



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Toys

Many toys are good for all ages

All children, regardless of age, need playthings to build physical, mental, language, emotional and social skills.

Some toys will appeal to children of all ages. These include music-related items, plush toys, and books.

For children two and up, a well-rounded toy selection should also include playthings from each of the following groups:

- Pretend/dress-up play
- Arts and crafts
- Blocks
- Science and nature exploration play
- Outdoor toys for active play
- Puzzles, games, and construction toys.
- Don't forget cardboard boxes and other boxes of all sizes. Check the recycling for safe items to use in creating something original. □

Parenting

Simplifying your life

More and more people are coming to the conclusion that the American Dream is not simply about a larger house, expensive cars and exotic vacations.

It's also about peace of mind and being part of a community.

Here are some suggestions for living more simply:

- Don't buy what you don't need. Although this sounds relatively easy to do, most of us have a habit of cluttering up our homes with things we "simply can't do without."

Before making your next purchase, ask yourself three important questions:

- (1) Is this an item I will use regularly?
- (2) Have I had a need in the past for this item?
- (3) Will this purchase enhance my life now?

- Stop chasing the almighty dollar. Disqualify yourself from the rat race by living with less to enjoy life more.

A bigger house, a new car, the latest fashionable clothing create tremendous stress to generate a larger and larger income but do not lead to happiness and fulfillment.

- Pick a month and designate it as your "poor" month. During those 30 days, buy only the absolute basics and do not use credit cards. Keep all transactions cash only.

This tightening of your financial belt accomplished three goals.

First, you will see how easy it is to reduce and simplify.

Second, you will save money which can be banked, applied to other debts, or donated to a worthwhile charity.

Third, you will be sensitized to how freely and carelessly money is spent and purchases made.

After living through one "poor" month, you will be more financially cautious and sensitive in the following months.

As you begin to cultivate a simpler lifestyle, don't become discouraged.

Remember that developing the simple-living mid-set doesn't happen overnight. For most people it's done one step at a time.

As you take each step, you gain more confidence and discover new ways of doing things. □

Raising responsible kids

Children need adults to care for them. In the beginning, a parent must do everything for them. But as they grow, adults need to teach them, and then let go so they can grow.

Allowing children to try, perhaps to fail, and then try again is one way to help them grow. Here are some others:

- **Experiment a little.** Much of a child's self-esteem comes from his belief that a parent values his ideas and goals.

Allow your child to experiment—with blocks, playthings, arts and crafts, recyclables—even if it means making a mess every now and then.

Little fingers learn to manipulate items, turning whims into reality. What a great start for creativity and an I-can-do-it attitude!

- **Answer questions.** Children who can do many tasks well usually understand the workings of the tools they use. Someone has answered their questions along the way.

Be a person who answers a child's countless questions. Explain, explain, explain. If he knows how the toilet works, for instance, he'll be more likely to use it correctly.

- **Let him try.** As you work with your child on a task, stop and ask yourself, "Could he try this?" For instance, as you wrap a gift for a friend's party, allow your child to choose the gift tag, peel off the price label or hold the paper down as you tape.

Monitor yourself. Could your child be helping here instead of just watching you do it?

- **Don't interfere.** When your child is trying to plant seeds in the back yard and all appears to be disaster, don't take over the project. More

important than perfectly planted seeds is the feeling of accomplishment of having done a task on his own.

You can encourage success if you make a plan with him ahead of time, and explain the steps needed.

- **Admit mistakes.** When a parent admits his or her own failures, a child realizes that everyone struggles to do things correctly.

Adults know failure is a part of success. Teach your child to overcome frustration by acknowledging setbacks as you encounter them.

"Uh, oh. I put three cups of sugar in this cake. That's too much sugar." Now you have a chance to show calm in the face of adversity.

Show him how you try to solve the problem by talking about your problem-solving technique: "Maybe I should just increase the recipe."

While children mature at different rates, most are helped (or hampered) by what parents do and say.

By our very words and actions we may encourage or discourage our children to take on increasing responsibilities. □

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;
From the publishers of **Growing Child**
and **Growing Together**

Telling a fib to gain attention

Sometimes children lie to gain attention from adults. This sometimes happens in times of transition, such as when a family moves, a child starts school, or a new baby arrives in the home.

At such times, a young child may feel neglected. She may, for example, deliberately pour the entire bottle of bath bubble down the drain and then deny she did it.

What to do? If you already know about or have witnessed the child misbehaving, it is best to avoid setting her up for "defensive lying" by asking: "Did you do that?" Chances are she will deny it or, worse yet, blame her baby brother for doing it.

Children generally respond more positively when parents confront them directly with what they already know: "I saw you doing that. It wasn't nice thing to do."

This doesn't mean parents don't love the child—it means they don't like the behavior.

To prevent a child's misbehavior or lying as a way to gain attention, it will help if parents can spend a little more time with the child who feels left out, especially during times of transition. □

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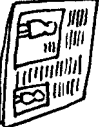
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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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.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Are there leaves to be raked?	2 Sit near a window and enjoy the sunshine.
3 Play "Follow the Leader" outside.	4 Snack: peanut butter and celery sticks and a glass of fruit juice.	5 Sing your favorite song. Ask others to join in.	6 Talk about ways to show kindness to others.	7 Ask how you can help around the house today.	8 Practice humming. hmmmm ...	9 Dress up in mom's and dad's old clothes.
						
10 Play with a toy that connects.	11 Columbus Day	12 Count the doorknobs at your house. Inside and outside.	13 Make up a story about a cat who wears a red hat.	14 Sing a song like an opera singer: La, la, la. La, la, la.	15 Talk about the safest way to cross a street.	16 Family board game night.
						
17 Count backwards from 13 to zero.	18 Go for a walk. Count your steps from the time you start until you stop.	19 Talk about life in a log cabin.	20 What shape is an orange? Name three more objects that have the same shape.	21 Everyone name their favorite cartoon book dessert.	22 Sit down on the floor with a partner. Roll a LARGE ball back and forth. Catch it with your legs, if you can.	23 Jump a rope and count to ten.
	25 Learn a new song today.					
24 What can you make with a leftover cardboard box?	26 Have a race blowing cotton balls.	27 If you were going to write or tell a story, what would it be about?	28 Trade seats for dinner.	29 Make silly sentences using words cut out from newspapers and magazines.	30 Act like a chicken!	
						
31 Trick or Treat!						