

As They Grow

An Early Learning Newsletter for Families of Preschool Children

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Communication and Young Children

Talking with children involves the exchange of words, ideas and feelings between two people. Communication is what we say and how we say it. We communicate with looks (smiles and scowls), with actions (hugs and slaps), with silence (warm and cold), as well as with words (kind and unkind).



Adults usually do not have difficulty communicating with children when it simply involves giving directions on how to use scissors or explaining the danger of cars, but they can have difficulty communicating when feelings are involved — either the child's or their own.

Good Communication Leads to:

- ▶ warm relationships
- ▶ cooperation
- ▶ feelings of worth

Poor Communication Leads to:

- ▶ kids who "turn off" adults
- ▶ conflicts & bickering
- ▶ feelings of worthlessness

Included in this issue are some winning ways to interact with young children. Try them out!

Family Fun Activities



- ◆ Play “active” games together, such as: freeze tag or hide and seek.
- ◆ Take a walk with a magnifying glass.
- ◆ Play “Memory” with picture cards. Take turns turning two cards to find pairs.
- ◆ Write a letter to a relative or family friend.
- ◆ Do outdoor texture rubbings.
- ◆ Name animals. Everyone act out the movements of that animal.
- ◆ Take a break! Sit outside and just enjoy being together!

Teaching Politeness

Teach, don't reprimand.

It's easy to assume that your child is purposely using bad manners. But, your child might just need a lesson or two. Be specific when you teach. Remember that many follow-up lessons will be necessary. Instead of saying, "You're being rude" or "Don't do that!"; respond by saying, "It's impolite to burp at the table; but if you do, please say, 'excuse me.'"

Say 'Please,' 'Thank You,' 'You're Welcome' to Children

Children deserve the common courtesies which adults use with each other. Children learn by imitating the speech and behavior of adults. Help them learn to say "Please" and "Thank you" by imitating you.

Correct Privately

As annoying as your child's lack of manners may be, resist the urge to reprimand your child in front of others. When a child forgets to say "thank you" or "please," avoid pointing it out. Model the behavior you want your child to use. Making a scene as you attempt to teach your child proper manners, is, well, bad manners!

Tell What To Do

When your child is displaying bad manners avoid nagging about the problem. Instead of saying, "Don't yell in the house!" teach what to do by quietly saying, "Please, use a quiet voice," or "Inside voices, please."

Prepare in Advance

Whether you are planning a visit to a friend's home, dinner at a restaurant, or playgroup at a park, take time before you go to coach your child on the behavior you expect. Review the "rules" of good manners and you'll more likely experience a pleasant time with your child.

Fun with Puppets

Puppets are fun for young children. Puppets help children express themselves through puppet interactions. Young children enjoy making a personal puppet friend and talking to you through the puppet.

Finger Puppets

Materials needed:

1. Old gloves - rubber or fabric
2. Felt-tip pen

Instructions:

Cut one finger off old glove. Decorate with felt-tip pen. Place over finger and wiggle.

Sock Puppets

Materials needed:

1. Old socks
2. Fabric and yarn scraps
3. Buttons and other trims
4. Glue or glue stick
5. Felt-tip pens
6. Scissors
7. Needle and thread

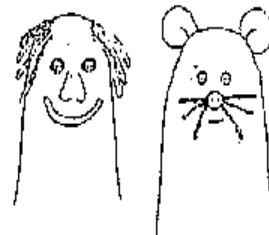
Instructions:

Put sock over hand. Glue or sew button eyes where your fist fits into sock. Add a felt tongue, ears, hat, or draw the face with felt pens.

Playtime:

If you want, you can create a whole "family" of puppets. After you have created your puppets, talk through your puppet with questions, such as . . .

- ◇ What is your favorite color?
- ◇ What is your favorite food?
- ◇ What is a funny thing mommy/daddy did?
- ◇ Who is your best friend?



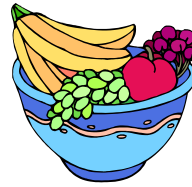
Healthy Eating Strategies for Young Children

Here are some strategies to help young children become healthy eaters:

- ◇ **Mealtime is more than eating food.** Meals are a time to connect as a family and support overall development. Talk with your child during meals and don't let your child eat alone. This time together helps build strong family relationships.
- ◇ **Establish routines at mealtime.** Routines make children feel loved and secure. You might say a blessing if that's part of your family's tradition. Or before each meal, ask all family members, "What was the best part of your day?"
- ◇ **Each meal should contain 3 to 4 healthy food choices.** Research shows children will choose a healthy diet when they are offered a selection of healthy foods.
- ◇ **Don't force children to eat.** Often the result is that children refuse to eat or eat less.
- ◇ **Allow flexibility with young children at the table.** Young children cannot sit for long periods of time. Plan for meals to not last longer than 10-20 minutes and snacks no longer than 5-15 minutes.



A Recipe You Can Make with Your Child



Fruit Dip

Here's an easy recipe for you and your child to make together:

Ingredients:

1/2 cup plain lowfat yogurt
1 tablespoon unsweetened frozen orange juice concentrate
Cinnamon powder
Seasonal fruit: apples, peaches, oranges, bananas, berries or pears

Directions:

While you cut up finger-size pieces of fruit (be sure they're small enough to not choke), ask your child to mix the orange juice and yogurt in a small bowl. Let him or her sprinkle some cinnamon on top. Then the two of you can dip the fruit pieces in the mixture and enjoy a snack.

While eating and preparing the food, talk about the different colors, tastes and shapes of the fruit and yogurt mixture. Mention that yogurt is made from milk, so it has calcium that helps make strong bones and teeth.

Go Play!

Healthy eating and physical activity go hand-in-hand. So make movement a part of everyday family life. Take walks as a family, go to the playground, or dance inside to your favorite music. Limit television and computer time. Children who spend a considerable amount of time in front of a screen are also the most likely to overeat or be overweight.



These suggestions are from ZERO TO THREE. You can learn more at: www.zerotothree.org

Help Young Children Be Creative

Children are naturally curious. Curiosity leads them to explore their world by examining different objects — which objects make a loud sound, move, squish, etc.? Children are practicing problem-solving skills as they experiment. This is a very valuable skill to acquire.

Some things children learn from creating art projects are:

- ▶ making decisions
- ▶ fine motor control (using small muscles)
- ▶ ability to value others' ideas
- ▶ taking turns
- ▶ communication skills



Set out a variety of objects that children can use to create art, such as: empty thread spools, paper towel tubes, rocks that are large enough not to be swallowed, leaves that you collect on a walk, markers, glitter-glue, clay, plastic bowls, cookie cutters, ribbon, large paper, newspaper to cut up and tear, paint, etc.

Let children create whatever they like. Let them experiment. There is no right or wrong way to create art. The experimenting is what is important, not the final art project.

Go to art fairs, museums, and exhibits in your local area, so children can be inspired. If children see adults doing creative work, creativity takes on a role of importance.

UW-EXTENSION WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

◇ Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome

Tues., July 24, 6:15-8:15 p.m. — Ives Grove Office Complex, 14200 Wash. Ave., Sturtevant

This workshop is required for childcare providers and employees, who have contact with children under the age of five. Registry Barcodes available for Child Care Providers for \$5.00, payable the night of the seminar.

To register, call 262-886-8460 by July 18. Questions? Contact Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262-833-8732.

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