



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Bread and jam

The beloved children's author, Russell Hoban, penned a thoughtful tale called "Bread and Jam for Frances."

In the story, Frances refuses to eat anything but bread and jam sandwiches.

Of course, the story goes on from that conflict to a happy ending with a lesson to learn.

Read this delightful story to your bunch at lunch. Provide unusual breads such as oatmeal, branola, or rye bread.

Spread the bread with tempting spreads like honey, apple butter, raspberry jam or grape jelly.

Add a glass of milk and a mix of peanuts (for those who can eat them) and raisins for protein and have a happy lunchtime! □

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Infants & Toddlers

Exercises in learning

Around her first birthday, what kinds of things is Baby now doing on her own?

If you watch her carefully, you will notice she is likely to try to do something in a different manner the second, or at least the third time she tries to repeat an action.

For example, when she discovers the fascination of dropping objects, she doesn't drop the same toy the same way each time. Instead she holds her arm in different positions. She also tries out all possible surfaces for dropping.

This is quite a change from her younger months when she used to do the same thing over and over, like banging an object or shaking her arms and legs to sway the bassinet.

What has happened is that she is no longer so fascinated with the effect she can produce when she simply makes the same thing happen over and over again.

Her interest has shifted to the world of causes and effects outside herself. She is willing and able to make variations in her actions to learn about the nature of the objects themselves. She has now begun to sort and classify her experiences in a simple way.

Jean Piaget, the noted psychologist, divided a baby's learning experiences into two categories. First, when

she has learned a new idea through her experience, she tries it out with a number of variations. She exercises the idea, so to speak.

Baby's various ways of dropping an object are not just a one-time occurrence but also a predictable happening.

Then along comes a situation where an idea doesn't work. Let's say that Baby is exercising the idea that she can put objects into a box through a hole in the top.

All of a sudden an object refuses to go through the hole—push though she will.

Now comes a tiny crisis. Baby's idea, which has been so stable, suddenly becomes unsettled. She must either reconcile the idea with this new happening or give it up entirely.

Of course, Baby soon learns to modify her idea slightly: All objects will go through the hole except those that are "too big."

This process of adapting an idea to new circumstances is the second category of learning experiences and is really the more important of the two.

By this means, all of us have gained a more highly refined understanding of the world and its ways. □

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 six” 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 retire.

A warning of “ten minutes until bath time” is also useful so that fun isn’t suddenly interrupted.

- Minimize television and rowdy activities close to sleeping time.

- A routine works wonders. For instance, a warm, calm bath followed by a ritual goodnight to the spider plant, the clock, grandma and grandpa in a picture, the dog, the piano ...

If you keep it up long enough, you may find yourself yawning. And speaking of yawns, a few of those don’t hurt either.

- If necessary, provide a small nightlight, a quiet radio or CD, or a trusted companion.

Nick, age five, has a stuffed penguin fully a foot longer than he is, and no doubt, Penny the penguin helps keep away those things that go bump in the night.

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

But often, if you tiptoe in ten or fifteen minutes later, you’ll find your youngster has been overtaken by the sandman. Then just whisper, “Sweet dreams ...” □

Save those boxes!

If the supply of boxes is generous and constant, most children will be delighted to show parents how inventive they can be. For example, babies crawl into boxes, sit and grin. Sometimes they get stuck and cry. Then they learn how to back out.

Big brothers and sisters occasionally think of putting a string through a hole punched in a box. Then babies pull the boxes.

Toddlers think boxes are cars, boats, trains or space ships. They think very big boxes are houses.

Ask at your appliance store for a big box that used to contain and refrigerator. This big box will make a dandy puppet theater where the main character is a fierce shoebox crocodile (the box top is the lower jaw).

Some little boxes fit over hands for hand puppets. Some tiny boxes fit over fingers for finger puppets (remember the boxes lipsticks come in).

Middle-sized boxes fit over heads, with holes for eyes. Other boxes can make a whole suit of armor where the body pieces are attached by string at the joints. There’s also a visor hinged with string to go up and down.

Of course, there’s a whole world that can be made of miniature boxes—houses, farms for small animals, outer space cities that on closer inspection bulge with exotic cosmetic boxes, cheese boxes and toilet paper tubes. Elmer’s Glue™ holds it all together.

Oatmeal boxes make rockets. A paper plate with a wedge-shaped section cut out can be bent into a nose cone (plus some tape to hold it).

Remember cigar boxes? They still make them.

Eggs come in boxes (get the molded kind instead of the folded kind). And egg box caterpillars are easy—kids can tear one strip of bumps from the molded box, draw eyes, and there it is.

But why not start a really fun project everybody can work on: a dollhouse. First, pile up boxes, one for each room. Glue them together, cut doors and windows, fold a piece of corrugated cardboard into a V for the roof. Bend another piece of cardboard into a zigzag for the stairs, wallpaper the wall with ... no, the rest of the fun is up to you! □

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/
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and enter your e-mail address.

Growing Together

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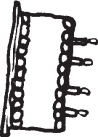
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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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>1</p> <p>May Day</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Sweep off the porch and sidewalk.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>National Teacher Day</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Say the days of the week.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Cinco de Mayo</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Plant some marigold seeds in a baby food jar and set them in a sunny window.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Help clean under your bed.</p> 
<p>8</p> <p>Mother's Day</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>During dinner, each person tell two things they did today.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>How many colors can you see in flowers today?</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Talk about your favorite things to eat.</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Make a straight line with a piece of string. Try to walk it.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Exercise with someone. Do ten toe-touches.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Comb your hair. Then do it again with the other hand.</p> 
<p>15</p> <p>Put fruit on your cereal today.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Put your shoes on the wrong feet —just to see how they feel.</p> 	<p>17</p> <p>How far can you hop on one foot?</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Spell a word using pretzels.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Oldest and youngest persons sing a song together!</p> 	<p>20</p> <p>Talk about traffic signs and what they mean.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Armed Forces Day</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Eat lunch on paper plates.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Practice whistling (a lost art).</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Play "Who Am I?" using animal sounds.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Empty wastebaskets.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Play a ball game with a Nerf™ ball inside. Make your own rules.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Write your name or make happy faces on an old newspaper with a crayon.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Is it warm enough to go outside without a jacket?</p> 
<p>29</p> <p>Bake something today: bread, a cake, a pie... try something new!</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Memorial Day Enjoy a picnic!</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Draw a picture of your family for grandpa and grandma.</p>	