



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Developmental

## Building confidence

Parents can encourage their child to demonstrate confidence in herself. How? By helping her learn to reflect positively on her own accomplishments and good qualities.

Self-pride is essential to self-confidence. If she's doing a good job at something, make a point of asking her how she feels about what she's doing.

Let her know that you think she should feel proud of herself "for working so hard", "for helping out her little sister", "for sticking with such a hard job", and so on. Be specific in your feedback.

Think about having a time every day, perhaps at dinner, when each of your children can report on something that they did or that happened to them that they feel good about. □



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## Parenting

### Tips for saving time

The purpose of time management is not to cram more and more chores into our busy lives. The purpose is to save on the mundane chores so we have time for what's really important.

Read the following tips, and then select the ones you like to help accomplish your time management goals.

1. Make your health a top priority. Exercise, don't smoke, and watch your diet. You can get more done when you're feeling good.

2. Pick an exercise that's fun and easy. Jumping rope or walking are good because you can do them almost anytime, anywhere.

3. Write a "to do" list and keep your mind free for important thoughts. If one item never gets done, maybe it doesn't need doing. Try taking it off your list.

4. Get up an hour earlier. If that's too hard, decrease your sleep by 15 minutes each week until you've reached your goal. Early morning is a great time for uninterrupted work.

5. Think how much time you'd save by cutting down on television. If you must see a show, do something else while you watch: ride a stationary bike, sew, or read during commercials.

6. Leave things where you see them until they're taken care of. For example, put your coat over the kitchen chair until you've mended it.

7. Limit the time you spend on housework by setting a timer. You'll be motivated to work faster as you race to beat the clock.

8. As they are able, make kids clean their own rooms. This saves your time while teaching them responsibility. Close the doors if they don't keep their rooms as clean as you'd like.

9. Don't waste time waiting in lines; shop at off-peak hours. Even if you work from nine to five, you can shop early, late, or during the "Big Game."

10. Always carry a book in case you get caught in a line or traffic.

11. Don't feel guilty about shopping for convenience: drive-through car washes, prepared foods, delivery services. The time you save can be used for things you really care about.

12. Plan your meals ahead of time, not at the end of the day when you're tired and hungry.

13. Listen to audiotapes while you drive.

14. Keep a spiral notebook close by—you'll have messages, appointments, and names handy whenever you need to look them up.

15. Don't be a martyr. If someone offers help, accept!

16. Take time to enjoy yourself. You'll accomplish more if you're happy and relaxed. □

## Praising children

Children flourish and thrive when they receive praise from the important adults in their lives.

Praise is an essential component of a child's daily life. Through it a child receives positive, ego building messages that say: "You are unique." "You are important to me." "You can do it!"

Here are some effective ways to offer the gift of praise to your child:

- **Increase your praise level.** Criticism is often long and detailed but praise is short. It's easier to find fault rather than to see and express the many positives in a child. Every family should increase the level of praise in their home.

- **Be specific.** Rather than using vague and general terms, shape your vocabulary to be explicit and precise about what you want to commend.

Instead of saying, "I love your painting," try saying "You have a fantastic eye for color." Rather than saying, "You are such a good helper," say "Thank you for putting all of our clothes in the right drawer."

- **Stay honest.** Indiscriminate praise over every act and event will make the child question your sincerity as a parent. Children know when parents are insincere.

- **Identify progress.** Like adults, children want to know that they are developing and improving their skills. Imagine how the young girl felt after she completed a series of cartwheels and heard her mother say: "Wow! You did four cartwheels in a row! That's something you couldn't have done a year ago."

- **Don't compare.** Stay away from statements like these: "You are the best reader in your class." "You run faster

than the other team players.

While such statements may not be false, they put down someone else. Comparisons can work against a child by promoting unnecessary competition and the fear of failure.

Also, no parent should ever compare his or her child negatively with another child. ("Why can't you be good like your friend, Billy?")

Each little comparison may seem unimportant in itself but added together they can cause a child to believe he will never be able to measure up.

- **Avoid negative compliments.** Unwittingly, some parents undermine their own efforts at praise by offering negative statements.

For example, here are some negative statements: "It's great to see you being good for a change." "I can't believe you finally cleaned up your room."

Children believe what they're told about themselves. If you suggest negative qualities, the child will begin to think of himself that way.

- **Commend effort, not results.** Children will be greatly motivated when they are praised simply for the attempt at doing something new.

If a child is unable to dress himself completely, you can point out how nicely he has pulled on one stocking. Then he may go ahead and try to put on his shoes. You should commend the effort, whether successful or not.

In addition to words of praise, try reinforcing your comments with a physical act. A warm embrace, a loving kiss and a high five will serve to strengthen words of approval and admiration. □

## Shy children

Many shy parents worry that their children will also be shy. You can avoid this by instilling a sense of self-pride in your children.

Recognize each child's individual integrity. Children who receive support when they attempt new things feel confident.

One way to do this is by showing enthusiasm for small accomplishments.

Remembering to turn a television set off when leaving a room is no small task for a preschooler to remember and deserves praise.

A pleasant smile in the morning from a sleepy child or a meal at which your toddler feeds himself should all be met with a positive comment. This makes children feel successful.

It's not necessary to force a child into social situations that make him or her uncomfortable.

By all means encourage your child to play with friends and attend parties.

But if they appear reluctant to socialize, try inviting one or two children to your home.

A child who seems to be shy outside his home may flourish on his own turf.

By accepting children as they are, and providing them with comfortable opportunities in which to socialize, parents can provide a foundation from which their children can go into the world with confidence rather than with hesitation. □

## Positive conversations

Positive conversations that can change a child's behavior begin with:

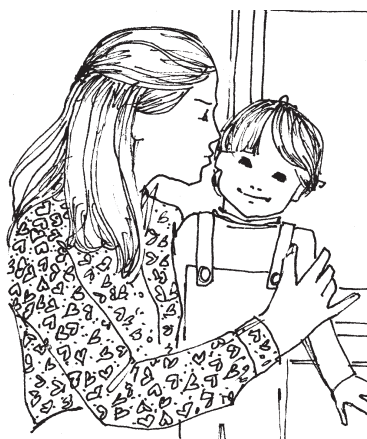
I like the way you are ...

I believe in you ...

I know you can ...

I love you, but I don't like ...

I will help you. We will do this together ...



You are so (smart, sweet, strong) that I think you can do better ...

Most of the time, you do this really well. Can you try harder today?

I'm so proud of you because ...

Let's use our quiet voices. You are making a little too much noise.

I am disappointed with what you did. I know that you can do better.

Are you being a good helper?

Are you doing your best?

Have you shown Alice how much you like to share?

I need you to ...



## Encourage a positive attitude about doctors

A parent's attitude toward health, doctors, medicine and hospitals is the single most influential factor in a child's attitude about the same things.

It is important to remember this when you talk about health-related statements.

Statements like: "Don't cry, I don't let the doctor hurt you," or "If you don't behave, I'll have the nurse give you a shot" quickly give a child a negative attitude.

The child may then misbehave in the doctor's office, making an examination or treatment more prolonged, unrewarding, or perhaps even painful.

These fears, if continually reinforced, may carry over into adolescence and beyond.

They are responsible for many adults being "afraid" to go to the doctor.

So, in health matters, as in everything else, think before you speak or act. Your child is listening, watching, and learning from 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/FreeGrandmaSays](http://www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays) and enter your e-mail address.

## Plan a family clean-up day

Young children can learn responsibility and cooperation by pitching in to help clean up the place they live.

Set aside a certain period of time—an hour perhaps—when everybody pitches in to clean up, pick up, and put away the objects and clutter at your house.

Explain that everybody has a job and carefully explain what each job involves. Try to match the job with the child's abilities and capabilities.

For example, two-year-olds love to put things into other things, and you can utilize this love by having them pick up and put away toys, trash and clutter.

Three- and four-year-olds can clear the table, dry dishes, vacuum the middle of a room, and dust.

Five-year-olds can pick up junk, fold clothes, sort laundry, and wash low windows. The trick may be getting them to do it.

When the time limit is up, everybody can join in to finish up jobs that need a little more time ... and then everybody head out for a treat!

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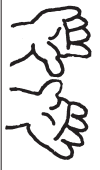

Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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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.

[www.growingchild.com](http://www.growingchild.com)

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1 Play catch with a big, safe ball. Pretend it will break if you drop it.</p>	<p>2 Election Day.</p> 	<p>3 Look in the bottom of the toy box and see what lonesome toy needs to play.</p>	<p>4 Read a book about a dog.</p>	<p>5 Plant some tulip bulbs to bloom in the spring.</p> 	<p>6 Trace your hand on a piece of paper. Can you decorate the tracing to look like a turkey?</p>
<p>7 Cinnamon toast for breakfast. Yum!</p>	<p>8 Today's snack: Applesauce and Farmer Cheese.</p> 	<p>9 Count backwards from eight.</p>	<p>10 What color is an eggplant? Look it up.</p>	<p>11 Veterans Day.</p> 	<p>12 Put a puzzle together.</p>	<p>13 Find a hat to wear outside and go for a walk.</p>
<p>14 Use markers to make VERY BIG pictures on newspapers on the floor.</p> 	<p>15 Treasure Hunt! Find: 3 red things 4 black things 2 white things</p>	<p>16 Visit a dentist's office just to look around. (Call ahead first.)</p>	<p>17 What color is your shirt today? Color these shapes the same color.</p> 	<p>18 Go outside and play kickball.</p>	<p>19 Learn how to jump a rope.</p>	<p>20 Name one fruit and one vegetable that is yellow.</p> 
<p>21 Eat an orange.</p>	<p>22 Can you stand on your head? (Ask for some help.)</p>	<p>23 How many fingers does mom have? Count them.</p> 	<p>24 Talk about what your family is thankful for.</p>	<p>25 Thanksgiving.</p>	<p>26 Sing "Old King Cole"</p> 	<p>27 Enjoy some popcorn and a movie at home.</p>
<p>28 Count how many eggs there are in the refrigerator.</p> <p>149?</p>	<p>29 Stack some empty plastic containers. Practice bowling with a large ball.</p>	<p>30 What's a bagel? What do you do with it?</p>	