

AS THEY GROW



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

November/December Year 3

Dear Parent,

Here we are at the holiday season already. Most of us look forward to happy family times at the holidays, but we may also dread all the work involved. This year, why not take some time before the holidays to think about what is really important to you and your children. Holiday activities mean most if shared, so time together is one very important ingredient of happy holidays. If you are spending all your time cooking, shopping, or cleaning, your child misses out on precious time with you.

Remember, preschoolers don't need things and activities as much as they need people and relationships. One simple gift given by a parent who then joins in playing with it is better than a pile of gifts from a parent who is too busy to play.

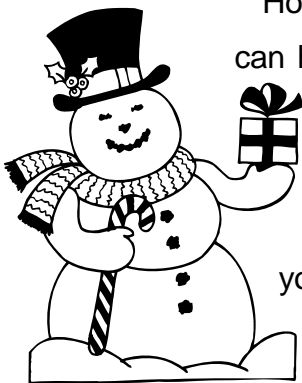
Enjoy your holidays and your child!

Sincerely,

Laura Dombrock
Community Educator
Waukesha County UW-Extension



Shopping With Daddy



Holiday time is gift-giving time. Preschoolers love to give gifts. Fathers can have a special time taking a child shopping to pick out something just right for Mommy or brothers and sisters. A shopping trip with a preschooler needs to be short and take place at a time when your child is rested and not hungry. Help your child decide before you go what the special gift will be. Then you can go directly to a store that will have that item, cutting down on the tiring, frustrating "looking" that most preschoolers (and plenty of adults) dislike.

Sneaking the gift into the house, wrapping it and hiding it can all be part of a fun time with daddy.



Love, Not Stuff

In our society, it sometimes seems like having a lot is what is important. When you have a child, though, you quickly learn that that's not true at all. Your child teaches you that it's love, not stuff, that matters. Most parents agree that little arms around their neck, and little voices whispering, "I love you," are more important to them than any possession they have.

Jolly Old Saint

To most adults, Santa Claus is a happy figure who stirs up happy feelings and memories. To many preschoolers, though, Santa is a real strange-looking, scary guy. We've all seen screaming, struggling children trying to escape from the lap of mall Santas. To make sure your child won't have such a bad experience, make a dry run. Go with your child to just look at Santa. Stand only as close as your child is comfortable with. Explain what the children are doing when they go up to sit on his lap. Ask if your child would like to talk to Santa next time. If the answer is yes, come back another time and again give your preschooler a chance to choose. Don't force your child to talk to Santa. Better to wait until next year than to have a frightened, angry child with bad feelings about that scary guy in the red suit.



Try Whispering

It's strange, but true, that children will listen more closely to whispers than to loud voices. Many teachers know that one way to quiet down a classroom is to begin whispering. Try this trick yourself. If your child is being too noisy in the house, or if you are going into a place where quiet is important, lower your own voice. You'll find that your child will begin to whisper back and loudness is no longer a concern.

Those Darn Colds



Preschoolers catch a lot of colds. Children are more vulnerable than adults to the germs which cause colds. Most colds are not dangerous for your child, but they can cause a lot of discomfort. Some ways to help your child cope with a cold are:

- Be sure the child is warm enough when up and about. It's usually not necessary or even possible to keep a child with a cold in bed, but warmth is important.
- Because of a stuffy head and general yuckiness, your child might not feel like eating. Offer simple, easy-to-eat food like soups, canned or packaged noodle meals, puddings, gelatin.
- Encourage the drinking of plenty of fluids. Water is best, but children often prefer juice, which is fine.
- Consult your doctor or pharmacist before giving a child any medication for a cold. Common cold medication for adults should not be given to children without a doctor's order.



Getting Ready For A Special Time

We have all seen situations where children were misbehaving and causing their parents a great deal of embarrassment. Some people do not like to see children in places like restaurants or movie theaters because they are sure the children will be noisy and disturbing. Children want to behave well and be praised for their behavior. If you are planning to take your child to a place where good behavior is especially important, try some reminders ahead of time.

"Next week, we are going to Cousin Sue's wedding. It will be very special. When people go to a wedding, they behave in special ways. They are quiet and they pay good attention. They don't want to make any fuss that might upset the bride and groom."

"Day after tomorrow we are going to Cousin Sue's wedding. You will want to remember to use your whisper voice and sit as still as you can."

"Today is Sue's wedding! Tell me how you will behave when we get to the wedding."

And in church, whispering, "We are finally at the wedding. It's exciting! Let's remember to sit very still and only whisper. Here's a book you can look at if you need something to do."



And afterward, "You were just great at the wedding! You sat still and you used your whisper voice. I was very proud. It's fun to take you places because you can behave so well."

Make-Believe Play

Make-believe play has many implications for future success in the modern work world. Much work of the future has to do



with computers and automation. This involves working with symbols (words, pictures, numbers) rather than things.

Make-believe play helps children deal with insecurities through fantasies and fantasies help children develop skills.



The feelings of power that children have in fantasy help them feel strong and good about themselves. Children can work through bad feelings in fantasy play by creating an unpleasant experience and changing it to meet their needs.

Fantasy relates to the ability to entertain oneself, attention span, vocabulary skills, flexibility, creativity and ability to work with symbols rather than things.



Expose children to a variety of new experiences-read books, make up stories, go to zoos, parks, museums and libraries.



Encourage imaginative thinking by playing pretend and being creative.

Provide toys and props such as dolls, stuffed animals, plastic dishes, old clothes, purse, hats, sunglasses and gloves.



It's Not Too Cold



In the winter, it's all too easy to keep children indoors in front of T.V. Your preschooler needs to exercise large muscles and have a chance to burn off some energy. Encourage your child to play outdoors in winter. Take the time necessary to help with warm clothing so that your child won't get cold right away. Remember that loose-fitting light layers are warmer than one tight, thick garment. Go outside with your child. Build a snowperson, have snowball throwing (how far can you throw?, how close can you come to that branch?), go sledding or skating, take a walk. You as well as your child will benefit from the exercise and fresh air and less T.V.



RED, GREEN, AND WHITE CHRISTMAS WREATH (a vegetable platter)



Ingredients:

2 cups raw cauliflower pieces
2 cups raw broccoli pieces
1 pint cherry tomatoes
1 3/4 ounce pkg. dry Italian dressing
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 tablespoons vinegar
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves

Instructions:

1. Wash hands.
2. Wash all the vegetables and arrange around the rim of your platter.
3. Mix all the remaining ingredients and pour into a serving bowl.
4. Place bowl in the middle of the vegetables.

A vegetable snack for lunch or dinner!



References:

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