

As They Grow

*An Early Learning Newsletter for
Families of Preschool Children*

**UW
Extension**
Learning for life

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Racine County UW-Extension

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Dear Families,

One of the most common questions that parents call with is, “can you give me ideas about discipline and my child?” The topic of discipline is not exclusive to parents of preteens and teens. Parents of young children face many choices and options in regards to discipline. Do you know your choices? If not, visit page two where we talk about the difference between discipline and punishment in this issue. Also in this issue, you will find useful information on building trust in children, shopping with your toddler, woodworking with your young child, and healthy eating tips for families.

If UW-Extension can be of any assistance in your parenting adventure, please do not hesitate to call any of us.

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BUILDING TRUST IN CHILDREN

Trust is a very tender and fragile thing. Children naturally have a lot of it, especially in their parents. It is very important that we justify that trust, guard it, and nurture it.

How can you encourage trust in your child?

- **Keep your promises.** Make only promises which you can keep. Say “yes” or “I promise” only when there is no question that you will come through. Saying that you promise to take your child somewhere and then not following through may lead to distrust between you and your child.
- **Explain why not.** If your child asks for something you don’t want him to have, be honest with yourself and with the child. Don’t make excuses or blame others.
- **Answer honestly.** Try to answer all questions honestly. Pick your words to suit the child’s level of understanding. If you model lying, your child will think that it is alright to lie in certain situations.
- Above all, **show your child your love.** Give hugs often and use verbal praise.



PUNISHMENT VS. DISCIPLINE

Discipline teaches a child how to act. Discipline should make sense to the child. It should have something to do with what he or she has done wrong. Discipline helps a child feel good about him/herself. It gives the child the chance to correct mistakes. It puts the child in charge of his/her actions.

Punishment only tells a child that he or she is bad. It does not tell a child what he or she should do instead. Therefore, punishment may not make sense to the child. Punishment usually has nothing to do with what the child did wrong. Sometimes a child is punished when nothing else seems to work. Sometimes a child is punished when he/she has made a parent angry.

All parents get angry with their children at times. Do not feel bad if this happens to you occasionally. However, if you are very angry, count to ten before you talk to your child. Tell him/her you will talk to him/her later.

Here are some examples of discipline and punishment. Can you see the difference?

Scenario 1: A three-year-old throws his crayons on the floor.

Punishment:

Tell him he is a bad boy and slap his fingers.

Discipline:

Tell him to pick up the crayons. Explain that the crayons could get broken or mark up the floor. Put them out of the child's reach until the next day.

Scenario 2: Your two-year old empties a wastebasket.

Punishment:

Spank her and send her to her room.

Discipline:

Explain she may not play with the wastebasket. Give her something she may dump and fill.

Family Smart/Kid Friendly Workshops

To learn more about workshops and parenting resources focused on discipline and challenging behaviors, call

- 262-939-1984 (eastern Racine County)
- 262-763-0809 (western Racine County)

Racine County UW-Extension provides the workshops through Family Smart/Kid Friendly, a collaboration with City of Racine Health Department, Love Inc., Next Generation Now, Racine County Human Services Department, United Way of Racine County, and Western Racine County Health Department.

WHAT ABOUT SPANKING?

Should parents spank or not? Some parents think spanking is the right thing to do when their children misbehave. Others believe any form of spanking is wrong and harmful.

Parents often spank children when they are tired and frustrated; when they are "at the end of their rope." Some parents are so angry and frightened that they cannot think about anything else to do and simply lash out. They need help with their own problems so they can use better ways of disciplining their children.

Other parents spank because they do not know about other choices or tools for handling misbehavior and teaching their children. It is easier for parents to avoid spanking if they know about the many teaching, nurturing, and disciplining tools, which are more effective in the long-term, and less harmful than spanking and other forms of physical punishment.

SMALL CHANGE

Even preschool children need to learn how to make decisions. Those trips to the grocery store are ideal times to teach some basics about good nutrition and decision-making.

The next time you and your child are grocery shopping try this activity from the UW-Extension publication "Family Times":



"Toddler Shoppers"

Decide which simple food items your child can choose. Limit these items to choices that can be made from the shopping cart: canned, fresh or frozen fruits, juices, nutritious cereals and/or dairy products. Use questions like "would you like pineapple or orange fruit juice?"

When you get to the right aisle, give your child a few moments to make his/her selection. Be sure to provide plenty of praise for doing a fine job and being a good helper. Try statements like "you are being a great helper to mom / dad in the grocery store. I really appreciate your help!"

Put them in charge of holding coupons and looking for the coupon items on the shelves. Discuss the "cents off" from the coupon and talk about the amount saved. Another option may be to put an equal amount of money saved into the child's piggy bank. For example, "today, we saved \$1.50. You may put the \$1.50 in your piggy bank for your holiday shopping."

At meal times, point out the foods your child chose in the grocery store. "Tonight we are having hamburgers, corn, mashed potatoes, milk, and the apples that Sophia picked out at the grocery store."

Talk to your child about jobs people do. Help your child understand that people work to earn money to pay for family needs. If you wish, give your child a small allowance for tasks that they complete that are related to food preparation, setting the table, or clearing dishes.

WORKING WITH WOOD

Your preschooler will benefit in many ways by working with wood. Woodworking:

- teaches valuable life skills
- improves eye-hand coordination
- gives an opportunity to be creative
- leads to greater self-confidence
- develops problem solving skills and teaches how to plan
- may channel aggressive energy
- helps children feel powerful in a new and positive way
- gives the opportunity to learn how to work safely with tools

Pleasures of Woodworking Can Start Early

Have your child begin learning about woodworking by playing with plastic tools. Through this play, they learn the names of common tools and begin to understand how they are used. Many children enjoy watching adults working with tools and imitating them in their play.

Children also enjoy sanding wood. Give them a block of wood covered with sandpaper and let them sand a pinewood block. A coarse grit of sandpaper (80 or 100 grit) lets your preschooler see progress.

When using woodworking tools, make sure a rule list is created. For example,

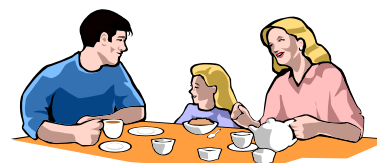
1. Wear safety goggles
2. Handle tools carefully
3. Always ask a grownup for help
4. Tool must stay in the woodworking area
5. Ask for the tool if you need one
6. Provide a strong and stable work surface.

**To learn more about children and woodworking, refer to the *Parenting the Preschooler* publication at:
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/pp/play.html>**

TIPS TO HELP FAMILIES EAT RIGHT

Adapted from www.mypyramid.com

U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Science Service

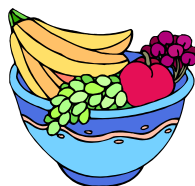


1. **Make half your grains whole.** Choose whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, and low fat popcorn, more often.
2. **Vary your veggies.** Go dark green and orange with your vegetables—eat spinach, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes.
3. **Focus on fruits.** Eat them at meals, and at snack time, too. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried, and go easy on the fruit juice.
4. **Get your calcium-rich foods.** To build strong bones serve low fat and fat-free milk and other milk products several times a day.
5. **Go lean with protein.** Eat lean or low fat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Also, change your tune with more dry beans and peas. Add chick peas, nuts, or seeds to a salad; pinto beans to a burrito; or kidney beans to soup.
6. **Change your oil.** We all need oil. Get yours from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn, soybean, canola, and olive oil.
7. **Don't sugar coat it.** Choose foods and beverages that do not have sugar and caloric sweeteners as one of the first ingredients. Added sugars contribute calories with few, if any, nutrients.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS...

- Do you have problems with children eating healthy meals?
- Does your “I’ll eat anything” child now push away their plate at mealtime?

If you answered yes, then plan to attend the “Mealtime Madness” workshop provided by the UW-Extension Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program. Learn ways to help children make healthy food choices, encourage “picky eaters” to try something new, and find out about other food related topics for parents and caregivers of children under the six.



“Mealtime Madness” Workshop

- **Monday, April 3, 6:15—8:15 p.m.**
Kenosha County Job Center, Kenosha
- **Monday, April 10, 6:15—8:15 p.m.**
St. Luke’s Health Pavilion, Racine



To register for the free workshop, call Racine County UW-Extension at 886-8460 (ask for Fay). For child care providers needing Registry Barcodes, a \$5 barcode fee is payable the night of the workshop.

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