can be designed and personalized beforehand using crayons or markers. Or rings can

be assigned different numerical values for scoring.

This game can also be customized for older or younger children.

#### Inside/Outside

#### Treasure Hunt

Give each player an egg carton that has twelve sections. Their job is to fill each section with a different object that will fit inside the section. Participants can hunt inside or outside.

When everyone is finished, they can compare collections and try to identify each object. For safety's sake, children under three years old should be accompanied

by an adult since items this small may pose a choking hazard.

There are lots of variations on this game—participants can hunt in pairs or teams; lists of 12 items can be provided for a scavenger hunt; a time limit can be imposed.

#### Hole-in-One

With tape, attach a piece of string to a ping-pong ball at one end and a paper cup at the other. Then see how many times players can catch the ball in the cup.

The string can be adjusted longer or shorter to make the game harder or easier. Different sizes of cups also add difficulty. □

## Social Skills

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### Growing up to be responsible adults

We all want our children to grow up to be responsible adults. We want them to feel, think, and act with respect for themselves and for others. To do this, children need lots of help from parents and caregivers. Learning to be responsible includes learning to:

- Show respect and compassion for others;
- Practice honesty;
- Show courage by standing up for what we believe;
- Develop self-control out of

consideration for others;

- Maintain self-respect.

Here are some things you can do at home:

- Watch for the chance to teach your children responsible behavior through everyday situations. Share your moral and religious values with them.
- Show compassion and concern when others are suffering.
- Read stories together that teach lessons: the courage of David standing up to Goliath or the value of persistence from “The

Little Engine That Could.”

- Talk about complicated and difficult decisions. Help children understand how the choices they make will affect them and others.
- Visit with teachers to discuss ways parents, caregivers, other adults and the school can reinforce the same lessons about good character.
- Talk with other parents and agree on acceptable behavior for children's play and parties. Take turns supervising to show that all the parents agree on the standards of behavior. □

## When your child is afraid

All of us have experienced fear. And, as caring parents, we want to protect our children from fearful situations.

But we cannot always protect our children, nor can we keep them from being afraid. We can, however, reduce children's fears by:

- Helping them express their fears;
- Distinguish real from imaginary dangers, and
- Become increasingly independent and confident about handling frightening situations they encounter as they mature.

Here are some ideas that will help you help your child deal with fear:

- Talk with your child about the frightening situation and listen carefully and respectfully to what he says. Let him know that

he can talk with you about anything—even sensitive subjects. Avoid creating an atmosphere in which he feels guilty or ashamed if he brings up a touchy subject.

- Allow your child plenty of time to talk over fears. Don't push her into a scary situation. Forcing her to stay in a dark room, for example, will only intensify her fear of the dark.
- Accept your child's fears, feelings, and reactions. Don't deny what your child fears; these fears are very real to her. Ridiculing or shaming her will make her hide her feelings from you.
- Tell your child the truth about frightening events. "Yes, it may hurt when you get a shot. So it's okay to yell and make faces, but you still need to hold still."

Don't deceive your child about stressful or frightening events. Providing information about the

hospital (or death or divorce) isn't harmful to a child; deceiving him is.

- Involve your child in decision-making and problem solving about frightening situations. This will enhance his feelings of power and competence. Ask, "What do you think would help a child who is afraid?"
- Provide books with stories about other children experiencing fear. And let your child use art and puppet play to rehearse solutions to frightening situations.
- Suggest ways your child can cope with fears: "Some people who are afraid of the dark carry a flashlight or use a nightlight. What would help you feel better?"

Don't limit your child's options for adaptive behaviors by emphasizing the negatives, by saying, for example: "Don't cry!" "Don't act like a baby!" Instead suggest what the child **can** do. □

## Academics

### Gifted children have problems, too

Every child has special gifts. You can help your child develop his natural gifts by noticing what he is interested in, giving him the opportunity to do those things, and being patient, encouraging, and interested in his efforts.

Sometimes other children may not like an exceptionally gifted child because he or she is different. Adults sometimes expect gifted children to be as mature in every way as they are in the gifted area.

Parents or teachers may be impatient with a four-year-old who can talk, read, and write like an eight-year-old when the child behaves like a four-year-old,

It's easy to forget that even though a child is advanced in some ways, he or she is still only four and apt to act that way. □

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