



# Growing Together®

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Developmental

## How to be successful

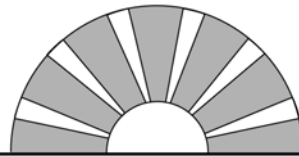
In order for a child to develop feelings of confidence in his ability to be successful, he needs practice at being successful,

Observe his present skills and interests. Then introduce him to activities which will spark his interest and stretch his skills, challenging him and assuring success.

Encourage him to stick with activities until he's done what he set out to do.

Try not to interrupt him from an involving activity. Perseverance is an important part of success. If he meets with difficulty, encourage him to "just try."

If you can suggest a way of simplifying the task, do so. But resist the temptation to take over and show him how by doing it for him. That's a subtle way of telling him he can't do it and will undermine his confidence in his own ability. □



## Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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Parenting

## What to do when parents and grandparents disagree

If there are disagreements between generations about childrearing, there are several things to consider:

- How important is it? If children seldom see the grandparents, a simple conversation about different rules at different houses may suffice. If there are major differences and children spend a lot of time with grandparents, the situation will have to be addressed.

- Many new parents are understandably insecure in their decisions about rearing children. An authoritative grandparent may make it hard to stand up for one's own beliefs.

- Some grandparents who were strict with their own children prefer to simply "enjoy" the grandchildren, indulging whims and undermining discipline.

- Grandparents who've struggled to raise their children may see different child-rearing methods as disapproval of their own practices or a repudiation of their values.

When differences of opinion are impossible to resolve or in cases where there are problems or sickness such as untreated alcoholism or a severe mental disorder, hard choices must be made. It is painful for grandparents and grandchildren to be cut off from each other, but there may be no

other solution.

In some cases, however, visits may be made with the parents or a responsible third party present.

Often differences between generations are the product of misunderstandings and faulty communication. A frank discussion of the parents' philosophy of child raising can often lead to a sharing of ideas.

Between the two extremes of response—suffering in silence or denying all contact—there is usually a common meeting ground.

- Parents should discuss between themselves their philosophy, goals, and plans for their children. Disagreements should be ironed out before approaching grandparents.

- If there is a particular child development book you are consulting, provide the grandparents a copy.

- Decide whether there is one specific area of disagreement, such as television viewing or going to church, or if there is a strikingly different philosophy.

- Meet without the kids on neutral ground.

Whether you are the parents or the grandparent, state your case, then *listen*. The other generation may have some good ideas, too. □

## Helping children learn to care and share

• **Teach by example.** In their formative early years, children learn right from wrong primarily by observing their parents.

Youngsters are observant; they pick up the real messages and values and are much more concerned with what you do than with what you say.

Obviously, if you want your children to practice honesty, be honest yourself. If you want your children to be truthful, then don't tell lies yourself. And, if you want your children to act compassionately, be a compassionate person yourself.

• **Teach by telling.** In addition to being a good role model, parents need to guide and instruct, advise and listen. "Even though it's extremely important to teach by example, it's not enough," declares New York psychologist

Dr. Thomas Lickona in his book, *Raising Good Children*.

"Kids are surrounded by bad examples. They need our words as well as our actions. They need to see us living good lives, but they also need to know why we do it. For our example to have maximum impact, children need to know the values and beliefs that lie behind it."

• **Insist on the use of "magic" words.** Even the youngest children can learn to say "magic" words such as: *please, thank you, excuse me*. Reinforce their use by complimenting your child whenever she or he uses them.

• **Use the word "feel" often.** An effective way of cultivating empathy in a child is to use the word "feel" frequently. Ask, "How do you think your brother feels

when you call him names?" Discuss how victims of prejudice must feel and help your child be sensitive to those feelings.

• **Cultivate the attitude of gratitude.** "When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude," observed British writer G.K. Chesterton. Teach children to be grateful for the things they have: health, family, home, teachers, school, friends, and pets.

• Challenge children to be accepting. Given the opportunity, children can transcend prejudice, and it is the responsibility of every parent to help them do so. Encourage your child to be friends with someone from a different race, religion or culture. Enrich your child's experience of the world by visiting an ethnic fair or dine at an ethnic restaurant. □

## Talking at Two

You're having coffee with a neighbor when your youngster rushes in to tell you something that is important to her.

Since she's not yet a fluent speaker and the urgency of the situation interferes with intelligibility, you don't know what she's trying to convey to you.

First, let's talk about what not to do.

• Don't belittle the child with criticism. "Who can understand you when you talk that way?"

• Don't threaten her. "If you don't talk better, no one will ever

understand you."

• Don't bribe her. "If you say it nicely, you can have a cookie."

• Don't command her. "Say it like this so we know what you mean."

• Don't overprotect her. "Go play and we'll talk about it later."

What to do:

• Echo what she has said insofar as you can and replace the unintelligible part with one of the "wh" words. Youngster: "Sam broke too me ever." You: "Sam broke what?"

• Assure her that you truly

understand her feelings (even if you do not understand her speech). This is very reassuring to a child.

None of us ever outgrows the appreciation for emotional support. For a child, a hug or squeeze accompanied by simple feedback will help: "I know you are upset right now. I understand how you feel. Let's have some orange juice and talk about it."

Treating a child as a sensitive individual with her own sense of personal dignity which can be hurt or gratified will result in cooperative behavior. □

## Let's do science!

When you learn science, you build on what you already know. Children need to start learning early, at home, so that they have a firm base of knowledge to build on when they get to school.

As parents, what's important is that we share the knowledge we have with our children. Science is in everyday activities: cooking, washing dishes, and growing

plants. So, look around the house and out the windows and you'll see that science is everywhere.

Here are some things you can do:

- Ask your children questions: How do you think the clock works? Why does a bird make a nest and what is the nest made of? How does electricity help us every day?

- Have children look at what's happening around them and have them tell you or write down what they see.

- Have your children make predictions about the weather or how fast a plant will grow or how high a piece of paper will fly with the wind. Have your children then test to see if their hunches are correct.

- Remind your child that it may take many tries before you get an answer. Keep trying.

- Have your children start a collection of shells, rocks, or bugs so that they can see similarities and patterns.

- Have your child look at how things are different. He or she can look around the neighborhood to see the different animals and plants that live and grow there.

- Have your child look at what causes things to change. What happens when a plant doesn't have water or sunlight?

These are just suggestions. By looking at the world around you, you can come up with activities suitable for younger or older children. □

## Health & Safety

### Check your baby's hearing

Once a baby can sit up with props, around five months old, she's also busy paying attention to the world about her. She turns her head to seek out sounds she hears; both her eyes and ears appear to search for the source of the sound, particularly if she drops something and it makes noise.

This is a good time to check for a hearing impairment if your baby is not responding in this way to the noises in the world around her.

You can assess her hearing by observing how she responds when you deliberately make sounds yourself or make sounds with objects which are within her hearing (five to six feet) but which she cannot see.

Does she turn her head to look when someone talks to her? Does she look toward loud, unexpected or unfamiliar noises?

On the other hand, if she fails to respond or if her responses aren't regular, you must not automatically assume she has a hearing impairment. For example, the time schedule for premature infants or those with delayed development will not be the same as for the "typical" infant.

A child is never too young to have a hearing test. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, consult your child's physician. He or she may do a hearing test or refer to you a specialist or clinic.

Hearing loss affects approximately three million American children under the age of 18. It is vital that babies with hearing problems are identified as soon as possible so that they can be helped to develop normal speech. There are many treatment options available.

Unless she can hear her own voice and the voices of other people, a baby will experience problems with both language and learning.

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