



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Health & Safety

Cold weather safety tips

If the forecast in your area includes snow and cold temperatures or just some rainy days, here are some tips to help your family observe safety first, both inside and outside your home.

- Make sure your child's gloves and shoes stay dry. If either becomes wet, exchange them for a dry pair, or switch to boots instead of shoes.

- Sledding on or into the roadway should be prohibited. Look for shallow slopes that are free of obstacles, such as trees and fences. A slope crowded with sledders spells trouble.

- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially outside each bedroom.

- Use a sturdy fireplace screen to prevent sparks from igniting newspapers, carpeting, curtains and upholstery.

- Make sure all electrical cords are in good condition. Replace them if they're frayed. Never run cords under a carpet. □

Parenting

Cultivate more joy in your life

Parenting is just one part of being a person. Parents, too, need to find ways to free their spirit to appreciate all that life has to offer. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Develop a short memory. Practice the fine art of developing a short memory when it comes to hurts, wounds, and wrongs that have been inflicted on you.

Doing so will help you let go of yesterday's pain and free you from the burden of anger and resentment.

"Good to forgive; best to forget!" observed poet Robert Browning.

2. Look for the humor in daily events. Joy is the feeling of smiling inside, so laugh a little more. Laughter lightens life and animates the spirit.

Billy Graham recommended it: "A keen sense of humor helps us to overlook the unbecoming, understand the unconventional, tolerate the unpleasant, overcome the unexpected, and outlast the unbearable."

3. Encourage someone who is discouraged. Deliberately seek out someone who needs your words of encouragement and praise.

There is great wisdom in this statement made by St. James Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*: "Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

4. Make peace with your life. "Take what is given and make it over your way," advised Robert Frost. "My aim in life has always been to hold my own with whatever is going on. Not against, with."

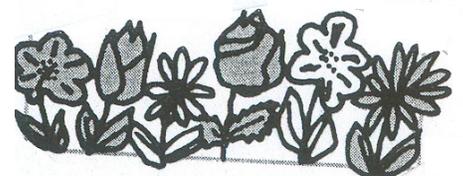
No one has a life which is trouble-free. A parent can fail us, a friend can betray us, a marriage partner may be a source of disappointment, a child can rebel and engage in self-destruction behavior.

Let go of regrets. Embrace the joy of the present. Anticipate the beauty of the future.

5. Count your blessings. Sure, there is a lot wrong in the world and sometimes in our lives. But there is a lot which is right and good as well.

Get out a pencil and paper. Give yourself five minutes to write out as many blessings as you can recall. Add them up.

Keep the sheet around and review it from time to time. It's bound to elevate your mood. □



A healthy family life

All of us probably know some families that are happy and close-knit. All of us probably also know other families that are dysfunctional.

A healthy family life—in which the members truly care for and about one another—is a great joy and blessing. It’s worth taking time to consider how interpersonal relationships in a family might be improved.

Here are some characteristics of a healthy family life for consideration:

1. In healthy families, the members make time to be with one another. For the sake of good family relationships, a parent may have to re-schedule a haircut or to cancel a golf outing.

These actions say louder than any words: “My family is important to me.”

2. Family members try to share as an entire family in the activities of each member of the family. Four-year-old Joey needs to know that others consider him to be an important member of the family by attending his preschool play.

Likewise, it is important for Joey to learn at this age that he is not the center of the universe, that he also needs to make time for other family members.

For example, he might be able to help a younger family member learn a new skill or join in celebrating a sibling’s birthday or success at school.

3. Healthy families try to involve all members, as far as possible, in decision-making. When buying a new car, for example, even though 4-year-olds won’t know

much about the car’s engine, Joey’s color preference could be taken into consideration.

4. Healthy families go places together. This may involve something as simple as a trip together to the park or as complex as an extended vacation. (Certainly the COVID requirements would be a necessary factor to include in planning.)

5. Healthy families show appreciation for one another. They say “thank you” even for everyday actions such as cleaning one’s room or cooking a meal.

Sometimes a little note is a good way to let other family members know they are valued and appreciated.

6. Healthy families learn how to deal with problems at one time or another. It’s not the problems that make or break family life.

Rather it’s how the family learns to deal with those problems. In a healthy family, each new problem can be viewed as an opportunity for growth.

7. Healthy families have fun together. Having fun together brings family members closer to one another. Shared fun breaks down barriers, such as age group differences.

Family fun may be as simple as sharing a few jokes or watching a comedy movie together.

Family life can be an excellent training ground for learning about sharing, caring, and loving.

Building a healthy family life is a truly great challenge. But it’s a challenge that will provide countless rewards. □

Help your child find his place in the world

For three- and four-year-olds it’s tough to be in-between—too young for some things and too old for others.

It’s not just that he isn’t allowed to go places and do things—there are many activities and occasions when he is included. But there are also many things he just can’t do yet.

Your child needs your patient support when he gets overwhelmed by tasks that are too big for him.

You can explain that everyone has trouble doing some things sometimes. Offer to help out if he wants. But don’t take over. That would only increase his feelings of incompetence.

He needs reassurance and encouragement to help him see things about himself that are special.

Compliment him, for example, on how good he is at making other people feel happy, or on what a wonderful smile he has, or what a good job he does in picking up all of his toys and putting them away.

Your youngster needs your help to see and develop his own special talents.

For example, tell him how much you love to hear him sing his “made-up songs.” Ask him if he’d sing one with you. Let him teach you.

You can remind him about how helpful he was to you yesterday when he set the table and how much you appreciate his help.

What gets rewarded, gets repeated. And your attention is a big reward to your child. □

Reading begins at home

Did you know that 50 percent of intellectual development takes place between birth and four years of age?

That means that parents are important teachers. You provide the foundation of your child's learning skills right within your own home.

You can shape the course of your child's educational future by the quality of learning experiences you provide before he or she ever goes to school.

Here are five watchwords designed to help you make the most of your child's early learning experiences:

Listen: Listen to your child. Pay attention to what he or she is saying. Call attention to sounds.

Listening and attaching meaning to sounds are essential skills that must be acquired before a child can read or succeed in a classroom environment.

Speak: Talk with your child. Direct conversation to him or her from infancy. Help your child learn to distinguish sounds and imitate them.

Take a walk together. Talk about the things you see and hear. Help the child classify objects as you see them: foods, plants, farm animals, birds, cars, etc.

Sing to your child. This teaches enjoyment of music and rhythm.

Read: Read to your child every day. Make reading seem enjoyable. Then it will be a skill he or she will want to acquire.

Let your child choose a favorite book or story to read. When you read stories, stop in the middle and ask your child what will happen next.

Talk about the pictures. Have your child point to objects in the pictures.

Take your child to the library. Let him or her look at the books there. Buy books that "belong" to your child. Provide a place for your child's books at home.

Remember, if the child sees you reading, then reading becomes something useful in his or her mind.

Move: Help your child roll over, crawl, stand and walk. This develops muscle control. Let your child explore,

Provide safe play objects such as boxes of different sizes, blocks, scraps of cloth with different textures, plastic containers.

Interact: Help your child learn that he or she is part of a family group. Include your child in planning family activities. Give encouragement and praise when it is merited.

Guard: Control your child's television and media viewing. Search out better TV programs for children and share them with your child.

Talk about the programs you watch. Correct any misconceptions that may have developed from them. □

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**

Who's the boss at Grandma's?

When you and your children go to visit grandparents or other relatives, who will do the disciplining? Whose rules apply: yours or Grandma's?

Most of the time it makes sense for the house rules to apply—the rules of the house you're visiting.

You can decide with your children that some behavior may be all right at Grandma's but not all right when they get home.

For example, grandparents may permit children to stay up later than is allowed at home. Or perhaps, allow two helpings of dessert.

This doesn't mean that grandparents should undercut parents' authority. Some behavior is not acceptable no matter where it takes place. For example, jumping on the bed or furniture is a no-no. Period.

As parent you are the protectors of your children, even when it means your wishes go against grandparents' or other relatives' wishes.

Sometimes you must insist on your own rules for your kids' sakes. □

Growing Together is published by Growing Child, Inc., P.O. Box 2505 W. Lafayette, IN 47996 ©2021 Growing Child, Inc. Telephone: (765) 464-0920. Customer Service: 1-800-927-7289.

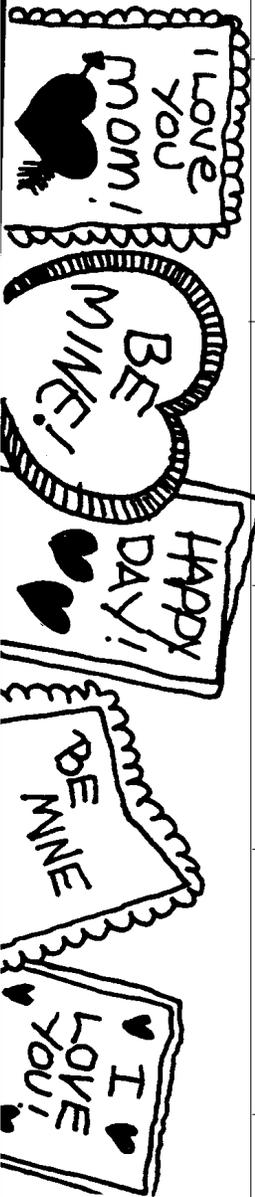
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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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.

www.growingchild.com

February 2021

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>FREE DAY Play some kick-ball outside, of course.</p> | <p>1 National Freedom Day</p>  | <p>2 Groundhog Day</p> | <p>3 When it's cold outside, what should you put on before going outside: Coat? Bathing suit? Hat? Gloves? Sandals? Scarf?</p> | <p>4 Thank-a-Mailman Day!</p>  | <p>5 Sing a song about snow.</p>  | <p>6 What's a mammoth? Look it up.</p> |
| <p>7 Draw a picture of an interesting bug.</p>  | <p>8 Draw a picture of a magic worm wearing a hat.</p> | <p>9 National Pizza Day! Eat some.</p> | <p>10 Give away three hugs today.</p>  | <p>11 How cold/warm is it today? How can you find out?</p> | <p>12 Lincoln's Birthday</p>  | <p>13 Check the family first-aid kit to sure it's up-to-date and ready to go when needed.</p> |
| <p>14 Valentine's Day Tell someone you love, "I love you!"</p> | <p>15 President's Day</p> | <p>16 Learn how to do the "Hokey Pokey!"</p>  | <p>17 Ash Wednesday.</p> | <p>18 Everybody draw a picture of themselves.</p>  | <p>19 Draw a big ball with red stripes, yellow circles, green fingers, a purple crown and a cup of tea as a design.</p> | <p>20 National "Love Your Pet" Day</p>  |
| <p>21 Make a snow-man. If you don't have any snow, draw a picture of one standing on his/her head.</p>  | <p>22 Washington's Birthday</p> | <p>23 Draw a picture of a snow family and their pets.</p> | <p>24 Keep a running list of all the books you've read.</p>  | <p>25 Popcorn and grape juice for a snack.</p> | <p>26 Purim starts.</p> | <p>27 Polar Bear Day Drink some cold root beer</p>  |
| <p>28 Try some marmalade on toast. Yum!</p> |  | | | | | |