



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Infants & Toddlers

Learning to eat can be messy

Toddlers who have been practicing with both finger feeding and holding a spoon are probably becoming good self-feeders by now.

On the other hand, if you have been feeding Toddler and she is now about 18 months old, now is the time to encourage her to take over and do it herself.

You can expect an occasional mess—being a neat eater takes a lot of practice!

Some toddlers will feed themselves certain foods but want a parent or caregiver to feed them others.

If this practice continues, it is possible that Toddler will build up faulty eating habits—she will see the difference between the foods she wants and the foods you want her to eat.

In this period of self-assertion such a practice can develop into a tug-of-war. In the future you may find that she may not have an appetite for *your* foods. □

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Parenting

There's no easy way to be a parent

A young father was undertaking the daily naptime struggle with his three-year-old.

He reasoned, he coaxed, he threatened, he bargained, and finally, he backed down. With a sigh, he said to himself, "I wish there were an easy way."



As this little story indicates, probably one of the most difficult facts for many parents to accept is that there really is no easy way. There is no magic formula for turning children into cooperative, self-controlled social beings.

However much parents might wish to avoid the responsibility of being the limit-setter and the rule-maker in every situation, this is what it means to be a parent of a young child.

In fact, once a parent has accepted this basic premise, life does become a lot simpler for both child and parent.

For the child, life is simpler because the heavy weight of being asked to make decisions that are beyond his developmental abilities is removed.

With the adult clearly in charge, the child is free to move about confidently in a world that is clear about behavioral boundaries and expectations.

If limits and expectations are clearly drawn, they are accepted as real. But if they are drawn with a shaky hand, there is uncertainty for the child about the rules of the game.

Then the child has the burden of continually struggling with the adult to find the limits of behavior.

For the parents who accept the idea that adults must firmly guide the lives of young children, there is less frustration caused by skirmishes between two sides so unequal in judgment and experience.

We all want our children to grow up to be successful individuals, capable of running their own lives.

In the meantime, adults—who clearly have an advantage in self-control, thinking and reasoning powers—must make the rules. □

All that energy!

You have probably been amazed—and at times maddened—by your preschoolers high level of energy.

He dashes across the room just to pick up a piece of paper. He wriggles and giggles while you read him a story.

Just as soon as you take a piece of ribbon from him—because his fidgeting with it bothers you—he finds a piece of tattered string to replace the ribbon!

Studies of children's activity levels—the amount and frequency of their physical movements—indicate definite age-related patterns.

A child's activity level increases from birth until about three or four years of age. After that age, there is generally a notable decrease in activity each year.

In other words, three-year-olds are more active than one-year-olds. But seven-year-olds are likely to have a lower activity level than four-year-olds.

Within any age group, of course,

there is likely to be considerable variation. Some of this variation appears to be genetically based. For example, boys of all ages are generally more active than girls.

Environmental influences also play a part. For example, it has been observed that some very active children become even more restless whenever adults try to restrict their activity level.

What implications for parenting can be drawn from these studies? It should be reassuring for parents of any preschool child to know that:

- A fairly high level of activity is normal in children during the preschool years.
- Most preschool children have a short attention span and can't sit still for a prolonged period of time.
- Boys tend to be more active than girls
- During the preschool years, there are wide variations in what is

considered a normal level of activity.

- Trying to force a restless child to sit still will generally not be effective in settling him down.

- Making minor adjustments in the environment—such as shortening the length of a story being read—will generally produce better results.

- Being sensitive to your child's unique characteristics and making reasonable accommodations to fit his own level of activity will generally be in his best interest.

- If you feel that your child's energy is too much for you, remember there is light at the end of the tunnel: most children's level of activity decreases throughout the childhood years.

- In the meantime, being patient with your child's activity level is most important during the preschool years, even though at times it may be a great frustration to you. ▢

Discipline

Growing healthy, happy children

To grow healthy and strong, children should have good food, plenty of sleep, exercise and fresh air.

Children have emotional needs, too. To be both healthy and happy, every child needs to have:

- A set of moral standards to live by—to know the difference between right and wrong.
- A belief in the human values—kindness, courage, honesty, generosity, and justice—beliefs boys and girls learn from those around them.

- Friendly help in learning how to behave toward persons and things in his or her world.

This can mean something as simple as how to treat a neighbor with kindness or how to care for a cherished pet.

- Grown-ups around them who show them by example how to get along with others.

All children need to know:

- That their parents have con-

fidence in them and their ability to do things for themselves and by themselves.

- That there are limits to what children are permitted to do and that their parents will hold them to these limits.

- That although it is all right to feel jealous or angry, children will not be allowed to hurt themselves or others when they have these feelings. ▢

What's wrong?

Here's a game that calls for observation skills.

Start by selecting the room where the game will be played. Ask the kids to stay in another room while you "set the stage."

Here's what to do: Do silly things to the objects in the room by rearranging them, putting things in the wrong place, or combining objects that don't belong together.

For example, move a small table (or a sofa pillow) in front of a door. Place magazines or newspapers under a chair. Turn a chair around backward. Put a stack of books in the middle of the floor. Use your imagination.

Then ask the children to come in and look at the room without touching anything. After everyone has had a good look, ask them to tell you "what's wrong?:"

Adjust the difficulty to fit the ages and abilities of the players. Keep safety as the number one rule—don't move or involve objects that could fall or break.

After the kids get the hang of it, play another game with harder puzzles, maybe in a different room.

Finally, ask the kids if they want to arrange a puzzle for you (with adult supervision)! □

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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.

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Learning about relationships

Your child needs experiences with other children in order to put into practice what she has learned from you about getting along with others.

She learns how to act with others from family members. But she needs to try out these ideas with other children in order to gain competence and self-confidence.

With other children, she can work out different ways of acting and reacting that she probably wouldn't risk trying with you or other adults.



She can practice being the boss as well as being bossed by another.

She can be a leader as well as a follower, a teacher as well as a learner, a caregiver as well as the one receiving care.

With you and other adults in her life, she is limited to certain behaviors that are appropriate because she is a child. With other children, her options are more open.

Further, just as you need time away from a child-centered life, she needs to get away from the adult-oriented world.

She needs to be with other people whose view of the world and orientation toward life are similar to her own.

Through her relationships with them, she can learn to cooperate, compromise, and strike bargains.

She needs to be able to work out satisfying relationships with other children in her own way, at her own pace, in terms of her own needs.

This is why "free play" time or recess can be the most important part of a child's day.

Try to work out an arrangement with other parents to get your children together on a regular basis, to play or go on outings.

Give your child the opportunities, support and encouragement she needs to work out satisfying relationships with other people. □



FREE!

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

January, 2021

Sunday

Monday

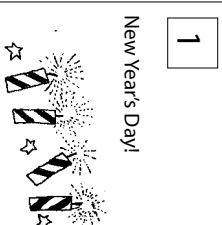
Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



3

Play "Follow the Leader" outside.



4

Sit near a window and enjoy the sunshine



5

Sing your favorite song. Ask others to join in.



6

Talk about ways to show kindness to others.



8

Practice humming.
hmmmm ...

9

Dress up in mom's and dad's old clothes.

10

Did somebody say "Jumpin' jacks"? Everybody does as many as they can.

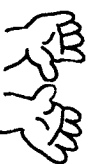


11

Do you have the phone number of the local poison control center posted by your telephone?

12

Play "Guess which hand?"



13

Draw a picture that includes:
• one cow
• two dogs
• three flowers
• four mice
• five mushrooms

14

Finger paint!

15

Put on a blindfold. Draw a picture of a cow. Take off the blindfold. Does the cow look like a cow or what?

16

Family board game night.



17

Count backwards from 13 to zero.

18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

19

Draw a winter scene using white chalk on blue construction paper.



20

Put together a puzzle or two.

21

Everyone name their favorite cartoon; book; dessert

22

Look in the mirror at your eyebrows. Can you make them go up and down?



23

If there's snow on the ground, make a snow fort.

No snow, make a fort with blankets and pillows under a table.

24

What can you make with a leftover cardboard box?

31

Make place cards for dinner.

MICHAEL

25

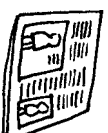
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Learn a new song today.



27

If you were going to write or tell a story, what would it be about?



28

How many colors can you name?

29

Have a tea party with a few friends.

30

Help water plants.

