

AS THEY GROW



Newsletter for parents of preschool children
University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension Family Living Education

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Dear Parent,

The family that plays together can create an environment that helps 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". Child-proofing 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!

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WHAT YOUR TODDLER CAN DO



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

Gross motor skills: jumping off a step, throwing, catching and bouncing a ball and beginning to hop.

Fine motor skills: holding crayons and pencils; building a block tower, winding up toys; pulling pants on and off.

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



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 date today. Say its 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.

SIBLING RIVALRY

Children first learn about different points of view from their family. Sibling relationships provide an opportunity to test social behaviors.

Managing Sibling Rivalry

- Plan time with each child.
- 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 the child's sibling.
- Help children understand why they have disagreements and how to work through them.

TREASURE BOX



This toy helps children learn about the way things feel, and helps them to tell one kind of texture from another. It also gives them a chance to collect and learn about different objects and materials.

Materials

Small cardboard box, like a shoe box
Crayon
Small touch treasures
Glue

Making the Toy

Print your child's name in large letters with crayon on top of the treasure box. Then, with your child's help, glue small objects of different textures and shapes inside the box. You can include pieces of sandpaper, scraps of wool, fur, sticks, small toy animals, shiny lids, stickers, etc. Be sure these things are not sharp or dangerous.

Playing

Your child will enjoy just looking at and touching the things in his/her treasure box. Encourage him/her to tell you about the objects. You can ask which one feels hard, is the tallest, is green, etc. Take turns asking questions. You and your child might want to have separate boxes for specific kinds of things-- a box of all round things, things that are all hard, all furry or all shiny. Take backyard or neighborhood walks to collect natural things like pinecones, leaves, flowers for an outdoor treasure box! Consider making a treasure box of a special occasion, trip or person.

Have fun!





DEVELOPING READING & 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-agers. 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 the pages and name the pictures.
- Ask "what" and "where" questions about details in the pictures.
- 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"

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

NO!

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

NO!



TOILET TRAINING



Children are ready to use the toilet at different ages. If you try to rush toilet training, you'll 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 they are going to have a bowel movement. However, they may not be able to go to the toilet in time to prevent an accident.

At two years old, your child may tell you they want to go to the toilet. They may be ready to begin using the toilet. Praise them when they succeed, and be calm when they don't.

Try to be patient about accidents. Hug and praise your child when they stay dry or use the toilet. Do not punish them when they have 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.

CINNAMON TORTILLA CHIPS

What you need:

- 1 tablespoon hot water
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 4 (6 inch) flour tortillas
- few shakes powdered sugar
- vegetable oil spray



What you do:

1. Mix water and vanilla together in a small bowl.
2. Lightly coat both sides of tortillas with vegetable oil spray.
3. Lightly brush each side with water mixture.
4. Sprinkle each side with cinnamon and then powdered sugar.
5. Place on a wire rack.
6. Bake at 400° F for 6 minutes or until lightly browned.



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