



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Art

Kids love “slime”

What is “slime” for? Any kid can tell you it’s to play with.

Of course, most parents think slime is gross, and that’s probably the truth!

But kids love to mess around with it and sometimes play like they’re “sculpting.”

Here’s how to make your own slime:

Start with some water in a bowl or plastic container. Slowly add cornstarch, mixing it with your hand.

Add enough cornstarch so that the slime looks wet when you’re pouring it, but feels dry when it is touched.

Children can do the mixing with some supervision.

Color can also be added. The best way is to add powdered tempera to the cornstarch before mixing. Or you can add food color to the water before mixing.

Is this stuff really art? Who knows, but the kids enjoy it enormously! □

Social Skills

Be a good role model

How can parents teach their children to be responsible for their own actions? One way is by being good role models themselves.

- **Be predictable.** Children need to know the rules. In a world full of contradictions and change, a parent should be predictable.

If a child makes a mistake, he needs to know what to expect. Parents’ positions should be clear. A few simple rules, firmly enforced, are more effective than many rules loosely enforced.

- **Be respectful.** No one likes to be ridiculed or embarrassed. Within the heart of every child is the potential for greatness. Don’t squelch it.

It is just as easy to take a child aside and point out an error as it is to make fun of him for a mistake in front of his friends.

- **Respect the opinions of children and recognize their intelligence.** When making plans involving them, ask for their views and give consideration to their preferences, when possible.

Treat children as though they are important because they really are.

- **When you’re wrong, say so.** Just because children are smaller doesn’t mean they can be easily fooled. You earn their respect when you say, “I goofed. You’re right.”

Children love honesty. Living truthfully and acting truthfully are powerful examples. If you want your children to be able to admit mistakes, show them how to do it.

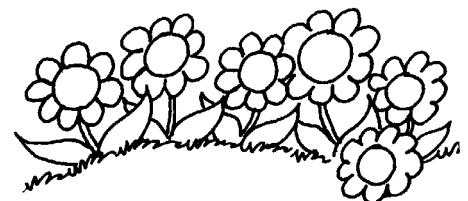
- **Be dependable.** As children grow, they need less from their parents and more from themselves, but one need they will always have is dependable parents

They need to know they can count on their parents to be on their side; to show love and concern when things don’t go right; to forgive them for mistakes they make; to bake their favorite cookies

Parents are the roots of a child’s changing world.

- **Be an example.** Avoid hypocrisy. If you tell a child not to smoke or use drugs but you smoke and use drugs, what behavior can you expect?

With children, one living example is worth 10,000 empty words. Children mirror their parents. See them and you see yourself. □



Dance with your baby?

Why not? A baby learns from the movement she experiences as she is being lifted, held, carried and cared for as well as from the movements of her own body.

An infant's nervous system is not yet completely developed and she startles easily. A loud noise, a sudden movement or loss of support can be frightening to her.

However, gentle rhythmic motion is soothing. That's why babies respond to being rocked or walked when they are uncomfortable or wakeful.

But dancing? Yes, dancing!

Remember, babies learn from being moved as well as moving. A very young baby cannot yet learn from rapid or jerky movements but she can learn from smooth, rhythmic changes of position.

So, if you enjoy moving to music, your baby will enjoy it, too. Find some music that is soft and rhythmic. Hold your baby gently but firmly so that she feels secure. Then sway from side to side, move forward and backward, twist and turn in time to the music.

Your movements will stimulate the sense organs deep within the baby's ears. The sensations she experiences will help her develop the position sense and balance she will need when she tries to sit, stand, and walk later on.

If you hum along with the music, your baby will get additional stimulation from the vibration of your chest.

If you enjoy moving to music, your pleasure will communicate itself to your baby as you hold her. Sweet music and gentle movements while holding your baby securely are the ingredients for some happy moments for both of you. □

Hang on!

Most parents know what it is to worry about how well their children are doing. Most parents also know how good it is to enjoy and savor their children's growing up experiences.

In every child's growing up, there are ups and downs. One day you think she'll surely be President. The next day you think you'll be lucky if your child manages to stay out of jail!

These swings between good and bad feelings about your child are all part of the business of being a parent.

Being a parent is a truly great experience, but at times, it can cause you exasperation! Be assured that such wild swings in feelings are perfectly normal. Like most other parents, you probably also wonder sometimes if you're doing the right thing.

In fact, it may encourage you to know that: (1) Almost every parent has felt what you are feeling now; (2) There are so many good things about your child's growth and development which can give you pleasure; and (3) One or two problems now won't affect your child forever.

You can get from this stage in your lives to the next stage by: (1) Living with your child's development problems from day-to-day; (2) Enjoying her, laughing with her, holding her close when the dark moments close in upon both of you; and (3) Simply getting through the ordinary routines of each day.

If you ever feel being a parent is getting too difficult for you, talk to a close friend or other parents who can share their experiences.

Whatever you do, don't mentally bite your fingernails or waste your emotional energy in wondering if you are a "perfect parent," whatever that might be.

Don't hover over your child, or-

constantly ask yourself, "Is she doing all right?"

Don't pressure your child into performing at an ever-higher level. Don't make her feel that you love her only if she performs well. She should know that you love her because she is your child.

Above all, let your child know in a hundred different ways that you love her. The knowledge that she matters, that she is loved for herself alone, is the greatest gift you can give your child. □

Discipline

Reward vs. bribe

What's the difference between a reward and a bribe?

A reward is offered ahead of time, before a child is asked to do something. For example, a child may be promised a reward if he helps his parent bag leaves or put away groceries. For the child, the reward reinforces his good behavior.

A bribe, on the other hand, is used to encourage a child to do something he has already refused to do. A parent might offer a candy bar to the child who has refused to clean up his room, for example.

Bribes tend to teach a child that he can get what he wants by refusing to cooperate.

Fortunately, for many young children, the best reward for a job well done is an adult's praise. And the more attention and praise you dispense for good behavior, the more good behavior you'll see.

Save the rewards for special occasions. By thinking ahead, you can do away with bribes altogether. □

Nature for the very young

A young child learns best from direct, personal experience.

A toddler may be able to point to a picture-book duck and say “Quack! Quack!” But until she encounters a real waddling, swimming duck, her understanding of a duck will be limited.

If nature learning makes you think only of forests and seashores, remember that many valuable, first-hand experiences can easily be provided close to home.

With a plastic squirt bottle, a child can mist a spider’s web, instantly creating the beauty of early morning dew — and an opportunity to marvel at the spider’s unique talent for creating an engineering marvel.

A child can rub baby oil onto favorite stones, deepening their colors and making them shine.

Sit down carefully and watch the busy work of ants as they scurry to and fro. And you can wonder out loud about where they’re going and what they’re going to do when they get there.

Why not set up a bird feeder near a window? Even young babies enjoy the sight of fluttering wings. An older child can help prepare a peanut butter and birdseed ball for the feathered visitors.

Even the idea of a bath can be made fun by considering how other creatures take a bath—the robin who jumps into the outside birdbath, and the cat who patiently and carefully washes her face each morning with her paws.

Most parents know more about nature than they think they do — and the child in your house is just waiting to hear the fascinating stories you have to tell. □

Tips for getting kids to bed

Here are some ideas that may help at bedtime:

- Have a set bedtime. “When the big hand is on the seven, it’s time to get ready for bed,” or “When the clock says these numbers” ... can be part of the routine.

In this way the clock, not the parent, is announcing the time to go to bed.

A warning of “ten minutes until bath time” is also useful so that fun isn’t suddenly interrupted. This helps children get used to the idea that there will be a change in the action soon.

- Minimize television, media and rowdy activities close to sleeping time. As bedtime nears, it’s a good idea to slow down, reduce activities and noise in preparation for sleep.

- A nighttime routine can work wonders. For instance, start with a warm, calm bath, followed by a ritual goodnight to the dog, the piano, the moon, grandma and grandpa in a picture, the refrigerator ...

Once you find a routine that works well, stay with it. Children find this kind of activity soothing and com-

forting and can come to rely on its repetition each evening.

- If necessary, provide a small night light, a quiet radio, or a trusted companion, like a favorite stuffed animal.

- If your child doesn’t fall asleep at once, there’s no harm in reading or playing quietly in bed, even if after bedtime. A child can’t go to sleep on demand any more than an adult can.

Adults know that by lying quietly in bed long enough, sleep will come. Children haven’t had this much experience, and have to “learn” how to go to sleep.

A slow-paced environment, soothing bedtime routine — which may include a bath, a bedtime story, and ritual goodnight — and quiet conversation sets the stage for a good night’s sleep.

If you tiptoe in ten or fifteen minutes later, you’ll probably find your youngster was overtaken by the sandman.

Then just switch off the light and whisper, “Sweet dreams ...” □

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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Sunday

Monday

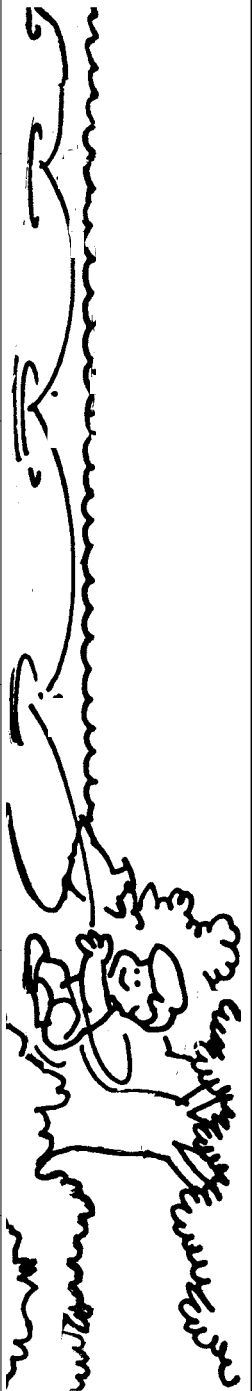
Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



1
May Day!
Put together a basket of flowers for a friend.
Kentucky Derby today.

2

Waffles for breakfast!

3

Ask Mom and Dad what they used to wear to school.



4

Practice hugging.

5

Cinco de Mayo
In what country is this day celebrated?

6

Read a story about bedtime before you go to bed.

7

Eat something good for you today.

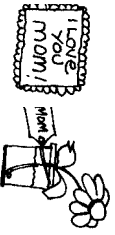


8

Put banana halves on popsicle sticks.
Dip in yogurt and granola.
Freeze.
Eat.

9

Mother's Day.



10

Bananas, crackers and peanut butter for a snack.

11

Find a small cardboard box with a lid. Decorate it with crayons, markers, sticks and glitter. WOW! Put your name on top.

12

Find out the names of flowers you see in bloom now.



13

Use the flat side of crayons to create an outdoor scene.

14

Select some toys and sort them into three different piles.
LARGE Medium Small

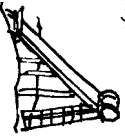
15

Everybody dance THE TWIST!



16

Spend some time at a park today.



17

Find two things that are blue in the kitchen!

18

How many thumbs do you have? Why is that?



19

Count the number of ears in your house. (Don't forget Fluffy and Ruf!)

20

Just for fun: Which would you rather be: a horse or a monkey? Why?

21

Pretend your bed is a ship and go for a sail!



22

Play "Dress Up."

23

Have a cook-out dinner.



30

Big race day ... Indy 500!!

24

Name 5 words that rhyme with "toe."
Memorial Day. Remember those who served our country.



25

Today is Tuesday. What is tomorrow?

26

Count all the chairs in your house.
9,451?

27

Look outside and count the birds you see.



28

Use plastic containers to stack and play with.

29

Talk about ways to show kindness to others.