



As They Grow

Newsletter for Parents of Preschool Children

University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension Family Living Education

March/April 2005

UW-Extension Walworth County
W3929 County Road NN
Elkhorn, WI 53121-4362

Phone: 262-741-3186
Fax: 262-741-3189
Email: jenny.wehmeier@ces.uwex.edu

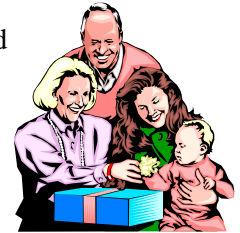
Dear Parent,

Welcome to the new format for *As They Grow*. We hope that you will find this format more parent friendly! We would also like to solicit your input for topic ideas. Feel free to contact me with your thoughts and suggestions.

Families that play together create an environment that help preschoolers succeed when they enter school. Children need challenging toys, good play areas, and other children to play with. However, children also need an adult to listen and respond to them, to show them ways to use toys, or to offer help when they need it. Steps that parents can take to help children develop thinking skills include:

- * Show warmth and care frequently. Praise your child. Focus on what the child is doing right. Show physical affection. Hug or kiss your child when he shares a new discovery with you.
- * Encourage exploration. Let your child explore and express him or herself, rather than restricting the child's behavior. Toddlers who develop their thinking skills have "floor freedom." Childproofing your home so it is safe allows toddlers opportunities to explore.
- * Reason with children. When you discipline, appeal to the child's feelings rather than imposing rules. Say "you can't play with it because it is sharp and could hurt," rather than "you can't play with it because I said so."
- * Talk together. The child who can describe and explain things well is the one who will learn to read most easily. Parents can help by elaborating on what children say with descriptive sentences.

Have fun helping your children learn!
Jenny Wehmeier
Walworth County Family Living Educator



MAKE FAMILY TIME LEARNING TIME

Children try to fulfill their strong drive to learn by asking endless questions and exploring their environments in a very energetic way.

Parents can help satisfy these desires and needs by trying a few fun ideas!

- Ask questions that make your child think. Which one is larger? Which one is blue?
- Talk about the day today. Say it's name. Is it Monday or Tuesday?
- What is the name of the season we are having now?
- Learn while doing the laundry. Have your child help you sort clothes by color. After the wash is done have your child help you put all the socks in one pile, mom's clothes in another pile, etc.
- LISTEN TO YOUR CHILDREN! Give them your full attention. This will help them value themselves as a person.



WHAT YOUR TODDLER CAN DO

Toddlers have developed many skills, including gross motor, fine motor, and cognitive skills.



Gross motor (large muscle) skills: jumping off a step, throwing, catching and bouncing a ball, walking, running, climbing onto the furniture, sliding down a snow hill, and beginning to hop.

Fine motor (small muscle) skills: holding crayons and pencils, building a block tower, winding up toys, moving toy cars on the floor, combing a doll's hair, pulling pants on and off.

Cognitive (thinking) skills: pointing to body parts including toes, stomach, back, knee, chin, and teeth.

FAMILIES ON THE MOVE-HEALTHY EATING

Did you know that more than one out of five of Wisconsin adults is obese, defined by having a Body Mass Index of 30 or more. Many people are becoming concerned with the rising obesity rate and its negative impact on our health. Parents need to become more aware of the epidemic facing their children as well. Becoming more aware of portion sizes and the serving sizes, when eating out or at home, can help you get on the road to a healthy weight while you still enjoy eating.



Many factors contribute to the obesity epidemic. In the simplest terms, people gain weight when they consume more calories than their body uses. Average daily calorie consumption in 2000 was roughly 300 calories higher than in 1985, a 12 percent increase. This increase in total calories reflects the increase in our portion sizes. Researchers at New York University studied the role of expanding portion sizes in the obesity epidemic. Their results show that portion sizes served in many food service outlets (and subsequently, our perception of what a "normal" portion size is) far exceed the amounts recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute looked at changes in portion sizes over the past 20 years including:

- A bagel was three inches and 140 calories in 1991; today it is six inches and 350 calories (an increase of 210 calories).
- A cheeseburger was 333 calories; today it is 590 calories (an increase of 257 calories).
- Chicken Caesar Salad was 1 1/2 cups and 390 calories; today it is 3 cups and 790 calories (increase of 400 calories).

UW-Extension recommends some ways to choose sensible portions when eating out:

- Choose a small or medium portion for main dishes, side dishes, and beverages.
- Choose water or milk to drink. Soda and fruit drinks have calories with few nutrients.
- If main dish portions are large, order an appetizer or side dish or share a main dish.
- You don't have to clean your plate--leave the rest or package it to take home.
- Order from the menu instead of the "all you can eat" buffet. Also, be careful when ordering from children's menus. Often times, the menu includes items that are high in fat, fried, and / contain no fruits or vegetables.



And, when eating at home:

- Using standard measuring cups, measure a typical portion of foods you eat often. This will help you estimate portion sizes of these and similar foods.
- Limit portions of foods high in fats and sugars like cookies, cakes, fats, oils, and spreads.
- Try using a smaller plate for your meals.
- Take sensible portions at the beginning of the meal and don't take seconds.
- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables. Portion sizes for these foods are important only to be sure you get enough. Five to nine servings are recommended daily.

Watch for more information on the Food Guide Pyramid and New 2005 Dietary Guidelines!!!

SIBLING RIVALRY

Children first learn about different points of view from their family members. Sibling relationships provide an opportunity to test social behaviors. In order to better manage sibling rivalry:

- Help children understand why they have disagreements and how to work through them .
- Recognize and accept each child as being different. Uniqueness is a strength, not a weakness.
- Praise children for what they are-rather than for what they can do.
- Avoid remarks which compare-they create negative feelings toward parent, child, and sibling.
- Plan alone time with each child.



DEVELOPING READING AND WRITING IN CHILDREN

Successful reading and writing experiences are important for young children. Children who consider reading and writing to be a pleasure usually have an easier transition to formal schooling.



Different teaching techniques should be used with very young children than are used with school age children. For example, almost no one-year-old can sit at a desk 'writing' for extended periods. To force a toddler to do so will usually result in frustration, for parent and child. Worse, writing becomes a chore instead of a pleasure. Many parents want to do whatever they can to help their youngster succeed in school. "Pre-reading" and "pre-writing" experiences provide a solid basis. Here are some ideas:

TODDLERS

- Point occasionally to words as you read them.
- Have your toddler turn pages and name the pictures.
- Ask "what" and "where" questions about details in pictures and books.
- With favorite stories, pause and omit a word occasionally for your toddler to fill in.
- Keep plain paper, crayons and big pencils handy for drawing sessions.
- Encourage any attempt at "writing," regardless of how messy it may appear.

PRESCHOOLERS

- Relate story incidents to your toddler's own experiences.
- Read to your child regularly and often- even the same books if he enjoys them.
- Encourage your child to write words and phrases and to read them back to you. Don't overemphasize spelling.
- Make up stories together that have a beginning, middle, and ending.

Most important, make reading and writing a pleasurable experience. Make sure your child sees YOU reading. With this basis, school-based reading and writing will follow naturally.

WHEN YOUR CHILD SAYS "NO"

Sometimes it seems like "no" is the only word your child knows. Beginning at about 15 months, children begin to practice independence- one way they do this is to say "no." Your child is not being "naughty" - he is just showing he is growing up!

Suggestions to help reduce the "no's" include:

- * Try not to say "no" too often yourself!
- * Put breakable items out of reach and provide a variety of activities.
- * Try not to break your own rules- children will learn rules don't matter.
- * Tell her what you want in a positive way.

For example, say "you can play with water outside" instead of "don't play with water in the house."

Have you heard about the Matheson Memorial Library New Story Times?

Tuesdays, March 8-29, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

This program for 3-5 year olds will include story time focusing on the healthy topic of the day, finger plays, puppets, healthy snack, and physical activities that you and your child can enjoy together!

The cost of the program is \$10. Registration is limited to 12 children and their caregivers. Scholarships are also available. The fee includes a story book for your child to take home with them, weekly nutritious snacks, and handouts about nutrition, reading, and physical fitness.

For more information about the program, visit www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/walworth or call 741-3186. You do not need to be a resident of Elkhorn to participate in the program.

TOILET TRAINING

Children are ready to use the toilet at different ages. If you try to rush toilet training, you will have more problems and it will probably take longer.

Most children can tell you they have wet their diapers long before they are ready to control their bodies.

At 19 or 20 months, your child may be able to tell you when he is going to have a bowel movement. But he may not be able to get to the toilet in time to prevent an accident.

At two years old, he may tell you he wants to go to the toilet. He may be ready then to begin using the toilet. Praise him when he succeeds, and be calm when he doesn't.

Try to be patient about accidents. Hug and praise your child when he stays dry or uses the toilet. Do not punish him when he has an accident. Punishment can make toilet training take longer.

Most children still wet at night or while they are busy playing even after they learn to use a toilet during the day.

Sometimes an illness or a change in the family, like a new baby, will cause a child to start wetting again.

Family Building Blocks Events

Pre-registration is required for these programs. Call 262-728-4731 for program details and registration. All programs are held at Community Action's Family Building Blocks Center, 1545 Hobbs Drive, Delavan.

Family Fun Day: Move to the Music

Join music teacher Lisa Reshkus as we learn creative ways to express ourselves through music! Make your own instruments and also enjoy refreshments. Saturday, March 12, 10:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

1, 2, 3, 4 Parents

Join other parents with children ages birth to four to discuss the power of encouragement, ages and stages of development, tips to prevent problems and accidents, and non-violent discipline. Wednesdays, March 9-30, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

ADHD & Your Family

In collaboration with East Troy's Family Center, all Walworth County Families are invited to hear child psychiatrist, Dr. Stanley Fudala speak about ADHD. Mark Weerts will also talk briefly about ADHD from a school's perspective. The workshop will conclude with a question-and-answer period. Monday, March 19, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Chester Brynes School, 2031 Division Street, East Troy. (free childcare available)

This newsletter is a publication of the University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension.
Jenny M. Wehmeier, Family Living Agent, Walworth County

UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX requirements. University of Wisconsin-Extension, United States Department of Agriculture, and Wisconsin Counties Cooperating.



University of Wisconsin, United States Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating.-An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, the University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming Including ADA and Title IX Requirements.