

Grade 3 December Part 2

Personal grooming skills are better now

The third grader has the fine-motor ability now to be responsible for many personal grooming tasks.

She can shampoo her own hair.

She can cut her own fingernails, but needs some help with those on her dominant hand (keeping the nails short, by the way, is the best way to keep them clean).

She is capable of brushing her teeth thoroughly, but may not take the time. She will floss well if she can listen to a story at the same time.

Now that you're sure she is capable of doing all these things, *how* to get her to do them is the question. She really responds to praise. Also, rewards—at intervals—but not too often. The reward: MONEY! She's money-mad this year!

Gaining social poise and good manners

Your child is beginning to have "company manners." When she has chances to "rehearse" her manners in frequent social situations, she becomes more and more comfortable with them. For some reason, her manners are better away from home, and she is always eager to go visiting, especially if the visit is in another city or town.

By the end of the year, she will meet new people with a fair amount of ease and can even converse with strangers at the next table in a restaurant. At this time—and this can be a real help—her blossoming social grace makes her able to telephone well and also to write down simple messages.

Avoiding accidents

Accidents are a major cause of death at this age—chiefly accidents involving automobiles, falls, and drowning.

These accidents happen because the third grader is out for action and is ready to try anything. The caution she had last year is no longer present to protect her. Her ease in movement, plus speed, hurls her into precarious situations. She also misjudges herself as being better able to handle a situation than she truly is.

The child is not really ready to take a bicycle out on a highway or in a business section of town. Also, if she plays on the sidewalk, she will dash into the street for her ball without looking. When she falls, her good balance causes her to land on her feet and, therefore, she may break a leg more easily.

Verbal reminders for caution will be ignored until she outgrows this lack of caution. Controlling the environment in which she plays is about all you can do. So you may have to lay down the law as to *where* she may play.

Dealing with stress

The occasional stammer, mouth-working, and head-tossing, which were all tension outlet movements, seem to be gone now.

A few boys pull at their pants in the genital area or scratch their buttocks when they are under stress. It's very embarrassing to parents. Looser underwear will help, but removing the child from the overly-demanding situation is the best treatment.

"The training of children is a profession, where we must know how to lose time in order to gain it."

—Rosseau—