



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Behavior

## Good moods, bad moods

Preschoolers can sometimes be moody when things don't go their way.

A child's mood can change quickly, from joy to anger, for example, if someone doesn't pay attention to him or if he can't make a toy work the way he wants.

Often you may not even know why he's upset. He may have some idea inside his head of what he expects.

When his expectations aren't met, he might pout or stomp about without ever letting you know why.

Try to put yourself in his shoes. See if you can figure out the problem. "I'll bet you're mad because you got tired of waiting for me to get off the phone."

Be sympathetic, even if you think his reason for being in a bad mood is not important. If he feels you understand, he'll get over his moodiness more quickly. □

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Developmental

## Dance with your baby?

Why not? A baby learns through movements. He learns from the movement he experiences as he is being lifted, held, carried and cared for as well as from the movements of his own body.

A very young baby's nervous system is not yet completely developed, and he startles easily.

A loud noise, a sudden movement or loss of support is very frightening to him.

However, gentle rhythmic motion is soothing. This is why he responds to being rocked or walked when he is uncomfortable or wakeful.

But, dancing? Yes, dancing! Baby learns from being moved as well as from moving.

So, if you enjoy moving to music, if you like to dance—your baby will enjoy it too.

Find some music that is soft and rhythmic—a waltz or a ballad.

Hold your baby gently but firmly so that he feels secure. Then sway from side to side, move forward and backward, turn and twist in time to the music.

Your movements will stimulate the sense organs deep within Baby's ears.

The sensations he experiences will help him develop the position sense and balance he will need when he tries to sit, stand and walk.

If you hum along with the music, your child will get additional stimulation from the vibration of your chest.

If you enjoy moving to music, your happiness will communicate itself to your baby as you hold him.

Sweet music and gentle movements while holding Baby securely are the ingredients for some happy minutes for both of you. □



## “Have you seen my coffeepot?”

Here’s a word substitution game that will produce lots of laughs at your house.

**How to play:** One person leaves the room. The other players decide upon a word that expresses an activity, such as run, sleep, jump, or smile, and so on.

When the player returns to the room, he or she must discover the word by putting questions to each player. The word “coffeepot” is substituted for the unknown word.

So, the question from the player might sound like this: “Did you coffeepot today?” Or, “Did you coffeepot in the dining room?”

Players should answer as truthfully as possible. Sometimes “yes” or “no” will work, but other short answers may be needed.

Obviously some of the questions and answers will be entertaining and funny.

If the guesser figures out the word, the last person he or she questioned becomes “it.”

Another version—which may be easier for younger children—is to use a noun as the unknown word, so the question becomes, “Have you seen my coffeepot today?” or “Is the coffeepot in this room?”

Another help is to pair up guessers so an older player can help a younger one.

Decide what you want to do if the guesser is unable to come up with the correct word within a reasonable amount of time—select a new word, move on to a new guesser, or add still another guesser with a new word.

The object is to have fun with words—not to make others feel bad because they’re unable to guess the right answer.

Happy coffee potting! □

## Snack Time

### Fruit bites are quick and easy

Here’s a quick snack that’s good to eat and good for you.

Start with miniature rice cakes in a favorite flavor (cinnamon-apple or honey-nut, for example).

Next, cut up assorted fruit into bite-size pieces: strawberries, bananas, mandarin oranges segments, pineapple pieces, grapes cut in half, and kiwi fruit pieces.

Then spread low-fat cream cheese, peanut butter, or yogurt on top of each rice cake. Top each cake with a piece or two of fruit.

Looks good, tastes good! □

*Safety note: This snack is not recommended for children under three years old who may choke on small pieces of fruit.*

## Learning about ‘alike’ and ‘different’

Here’s a simple activity that helps children learn how things are alike and how they’re different. These skills are put to use when children begin to look at and understand the differences in numbers and letters.

Start with an empty egg carton and an assortment of buttons. Glue one button in each section of the egg carton.

The object is to sort the buttons into each section, based on the buttons’ characteristics.

That is, children have to match up the button with the sample in the carton section.

Some buttons will have two holes, three holes, or four.

Others can be sorted by color—red, blue, black—or by shape—round, square, rectangular,

Be sure there are plenty of buttons to fill in each carton section before starting. □

*Caution: This game is not recommended for children under two years old.*

## Read it free!

“Grandma Says” is a twice-monthly special message that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children’s book reviews.

To receive your free issues, go to: [www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays](http://www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays) and enter your e-mail address.

## Give children words

The ability to understand words, both written and spoken, is highly valued in our culture. We need to be able to speak and to read to succeed in almost everything we try to do in life.

Since children learn new words by hearing them and by seeing them, parents and caregivers can do much to add to children's vocabularies.

For very young children, this can be done by naming objects that they see and come in contact with.

Identifying and naming objects does sound a lot like talking to oneself, but it is a worthwhile endeavor.

For example, "This is your **shoe**, and I'm going to put it on your **foot**." "Let's put these **blocks** away in this **can**."

Older children love to hear big words, even though they don't always understand what they mean. So, don't be afraid to introduce new and fascinating-sounding words in your conversations.

"This sandwich isn't just big, it's **hugmougous!**" "This ball will roll faster as it gains **momentum**." "See the sunset .... it's just **spectacular!**"

Teaching children to be curious about their world—and the words that tell them about their world—can start them out on a journey of discovery of their own. □



## Learning kindness

Children don't learn kindness by accident.

They learn it by the teaching they receive, the way they see others interact, and by practicing gentle treatment of others.

Teaching children to think of others takes very little effort.

There are plenty of opportunities in an average day to instruct youngsters how to be nice.

For example, while waiting in line at the post office, you can explain that you are waiting for your turn because others are in front of you.

You can teach children how to answer politely when someone asks them a question.

You can even pose quizzes for them when situations arise: What would be helpful for that man on crutches?

The first and often most challenging place to teach children to be kind is at home. Daily interactions with siblings or friends can be used as learning situations.

Encourage little ones to express anger in ways that don't hurt anyone, and to find solutions to problems that are fair to everyone.

Although family members will always have times of disagreement, they can begin to think of how other people feel.

Kids who are raised in an 'anything goes' atmosphere cannot be expected to know how to play nicely with other children.

Even more powerful than teaching is modeling. If you are rude to others, your children will quickly

learn to be discourteous also.

If you yell at sales people because you aren't waited on promptly, or mutter obscenities at fellow drivers, your children will see your model and perhaps treat others with contempt.

Young people treat others the way they are treated.

How many times do we thank toddlers for helping, or ask that they walk a bit faster instead of demanding it?

Children need to be listened to and taken seriously, even if their ideas seem a bit trivial to us.

By respecting children's points of view and really listening to what they have to say, we help them learn how to react to others.

When youngsters are treated with love and respect in the home, they will be much more likely to be kind to friends away from home. □

## Growing Together

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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

[www.growingchild.com](http://www.growingchild.com)

# January, 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>Happy New Year! Kisses for good luck! Do you have a family tradition to begin the new year?</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Place three or four large rubber bands around a tissue box—you have a guitar!</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Count the numbers on a clock.</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Send a letter to an elderly friend.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Can you make a snowball today?</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Talk about a toy you got for the holidays. What can you do with it?</p> 	<p>7</p> <p>Visit the library and look for a book about dragons.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Elvis Presley's birthday. Ask Mom or Dad (or Grandma) to sing the hound dog song!</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Whisper a secret in someone's ear.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Talk about what you did today.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Look in the mirror and smile at yourself.</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>National Handwriting Day</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Is there enough snow outside to build a snow fort?</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Paint or color a big rainbow and hang it up in a window.</p> 
<p>15</p> <p>What's the best day for a nap? Sunday!</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Sing a song in a silly voice.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>A. A. Milne's birthday. Celebrate by reading a chapter from Winnie-the-Pooh.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Wear something purple today.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Make a fancy crown using construction paper, markers, glue, glitter and sequins. Or make two: one for the king and one for the queen.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Make a new kind of sandwich and give it a name.</p> <p>The Smurfator: The Bulldozer. The Cheese Machine.</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Answer Your Cat's Question Day.</p> <p>What in the world does that mean? Can cats ask questions? How do you know? Try it.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Chinese New Year</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Name your favorite song.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Play with a flashlight. Use the words on, off, light and dark.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Can you walk like a: giant? spider? flamingo? turtle?</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Birthday of composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, 1756.</p> <p>How old would he be today?</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Sing "Old McDonald Had a Farm ..."</p> 
<p>29</p> <p>Bake something today: bread, a cake, a pie, some cookies ... try something new!</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Tell a joke.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Talk about right and left.</p> 	<p><b>HAPPY: NEW YEAR!!</b></p> 