

AS THEY GROW

Newsletter for parents of preschool children



University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension Family Living Education July/August Year 1

Dear Parent,

How long has it been since you have lain down on your back in the grass and looked for shapes in the clouds? Lets' revive this simple, warm-weather pleasure.



Help your child describe the clouds by heights, thickness and color. Does your child see anything in the cloud shapes? Look for animals, storybook characters and household objects. Can your child spot an airplane, bird or moon in the sky?

Many outdoor games are very vigorous and active. This one invites family members to share some quiet time together! Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Laura Dombrock

Laura Dombrock
Family Living Community Educator
Waukesha County U.W.-Extension
262-548-7770

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.
- ❖ Explain why not. If your child asks for something you don't want him or her to have, be honest with yourself and with the child.
- ❖ Answer honestly. Try to answer all questions honestly. Pick your words to suit the child's level of understanding.



DISCIPLINE WITH "TIME OUT"



A "time out" can be a good way to handle those times when your preschooler seems determined to disobey and will not stop! Time out means putting your child in a safe place away from you for a few minutes. This gives you a chance to calm down if you need to and lets your child know that you are not going to let the behavior continue. Time out should be used to make your child understand that you are in control and will handle bad behavior with loving gentleness.

Here are some important things to do to keep time out as a guidance and discipline method, not punishment:

- Keep time out short. For a preschooler, time out should last no more than three minutes, or one minute for each year of your child's life. Set a timer and be sure you follow your time limits. When the time is up, go to the child, give a hug and say "Come back now and be with me."

- Tell your child about time out. Tell your child ahead of time, before a rule is broken, what time out is and how you will use it.
- Choose the time out place carefully. Use a safe, non-scary place like a room, a chair or part of a room. Never use a closet or place that is dangerous or frightening to your child.
- Let your child know why you are using time out and how long it will last. Explain to your child before time out why the discipline is being used. Indicate how long time out will be and that you will come back when the time is up. Keep your promise.
- Try to stay calm. When you use time out, or any kind of discipline, try to keep calm. Explain clearly to your child why you are doing it. Follow through in a way that is firm, but also shows that you love and care for your child.

"TIME OUT" FOR PARENTS

When you feel overwhelmed and need to calm down, here are some tips...

- ⊕ Breathe deeply or count to ten. Put your child in a safe area and go outside or to another room for a few minutes.
- ⊕ Lie on the floor with your feet up on a chair. Place a cool cloth on your face and think of a peaceful scene. Stay for five minutes.
- ⊕ Stop. Try to think what is making you so angry. Is it the children or is it something else? Are you taking your frustrations out on them?
- ⊕ Designate a place, even a chair or a corner, as a "time-out" spot where you can go when you feel you are losing your temper. Designate a safe, separate place for your child. When you are cool and collected, tell your child what made you angry.

TRAFFIC SAFETY



Traffic accidents happen so frequently because young children simply have no idea about the danger of moving vehicles. It is possible to teach preschoolers about the basics of traffic safety.

Preschoolers are at a physical disadvantage. Sit, stoop or kneel beside a road to get a feel of the difference. You can't see nearly as much and you can't really tell whether a vehicle is coming, going or standing still.

From two to three years of age, children can be taught where it is safe to play and to walk, and where to stop.

At four, they can understand the dangers of moving, parked and backing-up vehicles, and how to look for cars in the street.

By five, many children are capable of learning to cross a street safely at crosswalks.

A DRINK OF WATER!



In warm weather, it is very important to offer water to children throughout the day, especially after active play times. As a general guideline, children should be offered drinks of water at least every hour during hot weather and every half hour if they are in a place that is not air-conditioned. Encourage children to have a drink of water whenever they are thirsty.

Plain water is best, but milk and fruit juices are also good choices. Under normal conditions, children need about eight four-ounce servings of water per day. But the need increases during extremely hot weather. Set a good example by drinking plenty of water yourself!

TRAVEL TIPS



Traveling with your preschooler can be a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

The biggest challenge is keeping your child busy in the car. The key is planning, patience and plenty of rest stops. On a long trip, stop every 1-2 hours and let your child run around outside. This will release energy and exercise large muscles. Travel can be difficult for children and it is unrealistic to expect a young child to sit in one place for more than 2 hours.

Here are some tips:

- ☺ Bring your child's pillow and a small blanket to add a touch of home to the car and new environments.
- ☺ A bottle of bubbles, a frisbee, jump rope or a ball are all fun to use to encourage exercise at rest stops.
- ☺ Pack fresh fruit, vegetables and crackers for snacks. Also carry enough water to ward off dehydration.
- ☺ Books, crayons, magic slate boards and small toys can also keep a child busy.

MORE WAYS TO SAY "VERY GOOD"

THAT'S IT!

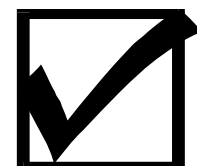
Way to go.

Good for you!

I knew you could do it.

That's coming along nicely.

I'm happy to see you working like that.



READING ALOUD TOGETHER

Reading books can stimulate conversations about feeling, fears, thoughts and experiences. Parents can encourage their children's reading in many ways. The conversation that goes with reading aloud to children is as important as the reading itself.

The Do's and Don'ts of Reading Aloud



DO'S



1. Read as often as you and child have time for.
2. Remember that the art of listening is an acquired one. It must be taught and cultivated gradually -- it doesn't happen overnight.
3. Allow time for discussion after reading a story. Thoughts, hopes, fears and discoveries are aroused by a book.
4. Remember that reading aloud comes naturally to very few people. To do it successfully and with ease you must practice.
5. The most common mistake in reading aloud is reading too fast. Read slowly enough for children to build mental pictures of what you just read. Slow down enough for the children to see the pictures in the book without feeling hurried.
6. Arrange for time each day for the child to read by himself (even if "read" only means turning pages and looking at the pictures).
7. Fathers should make an extra effort to read to their children. Because 90 percent of primary school teachers are women, young boys often associate reading with women and school work.



DON'TS



1. Don't read stories that you don't enjoy yourself. Your dislike will show in the reading and that defeats your purpose.
2. Don't read above a child's emotional level.
3. Don't be unnerved by questions during the reading, particularly from very young children. Answer their questions patiently. Don't put them off. Don't rush your answers. There is no time limit for reading a book but there is a time limit on a child's inquisitiveness. Foster that curiosity with patient answers -- then resume your reading.



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This newsletter is a publication of University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension.

Laura Dombrock, Family Living Community Educator

Shelby J. Maier, Family Living Agent, Walworth County

Tedi J. Winnett, Director, Kenosha County

Christine Long, Instructional Specialist

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