



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Developmental

Learning to share

An important skill children need to master is how to share with friends. Here are some tips:

- When friends come to play, help your child put away the special toys she doesn't want to share.
- Explain to your child beforehand that sharing a toy doesn't mean the friend can take it home.
- Help your child select "share toys" that won't break or get used up.
- Buy or collect toys that are good for sharing such as construction sets and outdoor play equipment.
- Model sharing. You might say to your child, "This apple is good. Would you like some of mine?"
- Ask your kids to share and then say, "Thank you for being such a good sharer."
- Play games that require turn-taking.
- Most importantly, remember that a child's understanding of "sharing" begins to be clearer around three years old. □

November, 2023

Vol. 40 No. 11

Music

The sound of music

Children love music and every child is born with some musical abilities which need to be nourished and encouraged through the preschool years.

Focusing on music in your child's life is not just an investment for future happiness. It pays immediate dividends in the following ways:

• Play activities

Children show a natural responsiveness to music—singing, dancing or listening to nursery rhymes—during their play.

A great benefit of music is that it enhances the learning that takes place in play by providing repetition and heightened interest in the activities.

• Movement songs

It is important for later school learning that young children develop good perceptual-motor coordination, for example, connecting what they hear with what they do. Movement songs help develop coordination, for example, by improving timing, accuracy, and smoothness of muscle movements.

• Emotional expression

Children like to create their own music, sometimes in the form of songs with words that don't mean anything. These songs help them to

express how they feel inside or their need for independence.

Their own original songs also help them to express their identity and unique personality.

• Relaxation and stress reduction

For centuries parents have used lullabies to sing a child to sleep. Soothing music can also be used at other times to calm a child who experiences stress or who appears tense.

For example, a child who becomes restless and irritable on a long journey may quietly drift into sleep with the sound of soft music.

• Educational dividends

Apart from the benefits already listed, music has many other educational dividends.

For example, through music many mental disciplines such as attention, concentration, and memory are learned.

Favorable exposure to musical experiences during the early childhood years will also help develop a deeper appreciation of good music in later life. □



Yet again: The positive benefits of no

A friend caught me up on a story circulating on social media: the report of the mother who explained why she was having a spa party for her seven-year-old daughter's birthday celebration. (I'm not even going to touch that one.)

The mother was quoted as saying, "I don't want them to feel that my saying 'No' means I don't love them." Let me take a deep breath before beginning.

You are the parent. It is part of your job description to make judgments about whether things are good or bad for your child, whether they fit in with the values you are trying to impart, whether your child is ready for experiences and events or not.

Your child is inexperienced, doesn't have the big picture, and is very open to being swayed by peers, the media, and everything else that may conspire against what you want to have happen in your child's life.

Therefore it is absolutely necessary that you get quite comfortable with saying "no", and quite fluent in explaining reasons why you have made the decision.

When parents confuse children's transitory distress when their every wish is not granted with demonstrating a lack of love, they are setting themselves up for deep trouble for both themselves and their children.

One notion that we hope to get across to children is that love is unconditional, not coming and going with any little episode in their lives.

Saying no, and even being screamed at that you're the worst mommy ever, doesn't mean that the bonds of love are diminished.

Furthermore, loving kids has absolutely nothing at all to do with en-

suring their eternal happiness. In fact, parental love has to do with wanting the best things for your child, which includes the necessary life lessons that humans can't always get what they want, and that learning to live within limits is an important skill.

Saying no is as essential to your child's future health and success as are the vitamins you give and the books you read to him/her.

Show me a child who hasn't learned how to live with the no's in life, and I'll show you a child who is widely unpopular with adults and children alike, and has a vastly inflated idea of his/her own place in the universe.

A parent who confuses setting limits with messages about lack of demonstrated love suggests to me a parent who so desperately needs the approval of even her own child that she is willing to ignore her vital role in preparing that child for future life.

Kids aren't going to like the no's, and lots of the time their own self-interests get in the way of understanding the reasons behind them. But parenting is not done by focus group.

It is parents alone who get to make many decisions, and have to apply them with the confidence that this is the best choice for this particular situation. □

Discipline

Think, don't react

When we were children, we all declared we'd never treat our children in some of the ways our parents treated us when they were angry.

Now that we are parents, we may find ourselves reacting in many of those same ways we said we would not repeat.

Try to think before you react to your child. Try to remember how you felt when you were small—how easily you could be hurt and frightened by those on whom you depended for guidance and comfort.

When you do react in a way you think was unfair or overly harsh, let your child know how you feel. It's helpful for her to see that you too can make mistakes—and say so.

It will build her trust in you. And it may make her more considerate of your (and others') feelings in the future as well.

It is 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 are of your child. □

Becoming aware of numbers and sizes

Here's a little game to play that involves objects and numbers.

First, find two shoeboxes, coffee cans or other containers that have larger openings and thus are easy to fill and empty.

Then, gather up a larger number of toys and safe, durable objects in a wide range of sizes.

Both you and your child take a container and pile the objects between you. Next, take turns selecting an object and putting it in your own container.

The object of this game is to fill one's container with as many objects as possible.

When the containers are filled, compare the number of objects in each. Pour out the contents and arrange the objects in two straight lines, so that your objects line up with each other's.

Count each object out loud as you point to it as this gives him experience in hearing counting.

The purpose of this game is to show your child that there is a relationship between the size of the objects and the number that can be placed in the container—the smaller the object, the more that can be put in the container.

Don't give away the winning method by selecting only the very smallest objects. Try to be just slightly better than he is and see if he finds his way to the correct method as he gains experience.

As your child begins to grasp the principle, you can anchor his understanding by using new containers and new objects. □

Learning kindness

Children don't learn kindness by accident. They learn it by the teaching they receive, the way they see others interact, and by practicing gentle treatment of others.

Teaching children to think of others takes very little effort. There are plenty of opportunities in an average day to instruct youngsters how to be nice.

For example, while waiting in line at the post office, you can explain that you wait your turn because others are in front of you. And others are waiting behind you for their turn.

You can teach children how to answer politely when someone asks them a question. You can even pose quizzes for them when situations arise: What would be helpful for that man on crutches?

The first and often most challenging place to teach children to be kind is at home. Daily interactions with siblings can be used as learning situations.

Encourage little ones to express anger in ways that don't hurt anyone, and to find solutions to problems that are fair to everyone.

Although family members will always have times of disagreement, they can begin to think of how other people feel.

Kids who are raised in an "anything goes" atmosphere cannot be expected to know how to play nicely with other children.

Even more powerful than teaching is modeling. If you are rude to others, your children will quickly learn to be discourteous also.

If you yell at sales people because you aren't waited on promptly, or mutter obscenities at fellow drivers,



your children will notice and perhaps be more likely to treat others with contempt.

Young people treat others the same way they are treated. How many times do we thank toddlers for helping, or ask that they walk a little faster instead of demanding it?

Children need to be listened to and taken seriously, even if their ideas at times seem a bit trivial to us.

By respecting children's point of view and really listening to what they have to say, we help them learn how to react to others.

When youngsters are treated with love and respect in the home, they will be much more likely to be kind to friends away from home. □

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).

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

November, 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5</p> <p>Tell your fellow family members what you like about them.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Rub lotion on your arms and legs.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Election Day.</p> 	<p>1</p> <p>What color is the sky today?</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Play dress-up. Give yourself a new name.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Trace items from kitchen drawers—measuring cups, lids, spoons.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Home-made soup for dinner: how can you help?</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Try a new ice cream flavor.</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>Go bowling! Line up some empty cans and roll a ball at them. Keep score.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Fix a favorite snack for mom or dad.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Go somewhere you've never been.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Help water the plants.</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Get your own library card.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Veterans Day.</p> 
<p>19</p> <p>Mix crunchy cereal with yogurt for a yummy snack.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Look at some baby pictures.</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>Save plastic bowls to use as bongo drums.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Find something in your house that has a triangle shape.</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Pour oatmeal into a pan for a miniature sandbox.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Make a picture of a face with dry cereal.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Does your family recycle? What items in your home can you recycle?</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Is the ground covered with snow? Go outside and see if you can find some footprints.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Make turkey-cranberry sandwiches.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Talk about something you're thankful for.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Thanksgiving.</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Go to the library and find a book about winter.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Do you have a children's cookbook? Try a new recipe.</p>	
		<p>28</p> <p>Role reversal: Youngster washes mom's or dad's hair.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Draw a picture of someone who lives at your house.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Make a cape to wear and pretend to be a superhero!</p>	