



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

## Social Skills

### Building confidence

Parents can encourage their child to demonstrate confidence in himself.

How? By helping him learn to look positively at his own accomplishments and good qualities.

Self-pride is essential to self-confidence. If he's doing a good job at something, make a point of asking him how he feels about what he's doing.

Let him know that you think he should feel good about himself "for working so hard," "for helping out his little sister," "for sticking with such a hard job." And so on. Be specific in your feed-back and be honest.

Think about having a time every day, perhaps at mealtime, when each family member can report on something they did or something that happened to them that they feel good about.

Think about how you feel when someone compliments you on a job well done. That's one way to encourage children to have confidence in themselves. □

## Parenting

### It's okay to cry

Few things are more distressing than seeing a child hurt and crying.

The natural response for parents and other adults is to hug the child and say: "Hush. Don't cry. Everything will be all right.

Yet this can be exactly the wrong response because these words don't allow children to possess their own emotions. The message they hear is:

"Stop now. There's nothing to cry about."

This makes the little one cry even more since his or her inner self needs to prove there is something to cry about.

One mom suggested a better reaction in such a situation:

"It's okay to cry. I know it hurts (or that you feel badly.) Cry until it stops hurting."

She said she found this reply worked better. When her children were given the "permission" to cry, it was often all that was needed to stop the flow of tears.

And even if it didn't, the children felt they had a right to their own emotions, had the freedom to release them, and were consoled.

In helping a child deal with a hurt, the importance of having a right to his or her own feelings cannot be

overstressed. Even the youngest ones pick up unspoken ideas from parents, and when they sense that what they are feeling needs to be suppressed, the message is also given that these emotions are unacceptable and unimportant.

Phrases from the past, such as "crying is for babies" and "be a big boy (or girl)" are unfortunately still used, and not only do they show little empathy for the child's problem, they also do nothing to encourage their self-esteem.

If children are to grow up seeing themselves as worthwhile people, they need to know at an early age that feelings are neither bad nor good, they just are, as a result of something that's happened, and what's necessary is to express them and deal with them.

So when your little one is crying, whether it's because she fell as she was learning to walk or because he wasn't chosen to play in a game, stop for a moment before you begin to offer comfort.

Then remember that the best way you can help these small people handle their emotions is to surround them with love and acceptance, and to say:

"It's okay to cry until it stops hurting." □

## Safety means more than car seats

Car safety begins with an approved car seat, but does not end with its use.

Here are some tips to aid you in making your car trips safer for you and your children.

- **Start a routine.** From the beginning, put your child in the car seat every time.

If he cries or fusses, say or sing the same thing each time. Try: "We're going for a ride. Time to buckle in."

- **Always buckle your own seat belt and insist other riders do the same.** Children accept being restrained themselves if they realize that this is a part of automobile riding for everyone.

- **Make it clear that riding in the car is not a game.** This doesn't mean you shouldn't try to make rides as interesting and fun as possible for your kids, but they need to understand that your attention must be on the road, not on them.

- **Learn to block out crying, until you can address the situation causing it.** If you get upset, your chances of having an accident are greatly increased.

If it is apparent that your child's cries are from crankiness or boredom and there is no place to stop, sing with the radio or talk to your baby over the cries. Try not to get upset.

- **NEVER leave your child unattended in the car.** It is true that getting a child in and out of a car seat can be cumbersome, but don't leave your child in the car, even if you are "just running in."

Bring your child along even if you can see your car from inside the store.

- **Be extra careful as you drive.** Be aware that you can be more distracted with a child in the car.

- **Pay more attention to what you're doing.** After a hectic day followed by getting a fussy child in the car seat, it's easy to forget to look behind you (and around you) before pulling out of the parking space.

- **Always use a car seat.** No safety tips can replace the invaluable protection a car seat offers your child. And remember—it's the law.

If your spouse or another adult is driving and your child is screaming, don't just take the child out of the car seat "just for a minute."

Besides sending your child mixed signals on the use of a car seat, this is dangerous—and against the law.

Try to calm the child, distract him from whatever the problem is by singing, gently tapping his hands, engaging him in conversation, or gently rocking him in the car seat.

### Safety rules for adults and other passengers, too.

1. Everybody in the vehicle fastens their seat belt.
2. No drugs or alcohol—be sober.
3. Leave cell phones alone. No phoning while driving.
4. Get plenty of sleep, be alert and well rested.
5. Keep a sufficient, safe distance from other vehicles, in front and back.
6. Obey the speed limit. Drive at a safe speed.
7. Keep passenger seats clear, no loose items.
8. Keep the sun out of your eyes. Wear sunshades on a sunny day. □

## Children have emotional needs, too

To grow healthy and strong, children should have good food, plenty of sleep, exercise and fresh air. Children have emotional needs, too.

### Love

Every boy and girl needs to feel:

- That their parents love, want, and enjoy them.
- That they matter very much to someone.
- That there are people near them who care what happens to them.

### Acceptance

Every boy and girl needs to believe:

- That their parents like them for themselves, just the way they are.
- That they like them all the time, and not only when they act according to their ideas of the way a child should act.
- That they always accept them, even though often they may not approve of the things they do.

- That they will let them grow and develop in their own way.

### Security

Every boy and girl needs to know:

- That their home is a good, safe place they can feel sure about.
- That their parents or caregivers will always be on hand, especially in times of crisis when they need them most.
- That they belong to a family or group; that there is a place where they fit in. □

## When children misbehave

Most parents believe it would be nice to have a simple solution—like a magic wand—to use when they feel frustrated by their child’s misbehavior.

Unfortunately, the reasons why children misbehave are too complicated for a simple solution.

In dealing with misbehavior, it is important for parents to bear in mind that:

1) What works for one parent in disciplining a child may not work for another parent with the same child.

2) What works with one child may not work for another child in the same family.

3) What works well in one situation may not work at all in a different situation.

It is important to remember that it is normal for young children to misbehave occasionally. It is also normal for parents to make mistakes and to lose their temper from time to time.

If you are thinking that you must be the only parent who can’t handle misbehavior, then it is time to relax and realize you are not alone.

Don’t be too hard on yourself—try to take a good look at the situation. Parents who can laugh at themselves are more likely to have a child who is happy and well-adjusted.

If you feel an extreme sense of “aloneness” in dealing with your child’s misbehavior problems, you might consider joining a parent support group or parent education class.

Sharing concerns with a good friend or listening to the problems other parents are having can help remove that sense of aloneness. It is also a good way to learn new ways to cope with your child’s misbehavior. □

## Enjoy the humorous side of parenting

For parents, laughing and playing with a child is a delightful experience.

However, when a child becomes uncooperative or stubborn, parents tend to lose their sense of humor and become angry and frustrated.

There’s nothing funny about a two-year-old whose favorite word is “no.” And a four-year-old who refuses to stay in bed is definitely not funny.

For those times when you’d like to see humor in parenting but find it hard to do, here are some tips:

- Assemble a humor first-aid kit. Fill a small picnic basket or a large box with items that encourage fun and laughter.

A package of animal crackers or a book of silly rhymes can amuse a toddler. A book of fingerplays or lively songs appeal to pre-schoolers.

Reach for the humor first-aid kit when you need emergency measures to control your temper or amuse a restless child.

- Tell a joke with meals. Meals are often a time of conflict between parents and children. As part of your mealtime conversation, divert your child’s attention with jokes and silly riddles.

Children especially like knock-knock jokes. Check with your local

library or bookstore for joke and riddle books for kids.

- Discover the child within yourself. When you are overwhelmed by the responsibilities of being a parent, take time out to play with your child.

Play, for both children and adults, encourages laughter and is a healthy release for tensions and stress.

Do some of the things with your own child that you haven’t done since you were young.

- Lie on your back outside in the grass and identify shapes in the clouds.

- Have a tea party and invite all of your child’s stuffed animals.

- Build something tall with blocks. Knock it down.

- Sing silly nursery rhymes like “This little piggy went to market” or “The itsy bitsy spider.”

- Play one of your child’s favorite games.

- Encourage your child’s fantasies. Play along with your child’s imaginary friends.

Not only will you laugh and have fun, but you will better understand thoughts and feelings that your child is unable to express. You’ll be surprised how much energy is restored by simply laughing and playing.

Make it a habit. □

### 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:

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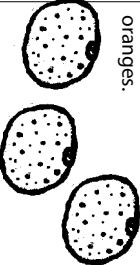




Growing Child also publishes:  
**Growing Child** (birth-six years), and  
**Growing Up** (grades K-12).

**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)

# July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>4</p> <p>Independence Day! Sing a song: "America, the Beautiful."</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Hard-boiled eggs, toast and jam for a snack.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>What's the biggest animal you know about? The smallest?</p> <p>Ask some other people the same questions.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Can you crawl backward? Find someone to have a race with.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Draw an interesting face on a paper plate. Suggestions: • your grandmother • a friend you play with • a happy clown • someone you like on TV</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Find a sandbox to play in.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>For a new art experience, paint pictures with cotton swabs.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>Play hide and seek with a toy. (Hide a toy for someone to find.)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>What words rhyme with "orange"? (This is tricky.)</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>Have a race rolling oranges.</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>Wear something yellow today. • What fruit is yellow?</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Orange and banana slices for a snack.</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Look for something outside that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• crawling</li> <li>• flying</li> <li>• jumping</li> </ul>	<p>17</p> <p>Eat lunch outside.</p> 
<p>18</p> <p>Learn a new word or two today:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• yacht</li> <li>• four-leaf-clover</li> <li>• Mount Rushmore</li> <li>• woodpecker</li> </ul>	<p>19</p> <p>Find something red in the refrigerator.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Play copycat games: Make faces. Wave bye-bye. Hold up two fingers. Make some of your own.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>True or false: Apples are blue: Birds can fly: Bananas have wheels:</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Pretend you're going on a camping trip. What will you take with you?</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>Practice a home emergency drill.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Go for a walk. Take along a paper bag and pick up litter.</p>
<p>25</p> <p>"Popcorn and Movie" night.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Donate toys, clothes, canned goods, paper products to a local charity.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Pat baby's hands together and repeat "Party Cake."</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Purchase a small package of balloons. Then blow them up. Adult supervision probably</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Hide a toy and play the "warmer—colder" game to find it.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Eat a green apple or some green grapes.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Use a small ruler and measure: 1. Your thumb 2. A banana 3. The shoe you're wearing.</p>