



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

A game for any time, any place

Next time you need to wait for an appointment—or can't think of anything else to do—here's an activity that requires only children and a large, empty space.

The question is: How many different ways can you walk?

- Rapidly
- Very slowly
- In a circle
- Taking big steps
- Taking tiny steps
- Walking on tiptoes
- Walking on heels.
- Walking like a soldier; a robot; a rabbit; a giraffe; a grasshopper; or a kangaroo.

When you've tried all of these, make up your own means of locomotion. □

Health & Safety

Safety means more than car seats

Car safety begins with an approved car seat, but does not end with its use.

Here are some tips to aid you in making car trips safer for you and your children.

- **Start a routine.** From the beginning, put your child in the car seat every time. If he cries or fusses, say or sing the same thing each time: "We're going for a ride; time to buckle in."

- **Always buckle your seatbelt** and insist other riders do the same.

Children more easily accept being restrained themselves if they realize that this is a part of automobile riding for everyone.

- **Make it clear that riding in the car is not a game.** This doesn't mean you shouldn't try to make rides as interesting and fun as possible for your kids, but they need to understand that your attention must be on the road and not on them.

- **Learn to block out crying.** If you get upset, your chances of having an accident are greatly increased.

Parents know when it's time to address a crying, upset child, stop the car in a safe location and attend to the child.

If it is apparent that your child's cries are from crankiness or boredom and there is no place to stop, sing to

the radio or talk to your baby over the cries. Try not to get upset.

- **NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED IN THE CAR.**

It is true that getting a child in and out of a car seat can be cumbersome, but don't leave your child in the car, even if you are "just running in."

Bring him along even if you can see your car from inside the store.

- **Be extra careful.** Be aware that you are more distracted with a child in the car. Pay even more attention to what you're doing.

After a hectic day and then getting a fussy child in her car seat, it's easy to forget to look behind you before pulling out of the parking space.

- **Always use a car seat.** No safety tips can replace the invaluable protection a car seat offers your child.

If your spouse is driving and your child is screaming, don't take him out of his car seat "just for a minute."

Besides sending your child mixed signals on the use of a car seat, this is dangerous and against the law.

Instead, when it's time for a break, take a few minutes to stop in a safe location where the child can be calmed and everybody can regroup before continuing on your way. □

The importance of play

It is generally through play that a preschool child learns about the world around her and then assimilates what she has learned into her concept of reality.

Preschool children enjoy three different forms of play: physical, manipulative, and symbolic.

Physical play refers to activities that involve use of the muscles. These include running, hopping, jumping, climbing, throwing, sliding, and playing with a ball.

Manipulative play refers to activities by which a child learns to gain better control over her environment. These activities include the use of puzzles and building blocks (which also require some physical play skills) as well as games that involve social manipulation (“What can I do to make Daddy come to me?”).

Symbolic play involves manipulation, not of people, but of events and objects. These play activities would include the use of fantasy; pretend play, and nonsense rhymes.

In symbolic play, a child can change events, identities and emotions for the sake of her play, thereby gaining more complete control over her newly created world.

In a child’s life, play has many important effects on development.

Physical development. Play activities that involve physical exercise help to promote a child’s general health. Specific activities that involve, for example, perceptual-motor skills also help to develop a child’s eye-hand coordination.

Cognitive development. Through play a young child is able to try out her understanding of how the world works. What we see in a

child’s play is not just trucks, dolls, teacups and saucers. It is the child’s cognitive conception of the world as she experiences and understands it.

Emotional development. Perhaps the single most important contribution of play to emotional development is the role it has in the formation of a child’s self-concept.

Play is also a means by which a child can deal with emotional conflicts (for example, by using puppets to talk about hurt feelings).

Social development. In play activities, a child has an opportunity to experiment with different roles, power relationships, and rules. For example, a young child may tell a doll or teddy bear to “sit in a corner” for some type of misbehavior.

Because young children enjoy play, it becomes a very natural way for them to learn about themselves and about the world in which they live.

So, the next time you see your child engaged in play, you will know that she is not just “goofing off.”

She is engaged in the “work of childhood,” namely, promoting her physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. □

Love with no strings attached

Unconditional love means that you love your child with no conditions. You love her today and tomorrow, and you will continue to love her in spite of the fact that her behavior is unacceptable sometimes.

You can show unconditional love by hugging your child. Tell her specific things you like about her or her behavior. “Thank you for helping your brother up the steps—I like to see you being kind to him.”

Tell her how much she is loved. It doesn’t have to be big words or long sentences. Just a simple “I love you” can do wonders for a child’s self-image.

If your child knows you love her, she has the freedom to grow. Knowing she is secure and loved will give her the confidence to try something new, to try harder to meet your expectations for her.

Your child needs to know she is loved even though her behavior may not always be lovable. You may at times discipline her for negative behavior, and at other times praise her for the positive behavior, but you can love her all the time.

That’s why it is important for her to understand how you can love her but not like her behavior. “I love you, Tina, but I don’t like your behavior right now. Don’t push your brother—he’s smaller than you are and he could get hurt.”

To your child, you are the most important person in her world.

Your love is the best gift you can give her—today and tomorrow—so be generous. □

Read it free!

“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.

Small children are sometimes frightened by noisy adults

An over-enthusiastic relative or friend who greets a child with loud laughter and smothering hugs also may arouse considerable anxiety and fear in a toddler. In fact, the child may not only hide from that person but also show increasing fear of everyone outside the immediate family circle.

It is pretty hard to tone down loud and over-demonstrative relatives, but sometimes visitors can be told in advance that your youngster is just learning to adjust to persons outside the family. They also can be asked to wait until your child approaches them on her own.

Another method is to pick up your child and hold her as you greet your visitors. This includes her in the eye-level greeting and gives her the additional security of your arms.



If she struggles or cries, comfort her and then try to interest her in something else.

A young child is naturally curious and will usually overcome her fear if visitors keep their greetings low key and if the youngster is allowed to approach them on her own. □

Language

Meaning what you say/saying what you mean

How does a child perceive what is said? An adult usually knows that people don't mean it when they say, "I could just kill him for doing that."

Children, especially very young ones, often have not had enough experience to know that what is said is not always to be taken literally.

Young children also tend to take things at face value and to be concrete and specific in their way of looking at things.

There's an old story about the boy who asked his mother where he came from, and his mother went into a long explanation of the birds and bees.

Then the child said, "Gee whiz, Joey said **he** came from Philadelphia!"

So, when we say to a child, "Stop that or I will ... pull your nose off ... throw you out the window ... break your arm ..." how can we be sure that the child won't take the threat literally and be afraid we really will do what we said?

The other side of the coin is that when the threat is not carried out and the child does not have her nose pulled off, she begins to learn there are no consequences for her actions other than additional nagging and scolding. □

Learning to classify is an everyday job

"What's this?" "What's that?"

When children ask "what?" questions, they're learning how to classify things, to see how things are alike and how they're different.

Why is classification important? Because without it we wouldn't be able to tell aspirin from arsenic!

It's classification that tells a child how to think about the world, where to look for a crayon, and what part of a store contains bicycles.

It tells a child that she can expect to find bears in the animal crackers and jelly next to the peanut butter.

How does a child learn classification? You help her. Almost every minute of the day she hears and sees you using the idea of same and different. Let her help you sort socks and silverware. Talk about the different shapes of street and traffic signs or the different feels of fabrics.

Let everyday experiences be your classroom! □

Growing Together

Growing Together is published by Growing Child, Inc., P.O. Box 2505 W. Lafayette, IN 47996 ©2011 Growing Child, Inc. Telephone: (765) 464-0920. Customer Service: 1-800-927-7289.






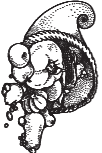
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

Growing Together issues may be reproduced in part or in full by participating organizations.

Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

www.growingchild.com

November 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>6</p> <p>Dress up and take a family picture.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Eid-al-Adha</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Election Day</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>What is your favorite game to play inside? Outside?</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Find something red that is made of wood.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Veterans Day</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Pack a picnic lunch. Eat it (carefully) anywhere but the kitchen.</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Are all of the poisonous cleaners and materials in your home put away in a safe place?</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Look in the dictionary and learn a new word today.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Select one television show or a CD for everyone to watch and talk about together.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Send Grandpa a note. Tell him what you ate for breakfast ... and what you plan to do today.</p> 	<p>17</p> <p>Which animal would be the easiest to keep as a pet? Why?</p> <p>elephant giraffe parakeet camel polar bear whale</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Drop different items and watch how they fall: a wooden block, a feather, a ball ...</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Play some kind of ball game inside with a NERF™ ball. Make up your own rules.</p>
<p>20</p> <p>Go to an outdoor park where you have lots of room to run and play.</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>During dinner, each person tells two things he or she did today.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Help clip coupons and organize them.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Name and talk about four animals that have a coat for winter.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Thanksgiving Day</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>NAME DAY: Think of names that start with B: Bob, Bruce, Brenda, Beatrice, Barry, Barbara ...</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Count how many cars there are in a row in a parking lot.</p>
<p>27</p> <p>Muharram (New Year)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Give the baby a new, wet sponge to play with.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Do you have a museum in your community? Check to see if there are special programs for children.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture about something you liked in November.</p>	