



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Academics

A start on telling time

When your child is hungry and impatient with the speed of mealtime preparations, point to the large hand of the clock and say to her, "We will have dinner when this big hand gets to the bottom (or the top) of the clock."

Point to where the hand will be as you say this.

Then make every effort to meet this prediction accurately.

If she is not familiar with the clock, you will have to explain that the hand does move, but too slowly for her to see it.

Don't try to teach her hours and minutes at first. This is difficult even for some first-graders to understand.

However, by kindergarten many children will understand the concept of hours. □



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Behavior

Shy or quiet: What's the difference?

There is a fine line between "quiet" and "shy."

Shyness implies inadequacy, an inability to deal with people or situations, an inability to communicate thoughts or feelings.

The major difference between "shy" and "quiet" is the child's comfort and happiness. Is he alone or is he lonely?

Does he prefer not to say anything, or does he want to express himself but is afraid or unable to do so? Does he have positive or negative feelings about himself? Is he happy?

The shy child is self-conscious and fears others' evaluations and/or rejections.

The quiet child is probably making evaluations of others. (Ask his opinions. His insight might surprise you!)

The shy child is unable to reach out to others, take risks, and approach new situations. The shy child holds feelings and emotions inside. He/she may be unpopular and uncomfortable around peers.

It is important for parents to observe and *know* their child.

Most people are naturally shy to a certain degree. We don't rush



into new situations, talk to every stranger we meet, nor share our every thought, idea or emotion.

But the "quiet" child has the potential of crossing the line into shyness.

If he is not encouraged to communicate and does not express himself, he could develop self-doubts, real or imagined rejections and misinterpretations of others' comments or lack of communication.

It is important for the parents of a "quiet" child to communicate verbally and non-verbally to reinforce the child's self-worth and to provide a supportive home life. □

How does your child see herself?

Self-concept or self-image is how a child thinks of herself in relation to the people and things in the rest of her world.

What is your child's concept of herself? Is she a very important person in her own eyes? Or does she think she's not too good of a person?

It is very important that a child have a genuine feeling that she matters in the world.

Psychologists have developed several ways to measure self-concept. Research about school-aged children shows that a child's self-concept is directly related to later achievement in school.

Children who have a poor self-concept do poorly in school learning tasks. Those who feel good about themselves generally do well

in school.

Parents can influence their child's self-concept development. Here are three general principles which will help your child develop a good self-concept:

1. Let your child know that you love her. A child needs to know that she is important to you, that she has your love—even when she has engaged in some unlovable activities (“I love you, but I don't like what you have just done.”).

2. Help your child handle her failures. What messages are you giving her when she fails? She needs to know that you're on her side, that you accept her—win or lose—for who she is.

Your corrections should deal with what she's done, not what she “is.”

3. Don't be dishonest. Your child knows when she hasn't done well, when she has failed.

If you acknowledge that you know this, but that it isn't the end of the world, your child gains confidence in you to reflect an honest value to her.

As a child grows, she tries to find her place in the world. She experiments with different ideas and concepts, looking to you from time to time for guidance and support.

Make sure you give her the room she needs to learn and make mistakes. But also make sure she knows you're on her side—win or lose. □

Social Skills

Good manners start early — at home

The basics of good manners for children are:

- Respecting other people's property and privacy;
- Behaving well at the dining-table;
- Not being rowdy in public;
- Not interrupting or contradicting;
- Not demanding one's way all the time.

Choose the manners that are most important to you and your family and concentrate on those.

If you start teaching manners consistently and with purpose in the preschool years, they should be a habit by the time a child enters school. □

Language

Reading books, telling stories

Driving time is also a great time for looking at books—for kids, that is.

Carry along a supply of books in the car for the youngsters to look at and read as you're traveling hither, thither and yon. And rotate traveling books often. Your local library has an inexhaustible supply.

Stories don't always come from books. You and your child can make up stories to tell each other.

It can also be fun to make up a story together. You tell one line and your child tells the next and so on until you have your own special tale. (You'll probably be asked to repeat it often.)

If you're on the way home, it's your turn to tell a story and you're too tired to think, resort to a classic like *The Three Bears*. □

One-year-olds just want to explore

At one year of age, youngsters are learning about mobility and independence. They are separate individuals, impatient to learn and find out “why.”

One-year-olds are curious adventurers, yet they aren't ready for fantasy or imagination. They need toys that deal with the real world.

This is the ever-exploring “pots and pans” age. One-year-olds need toys to take apart and put together; parts to screw and unscrew, put on and take off; throw and drop, stack and unstack. For example:

- Pull and push toys.
- Small, lightweight blocks.
- A soft, safe ball.
- Pop beads.
- Plastic links.
- A toy drum or safe, pounding toy.
- A first shape-sorter.
- A first puzzle.
- Simple, “holdable” dolls.
- Imitation toys such as a telephone or housekeeping toys.
- Toys to push on the floor while crawling. □

Something New!

“Grandma Says” is a twice-monthly special message that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children's book reviews.

To receive your free issues, go to: www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays and enter your e-mail address.

Loving without smothering

It's hard to be a parent.

Sometimes all the advice from “experts” can make you worry that you're not doing enough. This guilt can make you over-protective and over-directive of your child.

Try to be alert to how your behavior affects her without becoming anxious about it.

If you make mistakes, try to learn from them and then let them go.

The wonderful thing about young children is that you get a new chance with them each moment; they don't hold resentments.

Give your child a chance to be her own person.

Don't do things for her she can do for herself or protect her from the natural consequences of her own mistakes.

Expect her to take responsibilities for herself, as she is able. □

Growing Together

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Listening can help settle disputes

Bicker, bicker, bicker!

Sometimes it seems that brothers and sisters—and other children, as well—are always fighting. You can't stop it all, but you can help children learn to settle their disputes in constructive ways.



- Try to get the whole story of what caused the problem before jumping in and blaming anyone.








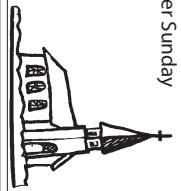


For example, say: “You must have really been mad at the baby to hit him,” and then let the older child explain. Let him know that angry feelings are acceptable but that you can't let him hurt the baby.

- In an argument between two children who can both talk, give each a chance to tell his point of view.

You can help by describing the situation rather than judging it: “It looks like you two can't agree on a television program. You both seem pretty upset. Want to tell me about it? Laurie, you go first. Then Joey, I want to hear your side of the story.”

This kind of approach will save a lot of hurt feelings and resentment between the kids and it will help them learn to settle disputes themselves without fighting. □

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3</p> <p>Kids help make a dessert using yogurt.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Take several cardboard boxes. Position them into a sculpture. Glue them together and paint your creation. Give it a fancy name.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Count your socks.</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>This is tricky: find four triangle shapes in your house.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Can you build a small house with mini-marshmallows?</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Help make your bed.</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Do you know someone who plays a musical instrument? What instrument is it?</p> 
<p>10</p> <p>Go out for ice cream. What is your favorite flavor?</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Draw a picture of a really cool space ship.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>How tall are you?</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Count all the things in your house that run on electricity.</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>Make a list of "short" things.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Check the contents of your first aid kit. Check the Internet or ask your pharmacist about necessary items to include.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Fruit bites for breakfast.</p> 
<p>17</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Passover begins at sundown.</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Cut out words from a newspaper and paste them on a piece of paper to write a note to someone you know.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Draw a map of your street.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Try to bounce a small rubber ball in time to music. (It's hard to do – lots of practice is required!)</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>Good Friday</p> <p>Earth Day</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Ask if there is a special chore you can do today.</p>
<p>24</p> <p>Easter Sunday</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Take a look at a picture book.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Do you have the phone number of the local poison control center posted by your telephone?</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Find five things that are heavier than your shoe.</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Look at the numbers on an outdoor thermometer. What is the temperature today?</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Arbor Day.</p> <p>Plant a tree.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Read or tell a story to your parents.</p>