



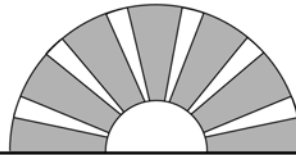
Growing Together[®]

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Nutrition

Quick tips for nutritious, low-fat snacks and meals

- Bread is the original low-fat “fast food,” offering a quick base for an array of toppings, from lean meats and vegetables to jams and fresh fruit.
- Couscous, one of the more “exotic” grains, cooks in just five minutes and comes in a variety of unique flavors, like toasted almond.
- Leftovers are transformed instantly when you wrap them up in a tortilla. It’s so easy to do: simply fill the tortilla with leftovers, roll up, and eat.
- Pasta is perfect for “make-ahead” meals: cook a large batch at the beginning of the week, toss with a small amount of light oil (to keep it from sticking), store in an airtight container, and take what you need for meals throughout the week. □



Child’s Day

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Behavior

Learning about relationships

Your child needs experiences with other children in order to put into practice what she has learned from you about getting along with others.

She learns how to act with others from family members. But she needs to try out these ideas with other children in order to gain competence and self-confidence.



With other children, she can work out different ways of acting and reacting that she probably wouldn’t risk trying with you or other adults.

She can get practice being the boss as well as being bossed by another. She can be a leader as well as a follower; a teacher as well as a learner; a caregiver as well as the one receiving care.

With you and other adults in her life, she is limited to certain behaviors that are appropriate because she is a child. With other children, her options are more open.

Further, just as you need time away from a child-centered life, she needs to get away from the adult-oriented world.

She needs to be with other people whose view of the world and orientation toward life are similar to her own. Through her relationships with them, she can learn to cooperate, compromise, and strike bargains.

She needs to be able to work out satisfying relationships with other children in her own way, at her own pace in terms of her own needs. This is why “free play” time or recess can be the most important part of a child’s day.

Try to work out an arrangement with other parents to get your children together on a regular basis, to play or go on outings.

Give your child the opportunities, support and encouragement she needs to work out satisfying relationships with other people. □

Preparing for success in school

There are many things a parent can do in the home that can help to prepare a child for success in school.

Here are five things your child will be expected to do in a classroom setting, as well as what you can do to help him get ready as he nears school age:

1. Follow simple directions precisely. ("I want you to go to your room and bring me your red sweater.")

2. Wait a reasonable length of time. ("I can't read you a story

until after I have finished washing these dishes.")



3. Listen to a story and respond to simple questions. ("Lis-

ten carefully because I will ask you some questions about the story I'm going to read to you.")

4. Complete a task. ("Pick up all your toys and put them in the toy box.")

5. Take turns. ("I will ask each of you a questions: first, Mary; then Jim; and then Joe.")

Children who develop these five skills in the home will more easily adjust to the classroom setting. As a result, they will more likely enjoy their school experiences. □

Science & Nature

Going for a walk

A walk in the outdoors with your child can serve many useful purposes.

Walking provides good exercise, particularly if it involves climbing up and down hills. It is also a great way to relax and have fun.

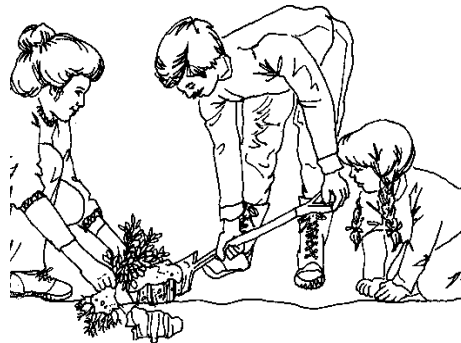
When you take your child for a walk, make it a "curiosity walk." Help her explore casually with the senses of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and vision.

In the woods or in the park, stop to examine a rock, a plant, or a tree.

Ask questions to provoke interest: "How does it smell?" "Can it make a sound?" "Do you know something it looks like?"

Your answers will allow you

to supply new and descriptive words such as "mushy," "squeaky," "lumpy," "bumpy," "squishy," and "enormous."



A walk in the outdoors can also be enjoyed by treating it as an obstacle course game.

Ask her to walk around a tree,

over a hill, under a branch. See if she can do the same thing walking backwards. You can make up our own game by finding different ways to get from one place to another.

As your child moves between, around, across, under, and on top of objects, she is increasing her awareness of her body. She must use her body in different ways to bend, stretch, pull, push, twist, turn, wiggle, creep, shake, squeeze, and stoop.

These different movements help her find out how she can use her body, arms and legs.

As you play and explore together, she gets lots of practice in using not only her body but also her mind to tackle the obstacles. □

Dealing with stress

Most parents today live stress-filled lives. Their minds go a mile a minute, thinking of all they have to do. Signs of stress include:

- Being easily irritated by things that normally wouldn't bother you.
- Being angry about things over which you have no control, such as the weather or being stuck in rush-hour traffic.
- Feeling rushed and pressured to get things done in less time than is realistic.
- Feeling frustrated or helpless because of not being able to keep up with the pace of your life.
- Feeling tightness in your neck muscles, shoulders, or back.
- Finding yourself frequently clenching your jaws or grinding your teeth.

- Feeling constantly tired even before you start a task.

- Having a headache frequently during or at the end of the day.

Here are some long-term strategies for dealing with stress:

Develop the habit of making a list of things you have to do. An unspecific, vague sense of "having lot to do" can wear you down. Making a list helps organize what tasks need to be done.

Make a list of what needs to be done immediately. Be realistic. Trying to accomplish everything at the same time is unrealistic and can be overwhelming.

Check off tasks as you finish them. A sense of accomplishment—even in getting small jobs done—can give a person renewed energy.

Give yourself more time than you think each task will take. Being rushed creates unnecessary pressure that ultimately saps one's energy.

Make time for yourself. This includes planning to take regular breaks and to look after your own interests.

Keep notes on whatever helps you the most to de-stress. For some people, listening to music or looking at a particular scene can be relaxing. For others, a mental sound or pictures—such as the sound of waves breaking on the seashore—is more effective.

Exercise regularly. Build some exercise program—even short, brisk walks—into your overall daily schedule. Treat regular exercise as a duty to yourself and others, rather than as an optional daily activity.

Find a long-term friend with whom you can share the cause of your stress. This person must be a good listener whom you trust to protect your confidentiality. □

Academics

Practicing ABCs

Here's an easy, fun way to practice making letters and words. Start with a big roasting pan. Pour a thick layer of salt into the pan and shake it from side to side until the salt is spread evenly. Now you're ready to write.

Children get the "feel" of letters better when their fingertips shape them than when a stubborn pencil point does. They can make letters as big as they like without wasting paper. And if they are unhappy with the way something looks, all they have to do is give the pan a shake.

If your child is too young for writing, he can make swirly designs with fingers or cookie cutters. For those kids to love tiny bulldozers and dump trucks, the salt's fine, dry texture works better than sand for moving, dumping, and piling up.

Look at the salt as a new kind of creative surface ... and think up a new challenge for the kids at your house. □

Born Musicians

Discover the Gift of Song

Ask about
music classes
for your child