



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

## Kids love puzzles

Puzzles have always had a fascination and appeal for young and old alike.

A child's first puzzle should be a simple one-piece-per-object one, (for example, an apple, a banana, and a pear). Very soon the child will progress to more complex puzzles in which parts must be put together to form a whole.

There are many things a child can learn while working with a puzzle, such as recognizing shape, size, and color. She can also learn new vocabulary.

As your child takes pieces out or places them in a puzzle, she is developing eye-hand coordination skills.

She will also become more aware of the relationships of objects in space (For example, the head is at the top, the feet are at the bottom of the body).

Most puzzles will indicate the age range for which they are appropriate. Public libraries generally have a good selection of puzzles appropriate for different age groups.

This is an activity that is a good learning experience, and it will provide your child with hours of fun. □

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Academics

## Let's read a story

Numerous research studies have indicated that children whose parents regularly read to them during the preschool years will later tend to do better in school.

That's why parents are continually encouraged to read aloud to their children. A child's parents are generally her first educators and her most important resources for developing a love of reading.

Let's consider for a moment some of the things your child can learn while you read a story aloud:

**Vocabulary.** As you read, your child is acquiring new words. Let her see the pictures on the page. Point to an object as you read its name. See if she can point to some objects which you name.

**Information.** Your child is also acquiring new knowledge and expanding the horizons of her mind. Reading helps to open a whole new world for her.

**Comprehension.** From books a child acquires new understanding of her world. She perceives new relationships between words and can relate new knowledge to what she already knows.

**Listening and attention skills.** Reading helps to sharpen your child's

listening skills and improve her attention span.

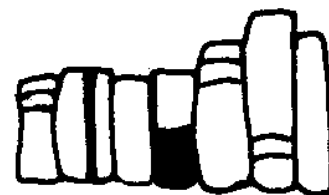
**Mental awareness.** As a result of your reading, she will also likely become more aware of and take greater interest in her everyday world.

**Sequencing.** From your reading, she can learn about sequencing in time; ("Once upon a time ...") and in space, ("In the first place sat ...") which is an important skill for later school learning.

**Emotions.** As she identifies with the characters in the story, she can sometimes gain a better understanding of her own emotions.

**Love of books.** As you read to your child, you are imparting to her an important value in your life, namely, your own love of books.

**Personal love.** Above all, by setting aside uninterrupted quiet time for reading, you are letting your child know how important she is to you. You are thereby conveying your own personal love for her. □





## Growing up to be responsible adults

We all want our children to grow up to be responsible adults.

We want them to feel, think, and act with respect for themselves and for others.

To do this, children need lots of help from parents, caregivers and other adults.

Learning to be responsible includes learning to:

- Show respect and compassion for others;
- Practice honesty;
- Show courage by standing up for what we believe;
- Develop self-control out of consideration for others;
- Maintain self-respect;

Here are some things you can do at home:

- Watch for the chance to teach your children responsible behavior through everyday situations. Share your moral and religious values with them.

- Show compassion and concern when others are suffering.

- Read stories together that teach lessons: the courage of David standing up to Goliath, or the value of persistence from “The Little Engine That Could.”

- Talk about complicated decisions. Help children understand how the choices they make will affect them and others.

- Visit with teachers to discuss ways parents, caregivers, other adults and the school can reinforce the same lessons about good character.

- Talk with some other parents and agree on acceptable behavior for children’s play and parties.

Take turns supervising to show that all the parents agree on the standards of behavior. □

## Teaching kids to share and care

How can parents help their children develop a sharing/caring attitude?

- **Start early.** Various studies demonstrate that even infants have surprisingly generous instincts and like to share.

Most parents have the experience of witnessing their baby, eating in a high chair, spontaneously pick up a piece of food from the tray and offer it to them

Benjamin Spock cites this example: “If a toy is offered but the baby doesn’t want to let go, don’t try to pull it away from him. That will only bring out his possessiveness.

“Instead, lay your hand on the toy, smile and say ‘thank you.’ Even if the toy is not actually relinquished, your positive reaction shows him that the impulse is right.”

- **Love and nurture your child.** While this may appear to be obvious, parents are usually surprised to learn the great number of children who grow up feeling unloved by their parents.

In fact, believing they are unloved is the number one reason many teens give for attempting suicide, using drugs and alcohol, and running away.

On the other hand, such issues are almost non-existent in homes where parents consistently work at showering their children with love and respect.

- **Commend your child for acts of caring and sharing.** This is not as obvious as it appears because children seldom bring attention to their acts of compassion and kindness.

Parents constantly need to be on the lookout for signs of caring and

sharing and then praise the child for his or her behavior.

How the future is shaped will depend upon the values children receive in the present.

As parents work at developing caring and sharing attitudes in their children, the world always has a chance at being a brighter, better and safer world. □

### FREE!

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

Issues are free of advertisements; email addresses are shared with no one.

Get the next issue by signing up at:

<https://growingchild.com/grandma-says>

Written by a very wise grandmother;  
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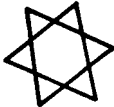

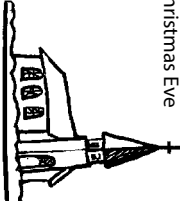
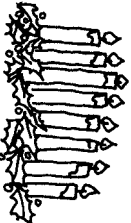
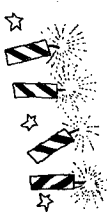

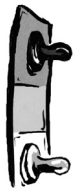
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

**Growing Together** issues may be reproduced in part or in full by participating organizations.

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)

# December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1 Rosa Parks Day. Find a book about her life at the library.</p>	<p>2 Make paper snowflakes by folding paper and cutting shapes.</p>	<p>3 Play "This Little Piggy!"</p> 	<p>4 Go outside and count icicles ... or palm trees.</p>	<p>5 Donate toys, clothes, canned goods, paper products to a holiday charity.</p> 	
<p>6 Warm up some apple cider for a tasty treat!</p> 	<p>7 Talk about animals that live where there is snow.</p>	<p>8 Draw and decorate a holiday greeting on a paper plate to send to a special friend or relative.</p>	<p>9 Get out the scales and weigh: 1. Yourself 2. Two books 3. 10 pencils</p> 	<p>10 Read "The Polar Express."</p>	<p>11 First day of Hanukkah.</p> 	<p>12 Read "Beni's First Hanukkah" by Jane Dreskin Zalben</p>
<p>13 National Cocoa Day. Make little floating islands with marshmallows.</p>	<p>14 Summer fun! Wear your swim suit in the bathtub.</p> 	<p>15 Oh, boy! Home-made fudge!</p>	<p>16 Draw a Christmas tree and color it with as many colors as you can find. Don't forget ornaments.</p>	<p>17 <i>This would be a good time to sing "Winter Wonderland."</i></p>	<p>18 Bake Cookies Day</p>	<p>19 What's mistletoe? What happens if you hang up some?</p>
<p>20 Today wear red and green ... and a smile!</p>	<p>21 Winter Solstice Day. The shortest day of the year. You might want to read more about it in a book.</p>	<p>22 Have a candy cane hunt!</p>	<p>23 Count your toes. How many are on your left foot? How many are on your right foot? How many are there all together?</p>	<p>24 Christmas Eve</p> 	<p>25 Merry Christmas!</p> 	<p>26 First day of Kwanzaa!</p> 
<p>27 Sing "Jingle Bells" four times.</p> 	<p>28 What can you do with an igloo? Find out how to make one.</p>	<p>29 Learn how to make some potato pancakes. Following a recipe is a good way to learn how to follow instructions.</p>	<p>30 Invite friends over for soup and games.</p> 	<p>31 Make a special hat for New Year's Day.</p>	<p><i>Growing Child wishes you and yours a happy and blessed New Year!</i></p>	