



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

## Games & Activities

### Can you find a special stone?

Here's an outside game that requires sharp eyes. When you're taking a walk, ask your child to bring you the smallest stone she can find.

Next, ask her to look for the whitest stone she can find, or the roundest stone, or the smoothest stone.

You can continue to think of more characteristics to look for—a stone that looks like the moon, a stone with a hole in it, a stone too heavy to carry, a stone that looks like a dog, and so on.

Finally, ask her to select a stone that looks different from the rest, and have her explain to you how it is different. Or she can pick a stone she really likes and talk about why she likes it.

For kids who are really interested, this could be the beginning of a rock collection. □

## Development

### Childhood friendships

During the first three years of life, a young child forms secure attachments with parents and other family members and friends.

Once a child reaches three years, however, attachments to other children outside the family become an important part of social development. But first the child has to learn how to interact appropriately with other children.

Although preschool children can develop genuine friendships, these encounters are quite different from friendships among older children or adults.

For example, two three-year-olds may be laughing one moment and struggling with one another for the same toy the next moment.

Just as suddenly, they may join in some form of cooperative play, such as pulling their two trucks across the floor together.

Adults can do a number of things to foster friendly cooperative play among preschool children:

**1. Provide toys that are developmentally appropriate for the children's ages.**

Any child will quickly lose interest if a task is either too easy or too difficult.

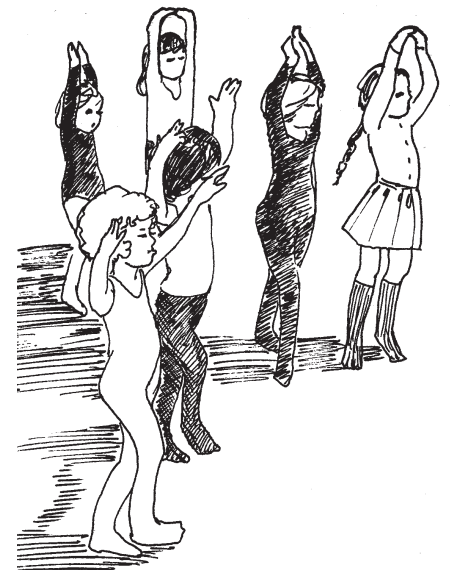
**2. Have enough toys so that each child has at least one with which to play.**

Having only one toy to be shared by several children will most likely result in a squabble.

**3. Make sure the toys are in good condition.**

Trying to pull a truck that has a wheel missing can be a highly frustrating experience for a young child.

It is generally through play that childhood friendships are formed. Although such friendships during the preschool years are often short, they are important in the overall social development of the children. □



## Praising children

Children flourish and thrive when they receive praise from the important adults in their lives.

Praise is an essential component in a child's daily life. Through it a child receives positive, ego-building messages which say: "You are unique." "You are important to me." "You can do it!"

Here are some effective ways to offer the gift of praise to your child.

- **Increase your praise level.** Criticism is often long and detailed but praise is short. It's easier to find fault rather than to see and express the many positives in a child. Every family should increase the level of praise in their home — for everyone.

- **Be specific.** Rather than using vague and general terms, shape your vocabulary to be explicit and precise about what you want to commend.

Instead of saying, "I love your painting," try saying, "You have a fantastic eye for color." Rather than saying, "You are such a good helper," say, "Thank you for putting all of our clothes in the right drawer."

- **Stay honest.** Indiscriminate praise over every act and event will make the child question your sincerity as a parent. Children know when parents are insincere.

- **Identify progress.** Like adults, children want to know that they are developing and improving their skills.

Imagine how the young girl felt after she completed a series of cartwheels and heard her mother say: "Wow! You did four cartwheels in a row. That's something you couldn't have done a year ago."

- **Don't compare.** Stay away from statements like these: "You're the best

reader in your class. "You run faster than the other team players."

While such statements may not be false, they put someone else down. Comparisons can work against a child by promoting unnecessary competition and the fear of failure.

Also, no parent should ever compare his or her child negatively with another child. ("Why can't you be good like your friend Billy?")

Each little comparison may seem unimportant in itself, but added together they can cause a child to believe that he will never be able to measure up.

- **Avoid negative compliments.** Unwittingly, some parents undermine their own efforts at praise by offering negative statements. For example: "It's great to see you being good for a change. "I can't believe you've finally cleaned up your room."

Children believe what they're told about themselves. If you suggest negative qualities, the child will begin to think of himself that way.

- **Commend effort, not results.** Children will be greatly motivated when they are praised simply for the attempt at doing something new.

If a child is unable to dress himself completely, you can help point out how nicely he has pulled on one stocking. Then he may go ahead and try to put on his shoes. You should commend him for the effort, whether successful or not.

In addition to words of praise, try reinforcing your comments with a physical action. A warm embrace, a loving kiss and high five will serve to strengthen words of approval and admiration. □

## Me first!

Six-year-olds (and some fives) want to be first in everything.

Therefore, younger siblings who require care and attention often threaten the child's feelings of "firstness."

Six may appear at times to be consumed by "Me first!" For example, her whole day may be spoiled if a younger sibling gets to the breakfast table before she does.

And she can be most jealous of the very sibling of whom she is most proud.

She is also jealous of any attention or present given a younger sibling by a guest, but is reassured of her position with some simple attention—and "I love you" smile or an arm around the shoulder.

The lecture approach ("You mustn't be jealous, that's not nice!") only aggravates the situation.

At this stage her intense awareness exceeds her ability to manage self and events and she is terribly vulnerable.

If her needs are met now, she can more easily discard her egocentric demands later.

Take heart. At least Six gets along fairly well with older siblings—as long as they don't treat her "like a little kid!" □

**Growing Together** is published by Growing Child, Inc.,  
P.O. Box 2505 W. Lafayette, IN 47996  
©2023 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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## Fighting not allowed

Young children rarely fight in the first few years of life.

But some children, as they get older, will react to frustration by fighting, hitting, teasing, name-calling or using bad language. This is the way they show or express their feelings.

Children who are always fighting and bullying are in trouble. They are usually feared and disliked by other children and adults.

They find themselves more and more left out, which makes them angrier and even more ready to fight.

Whether children continue to fight depends very much on how their parents handle the situation.

It is very important to set firm limits and indicate disapproval of that kind of behavior without getting violent about it.

Children need to know what the rules for behavior are — and to know exactly what happens if these rules are broken.

Parents need to watch their own behavior as well. If children hear shouting and see fighting at home, they will tend to do the same thing in their play and other activities.

For parents who have always been shouters, name-callers and hitters, changing may be difficult.

Some parents don't even recognize that they behave in this way until they see their children imitating them.

No matter how difficult it seems, the effort to change this pattern is worthwhile.

It can help spare a child a lifetime of frustration and difficulty. □

## “I see something”

There are times — waiting in the doctor's office, sitting on a bus — that are boring. Here's a game to play anywhere, any time that time drags. It teaches children to get information by asking good questions.

Say “I SEE SOMETHING.” (It has to be something you can both see.) Then give a clue: “It's on your head,” is pretty easy. It's made of cloth,” is harder. “It's red and flat,” may be pretty tough.

“It's bright when it's on and dark when it's off,” is a kind of riddle.

If one clue isn't enough, add another: “It's red and square and soft and I'm leaning against it.”

Children just starting on this game have no good strategy for getting the answer. They look around them and guess wildly.

So, when it's her turn to see something, listen to her first clue, but then ask questions of her that will help her develop strategy.

“Is it up high or down low?” That tells you where to look.

“What color is it?” (That narrows the choice.)

“Is it smaller than my shoe?” (This gives you an idea of size.)

With a little practice, you'll find yourself looking around to see what “something” you're both seeing. □

## How to help a child get along with others

Children are more successful in their relationships when they feel comfortable than when they are self-conscious.

Parents can help by being supportive and encouraging rather than critical or discouraging. Here are some dos and don'ts.

**DON'T** suggest he has trouble getting along with others. (“Nobody really likes you.”)

**DO** give him positive feedback for getting along well with others. (“I really like it when I see you helping Noah put on his shoes.”)

**DON'T** force him into uncomfortable situations.

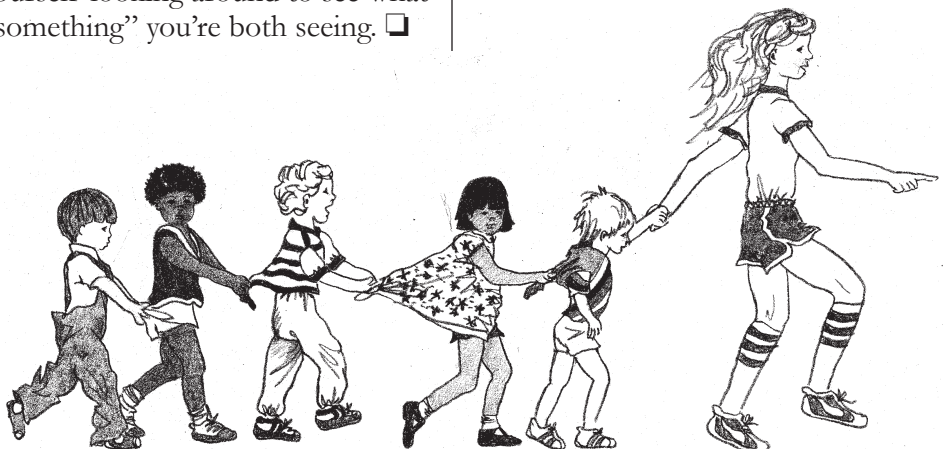
**DO** allow him to work out his own relationships with a minimum of interference.

**DON'T** insist he “make up” with someone he's still angry at.

**DO** respect his wishes about how and with whom he wants to spend time.

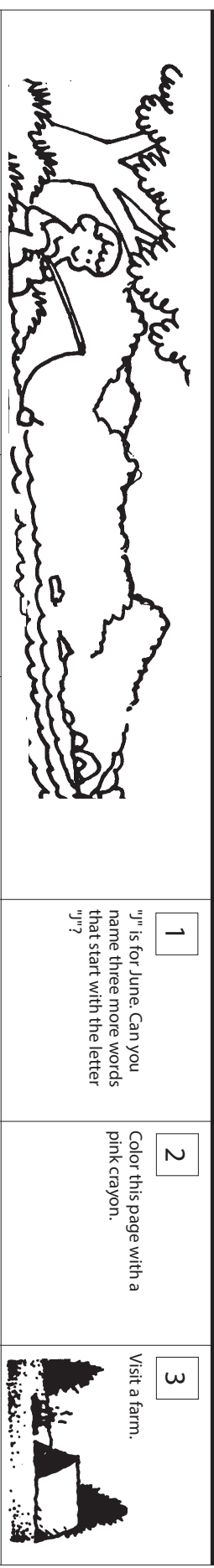
**DON'T** compare him with other children.









**DO** stand up for him, especially with adults. Everyone needs someone they can depend on, no matter what. □



# June 2023

Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday



<p>4 Go for a walk and count trees. When you get 25, turn around and go home.</p>	<p>5 Organize your own parade. Give it a name.</p>	<p>6 Talk about how and when to call 911 (or the emergency number in your area).</p>	<p>7 Play "Spy" Fly the Flag!</p> 	<p>8 Act like a chicken.</p>	<p>9 Try a new ice cream flavor..</p> 	<p>10 Ask how you can help around the house today.</p>
<p>11 Walk outside barefoot (very carefully).</p>	<p>12 Make a pretend car out of a large cardboard box. Or maybe make a boat?</p>	<p>13 Find four things that you think will float in the bathtub. Then test them out.</p>	<p>14 Flag Day! Fly the Flag!</p> 	<p>15 Orange and banana slices for a snack.</p>	<p>16 What is your favorite ice cream flavor?</p> 	<p>17 Eat lunch outside.</p>
<p>18 Father's Day.</p> 	<p>19 Jmneenteht! What in the world is this? How can you find out?</p>	<p>20 Look for things outside that are yellow.</p>	<p>21 First day of summer.</p>	<p>22 Go to the library and bring home a book about butterflies..</p> 	<p>23 Practice a home emergency drill.</p>	<p>24 Everyone do morning exercises together.</p> 
<p>25 Waffles for breakfast.</p>	<p>26 Blow bubbles outside. How many can you count?</p>	<p>27 Count your fingers and toes.</p> 	<p>28 Eid a:-Adha begins at sundown.:</p>	<p>29 Check the batteries in your smoke alarm(s).</p>	<p>30 Eat a green apple or some green grapes.</p> 