



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

March 2012

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Art

New ways to paint

Fingers are fine to paint with, but who wants to finger-paint all the time. Here are a couple of things besides fingers that a child can paint with:

1. A moistener. A little plastic tube with a sponge top. It's supposed to save you from licking envelopes and labels and stamps, but it's great to paint with.

Fill with tempera, thinned with a little water. Be sure the top is on tight.

2. Plain old string. Cut lengths 10" long and shorter ones, too. Dip the string into little dishes or saucers of paint or food coloring.

Drag the string across the paper, swirl it around, squiggle it up and down. Make wiggly patterns. Make stripes.

3. An old roll-on deodorant bottle. Pry the cap off, rinse well and fill tempera thinned with a little water. Pop the cap back on and let 'er roll! □

Developmental

There's a handy helper right in your home

When you're tidying up the house and Youngster is underfoot, instead of fabricating play activities, invite him or her to share in family chores and responsibilities.

For example, when preparing a meal, provide real tools and instructions for operating them.

Keep the tools simple, like a hand-operated eggbeater or a carrot peeler. If the equipment is placed at an appropriate height, there will be fewer spills — of child or equipment.

Before each task, give clear instructions and provide the materials that will be needed. Be clear about what the result will be when the task is completed.

While preparing to wash dishes or load the dishwasher, children may be assigned the job of sorting the silverware.

In the dining room, offer a damp cloth to remove finger marks from the woodwork or a soft cloth for dusting furniture in the living room.

Wastebaskets can be emptied into larger receptacles.

In the bathroom, there may be a tendency to splash in the water unless you suggest genuine work.

Allow Youngster to wipe off spray cleaner from mirrors, windows, or tile.

There are many reasons for recommending practical experiences in the home:



- The exercise is equal to, if not superior to, such things as push-ups or knee bends.

- The need to pay attention — to choose, arrange, and use equipment and materials — is a school-readiness skill.

- The ability to make decisions and then change them when they turn out poorly is essential for cognitive learning.

- The recognition and confidence gained for a job well done — as well as contributing to the family's upkeep — builds up good feelings about oneself. □

Avoiding bedtime uproar

Around the age of two years, many children begin to object to going to bed. Until now, going to bed was accepted willingly, or at least without much objection.

Now, suddenly, Toddler begins to resist. She hangs back. She clings. She wants this or that. She may even have a temper tantrum.

Why this sudden reluctance to go to bed? Toddler is tired. She is sleepy. Why is she fighting sleep in this way?

Toddler has learned that objects and people do not just vanish when

they are out of sight. If she goes into another room leaving her favorite toy behind, she knows that it will be there when she comes back.

As she develops this “conservation of objects,” she also develops a feeling of security about these objects and a strong feeling of possession.

But sleep is different. Suddenly Toddler becomes aware of sleep as different from waking and she is afraid of what might happen to her familiar world while she sleeps.

So, she clings to the security of the known, the security of what she

can see and touch.

At this stage of development, a bedtime routine will pay off in terms of family calm and Toddler behavior.

Just what this routine includes depends, of course, on the lifestyle of your particular family.

Some children want to say “good night” to favorite toys or give a good night kiss to every member of the family.

Sometimes a small, glowing, nightlight is reassuring. You can make a game of Toddler “blowing out” the light.

You may say that you are just not a person who follows a routine. You don’t like to do the same thing the same way every day—you need the freedom of flexibility. Perhaps you find your security in this very freedom.

A young child, however, is not ready for that kind of freedom. She must feel that her world, as she knows it, is stable and will be the same today as it has been today. She must feel secure if she is to explore her world further.

A bedtime ritual serves to provide this reassurance and to move her along familiar paths toward sleep.

A realistic bedtime hour, flexible within reason, should be established.

Often this can be cued to a regular TV program, after supper, or a special cuddle with a picture book.

This leads naturally into the ritual of getting ready for bed and for sleep—and reduces bedtime uproar to a minimum. □

Discipline

There are better forms of discipline than threats

When children have done something wrong, their parents discipline them.

Setting limits, providing natural consequences, time-out, and if-then statements (*if* you do *this*, *then that* will happen) are some disciplinary measures used by parents.

These ways to discipline are effective if they are used properly. Threats, on the other hand, are usually unplanned, harsh statements made to frighten and coerce a child into good behavior.

There is often a physical aspect to a threat such as, “I will spank you if you don’t stop whining.”

A planned disciplinary measure is not threatening because it is expected and understood.

When children or adults feel controlled by threats, they tend to resent the people using them.

If this plan has been explained to the child many times, she has learned that whining does not get attention. In this way, a child is not frightened into behaving. She can make a choice. □

Positive communication with teachers and childcare providers

A positive and successful relationship is based on clear and honest communication between parents and their child's teacher or family day care provider.

Ask questions about how your child behaves and discuss how he or she is adapting in the classroom.

Be approachable and make it possible for teachers and care providers to talk to you about difficult topics such as discipline.

It's extremely important for parents to get to know their child's teacher or caregiver. And give them a chance

to get to know you and your child.

Tell them about your family and your child's interests outside of the classroom or childcare environment.

Be familiar with what your child is doing on a daily basis so you can have meaningful conversation with your child as well.

Sharing problems from home gives teachers and care providers the news and facts that are vital to how he or she cares for and relates to your child.

Let the teacher or caregiver know

if your child has had a bad dream, if he or she has been coughing all night and hasn't been sleeping well.

If there is major turmoil at home such as separation, divorce, sickness or death, tell them about that too.

Understand that a teacher may not be able to personally connect with every parent at the beginning and end of every day.

Stay in touch and aware of what's going on by making a conscious effort to read the notices and messages that are sent home. □

Social Skills

Me first!

Six-year-olds (and some fives) want to be the first in everything.

Therefore, young siblings who require care and attention often threaten the child's feeling of "firstness."

Six may appear at times to be consumed by "Me first!" For example, her whole day may be spoiled if a younger sibling gets to the breakfast table before she does. And she can also be most jealous of the very sibling of whom she is most proud!

She is also jealous of any attention or present given to a younger sibling by a guest, but is reassured of her position with some simple attention—an "I love you" smile or an arm around the shoulder.

The lecture approach ("You mustn't be jealous, that's not nice!") only aggravates the situation.

At this stage her intense awareness exceeds her ability to manage self and events and she is terribly vulnerable. If her needs are met now, she can more easily discard her egocentric demands later.

Take heart. At least Six gets along fairly well with older siblings—as long as they don't treat her "like a little kid!" □

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.

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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>4</p> <p>Hard-boiled eggs, toast and jam for a snack.</p> | <p>5</p> <p>Save the daily newspaper each year on your child's birthday to give to her when she's grown up.</p>  | <p>6</p> <p>Talk about opposites and what they mean. Name some: Hot _____ Big _____ Long _____ Up _____</p> | <p>7</p> <p>Purim begins.</p>  | <p>8</p> <p>Figure out how old you are in: years, months, weeks, days, minutes and seconds.</p> | <p>9</p> <p>Play "echo" using an empty paper towel roll.</p> | <p>10</p> <p>Sing your favorite song.</p>  |
| <p>11</p> <p>Play hide and seek with a toy. (Hide a toy for someone to find.)</p>  | <p>12</p> <p>Mis for March. Name four more words that start with the letter M.</p> | <p>13</p> <p>Can you do two somersaults?</p> | <p>14</p> <p>Can you wink? Practice.</p> | <p>15</p> <p>Draw a picture of something you're good at drawing.</p>  | <p>16</p> <p>Help do something for dinner.</p> | <p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day.</p> |
| <p>18</p> <p>Go out for breakfast.</p> | <p>19</p> <p>Practice saying the days of the week. What's today?</p> | <p>20</p> <p>First day of spring.</p>  | <p>21</p> <p>True or false: Apples are blue: Birds can fly: Bananas have wheels:</p> | <p>22</p> <p>Tell someone what the weather is like today</p> | <p>23</p> <p>Practice a home emergency drill.</p> | <p>24</p> <p>Go for a walk. Take along a paper bag and pick up litter.</p> |
| <p>25</p> <p>Sing in the bathtub.</p> | <p>26</p> <p>Do stretching exercises.</p>  | <p>27</p> <p>Pat baby's hands together and repeat "Patty Cake."</p> | <p>28</p> <p>Can you put your elbow in your ear?</p> | <p>29</p> <p>If you had a horse, what would you name it?</p> | <p>30</p> <p>Eat a green apple or some green grapes.</p>  | <p>31</p> <p>Use a small ruler and measure: 1. Your toothbrush. 2. Your big toe. 3. A cracker.</p> |



**Did March
"come in"
like a Lion
or a Lamb?**



1
For a new art experience, paint pictures with cotton swabs.



2
Find four yellow circle shapes in the house.

3
Visit a neighbor.