



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Nutrition

How important is breakfast?

Children who eat breakfast get a head start on the essential daily nutrients they need because breakfast provides one-fourth to one-third of the day's energy and nutrient needs. Children who skip breakfast usually fall short of their daily dietary needs.

Here are some good ideas for a balanced breakfast:

- Dairy products, such as low-fat milk or yogurt.
- A grain such as high-fiber bread or cereal.
- A protein, such as peanut butter, cheese, or a lean cut of meat.
- Fruit or 100 percent fruit juice.

If you don't have time for a sit-down breakfast, make sure you have plenty of items to consume in the car:

Breakfast bars, fresh fruit, and cartons of milk or 100 percent fruit juice. □

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Games & Activities

Learning games

Fun learning games can teach a variety of skills. Here are two games that can help preschoolers improve observation skills, perceive relationships, and develop language.

Both of these games can be played again and again in more complex forms over the next several years.

I Spy

The purpose of this game is to get a child to identify objects from your description of their characteristics.

Select materials for which your child already knows the name: plate, ring, cotton ball, can, comb, and book.

Once you know that your child is familiar with each of these things, tell him: "I'm going to say 'I spy something', then I'll describe an object on the table. I want you to find the object and tell me its name."

Examples: "I spy something round and hard." (plate) "I spy something round that you can wear on your finger." (ring)

As a child's vocabulary expands, the descriptions can become more complex. For example: "I spy something oval made of brown leather." (football)

Which Ones Go Together?

The purpose of this game is not only to teach language but also to help the child identify relationships and associations.

Select pairs of household items that have something in common but which also have basic differences: apple and orange; glass and cup; brush and comb; fork and spoon; pen and pencil; glove and mitten.

Then arrange six or more of these pairs of items in haphazard order on the table.

Select one item at a time (for example, the apple) and say: "Find the one that is like this."

When your child makes the right selection, you can ask: "How are the apple and the orange alike?" Your child may answer: "You can eat both of them."

Then you can ask: "How are they different?" He may reply: "They taste different."

If your child has difficulty with either of these two games, you can give him the answers. Later in the game you can return to the item he missed to see if he understood the answer.

When your child has become familiar with the rules of these games, you can allow him to play the role of the adult and choose the items for "I Spy."

You may need to help him select the pairs of items for "Which Ones Go Together." Nevertheless, he will have fun seeing if you can answer his questions. □

Learning how to help

How do you get a child to do what he or she is capable of doing?

Motivating any child of any age to do anything hinges on praise. You cannot over-praise a child. And praise comes in many forms.

Saying, "You've been a big help!" is better than saying nothing. But saying, "That refrigerator shines! You pulled out the shelves and wiped the tray!" is much more ego stroking.

Also, such specific praise serves the purpose of clarification. The child knows why you are happy and is likely to repeat noticed actions.

Clarification means letting a child know what he or she is expected to do, and what will happen if that expectation isn't filled.

Charts with gold stars or stickers are also excellent praise vehicles. The most hardened lazy-bones will do things for tiny bits of paper that a week of yelling won't produce.

Charts are handy for clarification as well as praise. A chart posted in the kitchen might read:

1. All dishes washed, dried, and put away.
2. The floor swept and spills wiped up.
3. The sink cleaned out with cleanser.

Certainly chores are different from family to family and your list may not look like this one at all.

If the dish-doer checks each point with a pencil attached to the chart, no leeway is left for a difference of opinion about what "finished" means.

An unchecked chart and an unfinished job can mean no television, no computer, no overnight friends, or whatever punishment fits your family.

While a chart or list works for older children, younger ones need a job to be demonstrated several times.



Instead of saying, "Clean the bathroom," take a six-year-old into the bathroom and show him how to clean in, around and behind the stool, and wipe the lavatory. Show him what else needs to be cleaned and how to do it.

After the demonstration, let him do the job while you watch. At that point, when you say, "clean the bathroom," you know his definition of clean is the same as yours.

Demonstrating, praising and following through take incredible amounts of time. Many parents are just too exhausted at the end of a workday to struggle, so they just do it themselves.

But if you expend extra energy now, you'll save a bunch later. And you'll have taught your children valuable lessons about being responsible, contributing to the welfare of the family, and finishing what they've started.

You'll all have a happier, cleaner home as well. □

Check baby's hearing

Once a baby can sit up with props, around five months old, she's also busy paying attention to the world about her. She turns her head to seek out sounds she hears; both her eyes and ears appear to search for the source of the sound, particularly if she drops something and it makes noise.

This is a good time to check for a hearing impairment if your baby is not responding in this way to the noises in the world around her.

You can assess her hearing by observing how she responds when you deliberately make sounds yourself or make sounds with objects which are within her hearing (five to six feet) but which she cannot see.

Does she turn her head to look when someone talks to her? Does she look toward loud, unexpected or unfamiliar noises?

On the other hand, if she fails to respond or if her responses aren't regular, you must not automatically assume she has a hearing impairment. For example, the time schedule for premature infants or those with delayed development will not be the same as for the "typical" infant.

A child is never too young to have a hearing test. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, consult your child's doctor. She may do a hearing test herself or refer you to a specialist or clinic.

Hearing loss affects approximately three million American children under the age of 18. It is vital that babies with hearing problems are identified as soon as possible so that they can be helped to develop normal speech. There are many treatment options available.

Unless she can hear her own voice and the voices of other people, a baby will experience problems with both language and learning. □

Long distance grandparenting

Most all grandparents would appreciate tips on how to become involved in the lives of their grandchildren who live far away.

As a grandmother who lives several states away from my own granddaughters, I can readily identify with this topic, as my husband I have also been concerned about how to establish close relationships as long distance grandparents.

When the children were too young for phone conversations and e-mails, we relied on pictures.

We took many pictures of activities we shared when we had opportunities to visit.

Then we could frequently put one in the mail, with a short note reminding them about what we had enjoyed together for Mom and Dad to read. (The parents of those far away grandchildren are an important part of the plan, to help keep the remembrances and conversations going.)

We gave the children photo albums so they could add the new pictures and notes, and have a book of memories to look through on their own.

We also sent many postcards—little ones love to receive their own mail.

Postcards usually showed animals and birds associated with where we live. Sometimes we sent pictures by e-mail that we had taken of our home and life, so that Mom and Dad could show these on the computer.

When they were toddlers and preschoolers, we bought favorite children's books, and then made tape recordings to send of us reading the book aloud to the child, talking with



her by name as we went along.

That way they heard our voices frequently as Mom and Dad would play the tape again and again for the child to turn the pages independently, and the books became special favorites to pull out for story time when we visited.

When we did visit, we tried hard not to be the grandparents who bring too many things to make up for absence, but rather tried to plan enjoyable activities we could share together, such as a trip to an animal farm or a walk in the woods.

As the girls became able to talk more on the telephone, we learned to ask open-ended questions that would allow them to share some of their lives at preschool.

We listened hard and tried to remember names of friends, plans for special events, and so on that we could ask about in subsequent calls.

We also talk about daily trivia in our phone calls, such as what we're all having for dinner, what the puppy is doing right then, and which book the child is reading for homework.

During our visits, we make efforts to have time to share their ordinary lives, doing things like having lunch with them and their friends in the school cafeteria, and going to soccer practice and games.

My husband read through the classics with our older granddaughter. She kept the collection at her house, and on the phone they discussed what they would read during the next visit.

None of these are earthshaking ideas, but together they have helped us all feel that we are close, though distant physically.

The important thing for any family is to find what works for them, and to keep the goal of relationships in mind. □

Something New!

"Grandma Says" is a twice-monthly special message that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children's book reviews.

To receive your free issues, go to:

www.GrowingChild.com/
FreeGrandmaSays

and enter your e-mail address.

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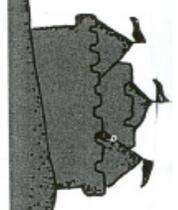
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

Growing Together issues may be reproduced in part or in full by participating organizations.

Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5</p> <p>Tell your fellow family members what you like about them.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Look at a bug under a magnifying glass.</p> 	<p>7</p> <p>If you had a pet camel, where would he sleep?</p> 	<p>1</p> <p>August is named after Augustus Caesar. Where did he live?</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Look at the stamps on the mail you receive. How are they alike? How are they different?</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Wash Baby's toys. Rinse well so all the soap is gone.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Have dessert outside with the neighbors.</p> 
<p>12</p> <p>Sit on a neighbor's porch and talk about the weather.</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>Laylat al-Gadr begins</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Walk on your hands and feet and count to ten.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Give Baby a box or bowl of "safe" junk to rummage around in.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>After dinner take a quiet walk outside.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Invite a small friend to share a meal.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Eid al-Fitr begins.</p>
<p>19</p> <p>What fits into what? What bowl, pans, cups do you have that nest inside of each other.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Make a map that shows how to get to the grocery store.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Help put the clean dishes away.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Can you think of some words that rhyme with your name?</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Make a tower with six blocks.</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Trace your hand on a piece of paper. Cut it out.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Make some paper airplanes to fly outside.</p> 
<p>26</p> <p>Play with the hose filling plastic containers. Water the plants while you're at it.</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Find a globe to look at and talk about.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Get dressed and make your bed before breakfast.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Draw a picture of someone who lives at your house.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Talk about traffic safety. Stopping, listening and looking. Examples help.</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Cut numbers out of the newspaper. Put them in order. Then paste them down on something.</p> 	