



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Behavior

## Slowing down the restless child

Children's behavior can sometimes get out of control, and whatever tactics you use to calm them down just don't work.

Here are a couple of suggestions for those times that may provide both you and your child with space to quiet down and regain control.

- **Read to her.** Is there a favorite book she loves to hear? Take the opportunity to sit close to her as you read.
- **Tell her stories about herself when she was young,** and stories about yourself when you were her age.
- **Keep a collection of colored chalk or magic markers** that are used only on special occasions such as "quiet time."
- **Remind your child that you love her.** Tell her at least two good reasons why. □

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Health & Safety

## Healthy eating without fuss

Nutritionists tell us that if children are consistently presented with items from the basic food groups, they will choose a healthy diet.

This doesn't mean they will eat the same amount or even a balanced diet each day. Teething, colds, or a slow growth period can cause a lackluster appetite, and it's quite common for a child to temporarily reject meat or go on a banana binge.

It does mean that given the chance (and an absence of prodding and tension) kids can develop reasonable eating habits.

Make it easier for your child to enjoy eating by trying some of the following:

- **Sidestep potential conflicts by substituting "likes" for "dislikes"** whenever possible. If Becky hates roast beef but loves hamburger, why fight it? They have the same nutritional characteristics. Lean on fruit during a "down-on-vegetables" phase or offer cheese instead of eggs.
- **Take advantage of your child's "hungry time."** In one family the oldest son awakened ravenous each morning and could easily consume almost a day's supply of nutrition at breakfast.

His parents supplied vast quantities of oatmeal, fruit, eggs, and

toast—and ignored his "pickiness" during the rest of the day.

• **Change the setting.** A "bored-with-food" tot may regain her appetite with a bang if allowed to picnic in the park or back porch or a tent (a sheet thrown over a card table) or on a tray while reading or building blocks. Where is it written that food must always be consumed at a table?

• **Once your child is more agreeable about food, let him or her help you in the kitchen.** You'd be surprised what kids will eat if they can make it themselves.

Two-year-olds may "hate" salads but let them tear up greens for a taco and they soon change their minds.

Slightly older children can shape dough for cookies, slice bananas, (with supervision), or assemble cheese sandwiches for toasting.

Expect some spilled milk and flour-coated floors, but keep a happy, encouraging attitude and children will soon associate "food" with "fun." □



## Rules that can work for you

Discipline is more than punishment for misbehavior. It is the means by which we teach our children good conduct now and for the future.

Every mistake a child makes can become an opportunity for new learning. Here are four rules that can guide you:

- **Accentuate the positive.** Let your child know you appreciate him doing things that are important to you.

For example, thank him for helping you keep the house neat by picking up his toys and clothes.

If he forgets, gently remind him that it makes your work harder when you have to do all the work yourself. And ask for his help.

- **Minimize the negative.** Pay more attention to the things your child does well than to his mistakes.

Without thinking, we often take for granted those behaviors of others that please us. Then we exaggerate out of proportion the things they do wrong.

This approach can backfire, however, because children tend to repeat those behaviors that get the most attention.

For example, the more you ask your child to stop an annoying habit such as playing with his food, the more he may do it.

Try ignoring it instead. Then when you notice him eating neatly, compliment him. It won't take long before you begin to see a change.

- **Explain your expectations.** Let your child know what you expect of him. Try to keep your expectations fair, reasonable and sensible. Explain them to him.

If he knows what you expect of him, it will be easier for him to please

you and avoid your disapproval. You will prevent unnecessary misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

For example, explain that you expect him to be in bed by a time that is acceptable to you. Let him know that he can lie in bed quietly for a short time before going to sleep.

Offer to read or tell him a story. Or just talk with him during that time if he wishes. But explain that you will not want to spend the time with him if you have to remind him several times to go to bed.

Let him know what you expect as well as what he can expect when he does not fulfill his part of the bargain.

- **Be consistent.** Decide what is important to you. Then try to be consistent in your expectations and responses.

For example, suppose you set up a rule that you do not want your child playing on the living room furniture with his shoes on.

Don't let him do it one day when you're feeling good and yell at him the next day because he's getting on your nerves.

Try to remind him, gently but firmly, that you do not want him to do it. Ask him to leave the living room until he can do as you ask.

Thank him when he remembers to take off his shoes.

It's not always easy to behave toward our children as we would want.

Try to accept yourself as you are, and do the best you can. No one can be kind, considerate, fair, patient, and respectful all the time.

Be as understanding of yourself as you try to be of your child. And your child will learn from your example. □

## When your child says "No!"

Sometimes it seems like the only word a child seems to know is "No"—and she says it loudly and constantly.

Why?

Because "No" is a powerful word. When a child says "No" it brings people up short. It draws attention and a lot of words from them.

There are several ways to handle a child when she's always saying "No."

The first is to recognize it's normal behavior. Knowing this will help you when your child is contrary.

Second, avoid asking questions that require a yes-or-no answer. Instead of asking, "Would you like some nice carrots?" say, "Here are some nice carrots."

Obviously, if you give her the option of saying "No" and she says "No", you are in a bit of a bind.

Finally, it may sometimes be necessary to ignore resistance and proceed gently but firmly along the path you have chosen.

It is important not to be impressed by the fuss she raises when you do this.

Pay as little attention as possible to the fuss, avoid looking at her, and don't try to reason with her or "sweet talk" her when she is actively resisting.

The extra attention merely reinforces her resistance and she learns quickly that it brings her more attention. □

## The Big Sister

My friend Diana recently told me a wonderful story about her two-year-old granddaughter Romy.

With the birth of her baby brother Owen a couple of weeks earlier, Romy had become a big sister.

Grandma and Grandpa were visiting to help out.

At one point the baby was crying, and Grandma said to Grandpa, "I think he's hungry, I'll have to wake Dara."

Without hesitation, Romy ran to the staircase, saying urgently, "I have to get Owen's mama."

Now, a lot has been written over the years about sibling rivalry, an emotion often so intense that it colors the lives of brothers and sisters forever.

Many parents tiptoe around the issues, either ignoring the strong feelings, or openly saying that children should not feel that way.

Behind all this, the adults likely experience often-unrecognized emotions of sympathy for the newly displaced youngster and perhaps a little guilt that the parents' decisions might have negatively impacted the older child.

Instead, this little vignette should make us ponder the wonderful gift that the new addition has given to the older child; the opportunity to experience at an early age the kinds of compassion that lead to unselfish behavior such as Romy displayed.

The conventional wisdom is that toddlers are completely ego-centric, unable to feel for another person's distress.

Certainly some of their actions confirm that finding, as they snatch a toy from another child without blinking an eye, and clearly don't get the concept of sharing.

Nonetheless, within the warm emotional setting of the family, youngsters can also be helped to understand the loving concern for others that can lead even to sharing one's beloved mother.

How does this happen?

It comes about first and foremost because the child has experienced responsive love herself, from her earliest days.

Her family has tenderly cared for her and helped her realize that her own needs would be met predictably.

Thus she has absorbed subliminally the notion that love means caring for others.

When children's needs are met reliably, and warm affection and attention are part of their daily rhythms, they don't have to use psychic energy to fight others to get their needs met.

Romy comes from a wise and thoughtful family that had anticipated that this new experience with a sibling would present some challenges for her, so they had made sure she had lots of attention in the days before the birth, with her beloved aunt flying in to spend some time with her.

With grandmas and grandpas around to help support the family, there was time for Romy to adjust to the new addition.

Will all this mean that Romy will escape the negative aspects of



adjusting to life with a sibling? Of course not; life's emotions and experiences are too complex for such a simplistic happy ending.

It does mean that the dimension added to her life with the arrival of the new sibling offers her wonderful learning possibilities and authentic opportunities to continue her growing knowledge of what it means to be fully human.

Warm, good wishes to Romy and her family, and all other families who are growing and developing.



### FREE!




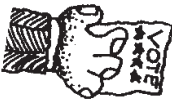









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Issues are free of advertisements; email addresses are shared with no one. Get the next issue by signing up at:

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

Written by a very wise grandmother;  
From the publishers of **Growing Child**  
and **Growing Together**

# November, 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<div>1</div> <p>Pack a picnic lunch and eat it in the living room. Maybe on the floor. On a blanket or rug.</p>	<div>2</div> <p>Mix pieces of pineapple and banana with some orange juice in a blender for a fruity treat.</p>	<div>3</div> <p>Add a new word to your vocabulary.</p> <p><b>creative</b></p>	<div>4</div> <p>How many times can you bounce and catch a ball without dropping it? Organize a competition.</p>	<div>5</div> <p>Look at an ABC book. Trace the letters with your finger.</p> 	
<div>6</div> <p>What color is a polar bear? Why?</p>	<div>7</div> <p>Can you whistle a tune? Play a harmonica?</p> 	<div>8</div> <p>Election Day.</p> 	<div>9</div> <p>Find five rocks. Line them up by size. Or try a tongue twister: find five rocks</p>	<div>10</div> <p>Count four things: 4 eggs 4 windows 4 noses 4 buildings</p>	<div>11</div> <p>Veterans Day.</p> <p>Remembrance Day.</p> 	<div>12</div> <p>What items do you recycle in your home?</p>
<div>13</div> <p>Play "Guess which hand?"</p> 	<div>14</div> <p>Do you have a first aid book and a first aid kit handy to use if needed?</p>	<div>15</div> <p>What is a nickname? Do you have one? Do you know someone who has one? What is it? How many questions are there is this box?</p>	<div>16</div> <p>Eat some fresh fruit.</p> 	<div>17</div> <p>Substitute your name for the main character's name in your favorite story or book.</p>	<div>18</div> <p>Get a book from the library and learn how to fold paper in unique ways. (Japanese origami)</p> 	<div>19</div> <p>Help fold laundry. (Not like origami)</p>
<div>20</div> <p>Yogurt with fruit makes a great snack or dessert.</p>	<div>21</div> <p>Have some friends come over for a sleep-over.</p> 	<div>22</div> <p>Talk about what you're thankful for in your life.</p>	<div>23</div> <p>Check to see if your local library offers storytelling programs or puppet shows.</p>	<div>24</div> <p>Thanksgiving Day.</p> 	<div>25</div> <p>What words would you use to describe today's weather?</p>	<div>26</div> <p>Play with a shape sorter. Learn the names of the different shapes and say them as you drop them in.</p> 
<div>27</div> <p>Count your toys as you put them away.</p> 	<div>28</div> <p>Using play dough, make: A long, skinny snake A birthday cake A round ball A cup</p>	<div>29</div> <p>Ask Mom or Dad to sing their High School song.</p> 	<div>30</div> <p>What color is a banana? Can you think of three things that are the same color as a banana?</p>	