



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Parenting

Good mood, bad mood

Preschoolers can sometimes be moody when things don't go their way.

A child's mood can change quickly from joy to anger, for example, if someone doesn't pay attention to her or if she can't make a toy work the way she wants it to work.

Often you may not even know why she's upset. She may have some idea inside her head of what she expects.

When her expectations aren't met, she may pout or stomp around without ever letting you know why.

Try to put yourself in her shoes. See if you can figure out the problem. "I'll bet you're mad because you got tired of waiting for me to get off the phone."

Be sympathetic, even if you think her reason for being in a bad mood is not important.

If she feels you understand, she'll likely get over her moodiness more quickly. □

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Developmental

Encouraging a positive, healthy self-concept

Self-concept is the way we think about ourselves and the feelings we have about ourselves. These thoughts can be positive or they can be negative.

As adults we can control and influence our feelings about ourselves. We can accept or reject others' opinions.

We can monitor the events in our lives that cause us to feel one way or the other about ourselves.

A young child's self-concept, though, is determined mostly by the "messages" she receives from others, particularly her mother and father.

Sometimes the message the child receives is not what parents really intend. For example, a parent may insist on doing everything for the child, even the most simple things the child could do for herself.

The parent may think he/she is sending the message: "I'm doing all these things for you because I love you."

But perhaps the unconscious, non-verbal message the child may be getting is: "Always rely on Mom and Dad to do everything for you because you don't know how to do things and you're helpless."

To understand a child's self-concept you have to try to see the world from her perspective. A one-year-old is very occupied with developing

competence—that is, learning to do things herself.

It is this continued striving for competence that pushes her to try new challenges—such as learning to feed herself with a spoon.

These challenges—and successes—lead her from one stage of development to the next.

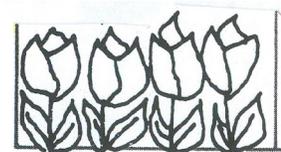
The day a child grabs the spoon and tries to feed herself is a day to rejoice!

Her best efforts to balance food on the spoon are certainly not the neatest or most efficient way to get the food to her mouth.

But to the child, the feeling of accomplishment and self-worth are more important than neatness and efficiency.

So, watch for the things a child can do for herself and encourage her to try to do them—even though she can't do them perfectly.

The more she learns to do for herself, the more positive her self-concept will be. □



Learning to get along with others

Youngster gets his first lessons in how to relate to other people from your example.

He learns how to get along with others from the ways you and he relate to each other.

He also learns from seeing how you get along with other people.

You'll see some of the effects of your "teaching by example" now.

Other patterns, although laid down now, may not appear in Youngster's relationships until he's older.

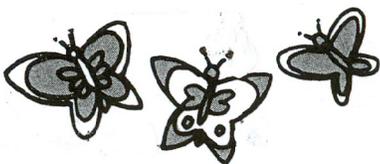
For example, suppose Youngster hears you and your mate regularly argue and blame each other over how to discipline him.

He will learn ways to act with each of you to try to please you and avoid your anger or disappointment with him.

He will pick up from the two of you different ways to act with others who are more or less powerful than he is, which he will use when he's in conflict situations.

And he will learn, from observing you, ways of treating his own mate and children.

Even though children don't always appear to be watching, they learn from the examples of the adults around them. □



Fibs and obscenities

Sometimes during their childhood, most children tell fibs that are real whoppers! Naturally parents become concerned and wonder what they should and shouldn't do.

Before you do anything, try to decide whether the child is creating fantasy—telling fibs to avoid possible trouble—or is simply unable to cope with reality.

There are a very small number in this latter group and they need professional help, not punishment.

Fantasy is going on when Bradley applies colored chalk to his lips and plays "Mother."

It's fantasy when Debbie develops an imaginary playmate, an invisible child or animal.

Bradley and Debbie aren't experiencing delusions, they're aware of whom they are.

As long as parents and children know when it's time to stop, enjoy the tall story and create your own just to see how absurd it may become.

And what about the child who fibs more than "occasionally?" Parents need to first check themselves to be certain that their quota of tall tales is low.

Next, you must convey the fact that there is a pay-off for being forthright. Demonstrate this immediately by rewarding the child for "fessing up" and sparing the punishment.

Youngster's newest vocabulary may well include a variety of swear words and other obscenities.

In spite of your strong desire to put a stop to them, you will not stop them by opposing them. Make it an

issue and your child will curse forever, even if she hasn't the vaguest notion of what the words mean.

The most successful treatment for preschoolers is to do absolutely nothing: Ignore the talk.

Very soon the swearer will weary of her explosive language because it fails to stir you up or shock you. □



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Written by a very wise grandmother;
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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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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7</p> <p>Daniel Boone Day. Now, you need to know about this guy!</p> 	<p>1</p> <p>Donut Day!</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Make up a poem about summer. Since the sun is shining today, I think I'll go outside and play!</p>	<p>3</p> <p>What is the opposite of: fast little off stop in up</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Play "I Spy ..."</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>What season is it now: Spring? Summer? Fall? Winter?</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>D-Day Find out what this stands for.</p> 
<p>14</p> <p>Flag Day.</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>Cheese & crackers & fruit for a snack.</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Go outside and construct an obstacle course. Safety first!</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Draw a picture of YOURSELF!</p>	<p>11</p> <p>What's a June bug? Look it up.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Count the plants in your house.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Eat dinner outside.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Father's Day.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Practice washing and drying hands.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Fresh veggies day. Get some dip for those things.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Sing a song while taking a bath.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Talk to each other through a paper tube.</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Draw a bunch of circles in all different sizes: BIG, little, teeny tiny, medium, GREAT BIG, twins, itty bitty, enormous, as big as your head, as small as an M&M ...</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Summer begins! Wear some that are really cool!</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Count the number of things in your house that need electricity to work: _____</p>	<p>22</p> <p>AFGHANISTAN How many letters are there in this word? What IS this word? Can you say it?</p>	<p>23</p> <p>How many numbers are there on a clock?  (Note: very tricky)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Play with a flashlight. Use the words on, off, light and dark.</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Eric Carle's birthday. Read one of his books.</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>How many marshmallows can you stack up?</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Sun Glasses Day. Wear some that are really cool!</p> 
<p>29</p> <p>What words rhyme with ICE?</p>	<p>30</p> <p>My, my, my: This is a good day to bake a _____.</p>					