



# Growing Together<sup>®</sup>

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

## A visit to the zoo

Here's a fun activity that combines snacks with information. (Snack is not recommended for children under 2 years of age.)

You'll need a box of animal crackers, some graham crackers, honey, low-fat cream cheese (at room temperature) and milk.

Mix a little honey with the cream cheese. Use the milk to thin the mixture a bit.

The kids can put a bit of the cream cheese mixture on a graham cracker, then select an animal cracker to stand upright on the graham cracker.

Take turns talking about each animal and answering these questions:

What is it?

What does it like to eat?

Where does it live?

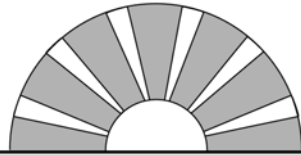
Where does it sleep?

What sounds does it make?

How big (or little) is it?

Have you ever seen a real one?

Would you want one for a pet? Why or why not? □



## Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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## Discipline

### Shame and blame

A child will behave according to what he thinks he is. Therefore, if he is addressed in terms like: "You always ..." and "You never ..." and "You are such a ..." he will surely develop an image of himself as a "so and so" and continue engaging in "such and such."

When correcting a child, it is much better to make a distinction in your mind between who he is and what he is doing. And it is necessary to behold children as innocent. We can assume that if they really knew better, really understood the value of another way, they would do it.

Parents are called upon for various responses to error. Sometimes a firm and vigorous stand is called for, such as when there is immediate danger of physical injury.

Sometimes a warning is called for, the pointing out of a possible consequence.

Sometimes parents simply have to stand by and let their children discover consequences for themselves.

Sometimes reproof and explanation are appropriate. But the goodness of the child is never the issue; even behavior is not the

issue; learning is.

In every instance something will be learned. If we view our children as naughty, disturbed or guilty of their misdeeds, they will learn to think of themselves as foolish, faulty, or shameful.

If we view them as innocent, or at least merely ignorant, they will gain understanding from their experiences, and they will continue to regard us as wise partners.



Write a no-fault clause into your family policy and apply it to yourself and your children. With no-fault assurance, even if you have to discipline your toddler, you will be able to do so with compassion and a sense of humor rather than fear or anger. You will be able to issue warnings without insult, and correct without humiliation. □

## Dealing with stressful situations

In order for children to learn how to deal with stressful situations, they need practice now when they have your help and support.

Your behavior in stressful situations will affect your child's reactions. If you are able to remain calm, despite feeling upset, this will give your child a feeling of security.

This is especially important in very frightening situations such as a car accident or a natural disaster such as a bad storm or an earthquake.

It is also important in the case of more routine problems such as when your youngster has made a mistake and is afraid of disappointing or angering you.

Naturally you will have your own feelings to contend with, and you should be honest with your child about them.

Let her know, for example, that you feel frightened, too, in a bad storm, or that you feel bad about leaving behind friends and favorite things when you move.

This lets your child know that it's okay to have feelings like fear and sadness. It helps her feel more comfortable about such feelings in herself.

Try to teach your child by your example to put these feelings into words rather than becoming immobilized by them.

Your child depends on you for comfort, reassurance, and stability, especially in stressful times.

□

## Touch is important to your baby

One of a baby's earliest ways of learning is through her sense of touch. Long after she has gained control of her eyes and has begun to learn through them, she will continue to learn by holding, handling, and mouthing objects.

The world is full of many different things which have different "feels" when Baby comes in contact with them.



The idea that some things are the "same" and others are "different" is one of the most basic of all learning experiences.

One way to help her learn more about "same and different" is to give her many opportunities to experience all those interesting "feels."

The active or the fussy baby never lacks the stimulation of being lifted and handled. However, the placid, "very good" baby may be deprived of stimulation that she needs simply because she makes no demands on her parents or caregivers.

All babies can benefit from gentle stimulation of their sense of touch. If a baby is placed on her stomach without clothing for a short time before her bath, she experiences sensations over her body's skin which she may otherwise miss.

Gently stroke and rub her back, arms, and legs with your hands. Pat her gently all over or tap her with your fingertips.

Rub her gently with something soft and velvety. A piece of soft corduroy is an excellent source of stimulation. After her bath, don't just pat her dry. Rub her arms, legs, tummy and back with a soft terry cloth towel. Kiss her head, her hands, and her feet.

Play with her toes as you talk to her. Pat her feet together. Pat her hands together. Make a bubbling noise against the skin in the hollow of her neck or against her soft tummy.

A "ticklish" baby is often very sensitive to touch because she has not had enough stimulation of this sense.

If your baby is ticklish, begin using her own hands to rub and pat her body. As she learns to trust her own touch, you can gradually begin using your hand.

Remember that a light touch feels more "tickly" than a firmer one. A gentle but firm touch with the palm of your hand is less likely to "tickle" than feather-like stroking with fingertips. □

## Kid-friendly ideas for a speedy breakfast

A well-rounded breakfast is essential for adults and children, but nearly half of all Americans skip breakfast because they're not hungry or don't have time. But time doesn't have to be an issue—there's nothing wrong with eating on the run.

Here are five fast, nutritious, and fun ways to give kids a jump-start on their day:

- Top toast slices with their favorite all-fruit spread and make a face with banana slices.
- Give teething infants who are familiar with solid foods a bagel to nibble. For older children, try a flavored bagel of their choice to munch on in the school bus or car.
- Do you have extra pancakes or waffles on the weekend? Cool and wrap leftovers in foil and store them in the refrigerator. On Monday, pop them in the microwave to warm, spread with all-fruit jam or applesauce and roll them up—a quick and easy breakfast rollup!
- Set out your child's cold cereal selections the night before to avoid spending time making these decisions in the morning. When crunched for time, put dry cereal in a container for kids to eat on the way to school or daycare.
- Make a cereal blend especially for your child. Buy several types of cereal at once and mix, adding raisins and other dried fruits or seasonal fresh fruits to create a special combination. □

## Spending time together

Most parents value spending time with their children. But all too often our lifestyle doesn't lend itself to "togetherness." Even when we plan special time with our children, things don't always go smoothly.

Here are some tips for helping make the time spent together happy and productive for all:

- If you spend time at work during the week and your child spends the majority of time in school or at childcare, staying home and having an unstructured day during the weekend might be a better way to nurture a relationship than going to see a movie or going to the zoo.



A relaxing time doing what you all enjoy—which may be as simple as fixing pancakes for breakfast or going on a hike—may be the best use of your time.

- Do something with your children that you like to do. If you do something you enjoy, the pleasure is often contagious. What about a game of miniature golf? Go swimming together. Play croquet.
- Consider the basics: hunger and sleep. It's difficult to have fun

with a tired or hungry child (or adult, for that matter). Try to keep naps on schedule. Eat an early lunch if you're going out for the afternoon, or take along a simple lunch.

- Sometimes let children join in your projects. The adult world is appealing to children. After all, children want more than anything to be "big." They also want to spend time with their parents.

For example, while you're making dinner, put a plastic tablecloth on the floor. Give your youngster a pan of water (not very deep) and some potatoes to wash with a vegetable scrub brush.

- Make a short list of four or five activities you can all participate in. Then let the kids choose the one they'd like most. This helps them feel like they are part of the family, and that their preferences are considered.

We need to manage ourselves to make time for what's important to us. But that isn't always easy. Kids are kids for only a short time. Building a strong relationship with them now means you can enjoy the rewards for a lifetime. □

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## Reward



**for referrals!**  
*Ask for details!*