



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Add 'em up!

Here's a fun ball game that can be assembled from materials on hand. First, start with several containers that will hold a tennis ball (or another similar ball) such as cans, plastic containers, small wastebasket.

Next, assign points to each container and then arrange the containers in some order.

The object is to toss the tennis ball into the containers that have the largest value so that the highest score can be accumulated. (Likewise, players can reverse the game and try for the lowest score.)

The game can be made easier or harder, depending on the players' skills. For example, a soft, sponge ball is easier to toss; smaller containers are harder to hit.

Players can divide up into teams. Or everybody can try to score a combined number of points in a given time period.

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Discipline

Problem children simply have problems

Problem children are simply children with problems.

Lack of understanding and improper punishment are often culprits in creating a child with a problem.



No one will argue that many children have strong wills and recognize many ways to successfully manipulate their parents. They may be very negative, refuse to eat, sit on the toilet, go to sleep, or cooperate generally.

Nevertheless, when you inflict punishment on a young child for these misbehaviors, she will feel angry with you, and the anger she experiences may be severe enough to frighten her.

Instead of physical punishment, some parents use words—"I won't love you anymore," or

"You make me sick"—and these words can be equally destructive.

The child doesn't know that the anger she feels is temporary and that such feelings are normal for her as well as her parents. What she learns is to imitate aggression, which often takes the form of tantrums. Thus parent and child feed the flames of each other's passions which can start a vicious cycle.

There is another way to obtain a child's cooperation. A child intuitively wants to please her parents. By reflecting her thoughts back to her, she has an emotional release and can save face.

For example, "I know you are angry, and I know how you feel. You don't want to put away the toys. You want to play. Come, let's put them away together."

A child doesn't always accept the situation, in which case it may be necessary to distract her. Remember, however, that not every cause must be resolved or every moral drawn. It's important to make allowances for individual differences. □

Learning to eat can be messy

Toddlers who have been practicing with both finger feeding and holding a spoon are probably becoming pretty good self-feeders by now.

On the other hand, if you have been feeding Toddler and she is now about 18 months old, now is the time to encourage her to take over and do it herself.

You can expect an occasional mess—being a neat eater takes lots of practice!

Some toddlers will feed themselves certain foods but want a parent or caregiver to feed them

others. If this practice continues, it is possible that Toddler will build up faulty eating habits—she will see the difference between the foods she wants and the foods you want her to eat.

In this period of self-assertion, such a practice can develop into a tug-of-war. In the future you may find that she may not have an appetite for your foods.

So, to avoid this kind of confrontation, continue to allow your toddler to feed herself in spite of the mess she may make.

Between the first and second

years, many youngsters will give up certain foods, particularly some vegetables. Accept her preferences and return to the rejected foods in a few weeks.

By pushing a temporary dislike on her, you increase the probability that the particular food may become permanently distasteful to her.

Toddler's preferences may result in an occasional lopsided meal, but from day to day or week-to-week her choices should even out to a well-balanced diet. □

Behavior

Getting ready for school

Here are some suggestions that will lead to good experiences for children before they attend school.

1. Be consistent in your enforcement of rules, but be certain that your rules can be defined, and that they are reasonable and enforceable.

Rules in the home help children feel more secure and comfortable when they meet rules in the school and community.

- 2 Permit children to be wrong, make mistakes and even fail sometimes. Children learn by doing, rather than by absorbing the experiences of others. Making mistakes is one basis for future independence, self-direction and intelligent decision-making.

3. Keep promises. Children develop cause/effect relationships when they know that they can anticipate the consequences.

4. Resist the temptation to over-organize or over-structure children's free time with lessons, sports or other activities. Children need time to "kick cans," be leisurely and work through problems with play. □

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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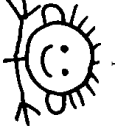

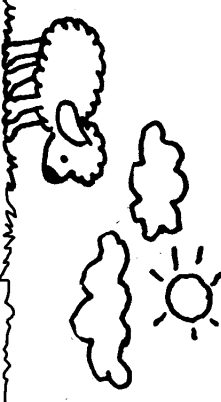
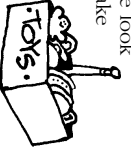


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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>Count the number of hands in your family.</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>Look for the number 1.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Where are your ankles? How many do you have?</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Lay on your tummies and make funny faces at each other.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Make a noise like: A duck A cow A car</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Clean out a closet and give the kids old clothes to dress up in.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Ask some friends over to share soup and play some board games.</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Visit an airport and watch the planes land and take off.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Sing a song with silly words.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Draw a picture of your ears. How can you see your ears?</p> 	<p>11</p> <p>Play music and clap your hands.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Save empty plastic bowls to use as bongo drums.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Make a sound like a bird ... loud, soft, whisper.</p> 	<p>14</p> <p>Go to the library and look for a book about baby animals.</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Stack plastic measuring cups.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Draw a picture for someone special.</p> 	<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day. Wear something green.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Wear something yellow.</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Show Baby how to touch his nose.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Spring begins!</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Read "The Runaway Bunny" by Margaret Wise Brown.</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Invite a friend or two for lunch.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Draw a picture that shows what the weather looks like today.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Trace hands and feet and send the pictures to grandparents.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Tell the teddy bear a story ...</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Count your fingernails.</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Hide a toy and have someone look for it. Take turns.</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Wash Baby's toys. Rinse well so all the soap is gone.</p> 
<p>29</p> <p>Is it warm enough to eat breakfast outside? Maybe not.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Count the numbers on a clock.</p> 	<p>31</p> <p>What can you build with your blocks?</p>				