



# News for the Nurturing Child Care Professional

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## Back to School: Pre-School Prep Helps Calm School or Daycare Jitters



*Improving Lives. Improving Texas.*

Whether your child will be attending school or daycare for the first time, returning to the classroom after summer or an extended break, or even heading to a Mom's Day Out Program in the Fall, the first day of school or child care can be a tough transition. Most children may fluctuate between feelings of excitement and apprehension, and understandably so, their parents may share those same emotions. Even older kids still get the first-day jitters as they wonder who their teacher might be, where their classroom is, and whether they will "fit in." Regardless of age, here are tips to make the transition back to school an easier one for everyone!



Prepping kids beforehand to eliminate as many elements of surprise or the unknown is a key to keeping kids happy and positive about beginning the school year--regardless of their age. Youngsters are already thinking about the school year, and most likely have accompanied you already on trips to the store to purchase school supplies, clothes, shoes and even a backpack to start off the school year prepared and in style! Here are some tips for keeping jitters to a minimum and smiles to the max about the start of school!

### Pre-School Prep Ideas to Keep Kids Happy:

- Start a child's back-to-school routine at least a week before the school begins, if not longer.
- Visit the school with your child ahead of time.
- Let your child have some control in school planning.
- Plan a welcome school special activity as a family.
- Give your kids a run through of what their school day might be like.
- Address emotional issues beforehand and then during the first few weeks of school.
- Don't linger on the first day.
- Know when to bring in reinforcements when your child is not adjusting to school.
- Schedule a quality question-and-answer time with your child.



### Inside this Issue:

- Caring for Mixed Age Groups
- Liar Liar Pants on Fire
- Is it developmentally appropriate?
- Daycare activities

## Questions?

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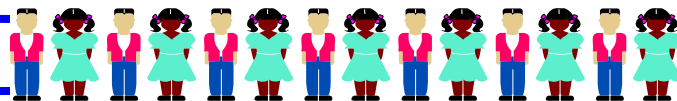
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# Caring for Mixed Age Groups



Karina is not unlike many other family childcare providers. She opens her home to care for four children in addition to her own four year old son. She cares for a young infant and his two year sister full time. She welcomes a three year old on Tuesday and Friday and eight year old Jalika every afternoon after school.

Unlike childcare center teachers, family childcare providers often care for children of many ages. Family daycare providers may offer services for children as young as six weeks of age and many provide afterschool or summer care for older children as well. Caring for a mixed age group presents a unique set of challenges and benefits for the caregiver.

## Challenges

The caregiver must take extra safety precautions when there are infants or toddlers in care. It may be difficult to find snack items that are appropriate for all age groups. Planning structured activities is difficult when there are children with various ability levels and interests. Daily routines such as nap or meal times may need to be more flexible to accommodate different aged children. Older children may prefer same age peers and resent the younger child in a play group.

## Benefits

Multi-age groups offer children opportunities to develop and practice social skills. There is a wider range of behavior and performance that is likely to be accepted and tolerated by the adults as well as by the children themselves. There is often less competitive and more cooperative or helpful behaviors. Mixed-age group care is more like a home setting and often a more comfortable and secure setting for young children. Siblings are not separated. By design, mixed-age group care is geared more to the needs of individuals. Children in such groups have greater freedom to develop at their own rate. Older children learn to adapt their language and social skills to relate with younger children, often learning patience, compassion and problem solving skills. Younger children are challenged by older children and often engage in more complex activities than when they play with same age peers.

## Tips for caring for mixed-age groups:

Provide a wide range of choices. Most caregivers find that most of the day is comprised of unstructured "free play" where they provide a wide range of materials and activities that are appropriate for various children. Provide some materials that are used specifically for an age group. Not all toys or areas need to be "one size

fits all." It is fine to have some toys that are of specific interest for only one age group. Consider ages of children when you set up the childcare space. Safety is paramount. Scissors that are used by school-aged children may need to be stored out of the reach of toddlers. Materials that are safe and appropriate for younger children can be arranged in easy to reach bins or containers. You may want to provide smaller furniture and step stools for younger children too. Select toys and materials that are open ended and can be used in many ways. Balls, art materials, blocks can be used by children with various abilities, they will use the material in increasingly complex ways. Focus on individual or small group activities. Asking a group of children of differing ages to participate together may bore older children or frustrate younger children. Use the opportunities to promote cooperation and teamwork. Encourage children to help each other and solve problems together. Accept the fact you may need to be flexible when scheduling daily routines.

Meeting the needs of individual children may mean you need to veer from routine. You may find a need to prepare an extra snack for an afterschool child or set up a quiet area for the youngster who still needs a nap.

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*Check Online Class: Managing Mixed Age Groups in a Child Care*

# Liar Liar Pants on Fire



Lying is a behavior that both parents and caregivers find particularly troublesome. Most children will exaggerate, stretch the truth or

downright fib at one point or another. It is helpful to understand that young children often lie for very different reasons than adults do. This understanding will help you prevent and cope with lying and tale telling.

## Reasons for Lying

To conform to expected behavior, avoid punishment or receive reward. A young child may realize that a concrete action such as taking a cookie is wrong and yet see no problem with denying the action.

To avoid embarrassment and preserve self-esteem. They don't yet understand the difference between fact and fic-

tion. This is very common with younger children. Their fanciful tales may be a reflection of their wishes or simply a bountiful imagination.

## Prevent Lying

Avoid giving the child the opportunity or reason to lie. This may happen when you confront a child for an action you already know they did. If you catch a child with standing besides a broken vase, it is best not to say, "Did you smash my favorite vase?" Try, "I can see you broke my vase, can you tell me how it happened?"

Be a good role model and practice what you preach. A young child is not going to understand the fine line between a "white lie" and a fib. Attempt to be honest in all that you say and do.

## Reacting to Lying

Try not to accelerate the lying with

such statements as, "If I find out you lied about this, I am going to put you in time out." Instead encourage discussion by saying, "I don't think that is what happened, I need you tell me what occurred so we can solve the problem."

Be sure to explain to the child in simple terms the importance of honesty.

Talk about how it builds trust and social relationships.

Acknowledge the child's feelings or the cause of the lie. "I can see you may be embarrassed, but I need to know what happened so we deal with it together."



*Copyright 2004 ~Joni Levine*

# Get Packin'...

Tips for a Healthy Lunch Box

**Main Courses**

- Cheese quesadillas
- Chicken drumstick
- Chicken, tuna, or egg salad with pita bread
- Hard-cooked eggs
- Hot soup in Thermos®
- Pasta salad with vegetables (use colored pasta or fun shapes)
- Sandwich on whole-wheat bread, bagel or english muffin
  - Peanut butter and jelly (add raisins for a twist)
  - Turkey, ham or roast beef
- Vegetable or cheese pizza

**Fruits and Vegetables**

- Dried raisins or plums
- Orange slices or wedges
- Snack-size applesauce
- Raw vegetables with low-fat dressing
  - Baby carrots
  - Celery sticks
  - Cucumber slices

**Beverages**

- Nonfat or 1% milk
- Nonfat or 1% flavored milk (chocolate or strawberry)
- 100% fruit juice box
- Water

**Snacks**

- String cheese
- Air-popped popcorn
- Baked chips
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- Dry whole-grain cereal
- Graham crackers
- Pretzel sticks
- Trail mix with nuts and dried fruit
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese or peanut butter
- Yogurt

## Start Your Preschooler on the Path to Healthy Eating

### 7 Tips for Raising Healthy Eaters

- 1 Be a Healthy Role Model**

Be a good role model by eating regular meals based on nutrient-rich foods, such as low-fat or fat-free dairy products, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- 2 Enjoy Family Meals**

Establish routines around mealtimes and snacks. Be sure to allow children enough time at the table—aim for 20 minutes.
- 3 Try New Foods**

You may have to offer a food 10-15 times before it's accepted. Try to add just one new food to a meal with three or so healthy foods your child already enjoys.
- 4 Trust Your Preschooler's Stomach**

Watch for signals that your child is full and finished eating (playing with food, for example). Offer children nutritious food, and they will naturally regulate the amount they eat.
- 5 Divide Responsibility**

You determine what foods are served and when. Your child should decide which and how much of those healthy foods offered he or she will eat.
- 6 Eat Snacks**

Regularly scheduled healthy snacks are like "mini-meals." Snacks can provide up to a quarter of the nutrients children need each day, as well as enough calories (energy) to sustain them through a busy day of school and/or play.
- 7 Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Go Hand in Hand**

Children should be active at play for at least one to two hours each day. Consider options like a simple outing to the park to play or more organized classes or age-appropriate sports.

[www.mealsmatter.org](http://www.mealsmatter.org)

Brought to you by Dairy Council of California

Looking for Free Cooking and Nutrition Classes? Call Joe Lynn or Alexis at (936) 336-4558, ext. 221.

# Yes, but is it developmentally appropriate?

When planning classroom curriculum for young children, it is important to factor in the wide spectrum of abilities and interests of children, as well as activities that are based on the way in which we know children learn. As more and more research becomes available on brain development, we, as early childhood professionals, respond by changing and evolving in how we work with children, and in our approaches to best assist them in reaching their full potentials - cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally.



"Developmentally Appropriate Practice" is more about doing things better - not "right" or "wrong."

To assist you in your planning, the following are questions to assess how appropriate an activity may be.

### Does the activity:

- Allow children to participate at their own level?
- Allow for flexibility, with no "right" or "wrong" outcome?
- Encourage active learning through participation?
- Encourage exploration and thinking?
- Allow for socialization and interaction with others?
- Enable children to learn through their senses?
- Allow children to experience things "hands-on"?

- Give children choices?
- Foster children's positive feelings about themselves?
- Respect individual differences and cultural diversity?
- Lend itself to being adapted if beneficial?
- Acknowledge the physical needs of children?
- Reflect the goals and philosophy of the center?

### What You Will See In a Developmentally Appropriate Classroom?

- Respectful, frequent and responsive interactions
- Children offered choices, given opportunities to make decisions, and are active participants
- A print-rich environment with many opportunities for children to interact and explore the written word (including a writing area).
- Open-ended art materials available as a choice throughout the day.
- Art displayed at the children's eye-level (dictation present).
- A stimulating, interactive science area, with real objects.
- Painting at the art easel available daily, as an on-going choice.
- Media/Sensory Tables open daily.
- Multi-cultural materials incorporated throughout the environment.
- Pictures of "real" objects and people (vs. cartoons).
- Children employing problem-solving

skills.

- Learning areas that are well-defined and inviting.
- Woodworking experiences available and utilized.
- Self-help skills and independence encouraged.
- Adults capitalizing on "teachable moments", and what the children express an interest in learning about.
- Age-appropriate expectations Ex: Mistakes and accidents ok.
- Children's individual needs and skill levels taken into account.
- Many opportunities for children to experience success.
- Smooth transitions with minimal waiting and lining up.
- Children's feelings acknowledged and validated.
- Role of the family acknowledged, with participation encouraged and valued.
- Activities facilitated in small groups instead of large groups with forced participation.
- Physical needs of children incorporated, with opportunities for large motor experiences available daily.
- The goal of guidance and discipline with

the children being to develop self-control and to make better choices.

- The presence of music and laughter.

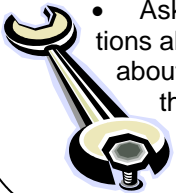


Copyright 2005 ~Cathy Abraham

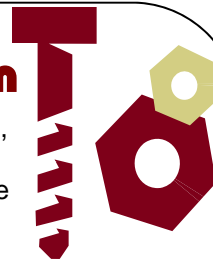
## Nuts & Bolts of Communication

Tips for talking to children and getting them to want to talk to you:

- Look each other in the eye. Crouch down to your child's level if you have to.
- Be careful not to embarrass your child in front of others. Show respect and your child will respect you.
- Ask your child lots of questions about her/him self. Ask about the best and worst thing that happened today.



- If you are upset, tell your child why you feel the way you do. "When you run away from me in the store, I feel worried because I'm afraid you might get lost."
- Give positive feedback. Even if your child has done something wrong, also say what he has done right! "I liked that you told the truth about breaking the toy."



[www.teach-nology.com](http://www.teach-nology.com)

## Clean Up the Attitude!



# Healthy Eating for Preschooler

## General Toddler Feeding Tips:

\*use unbreakable dishes.

\*Use a plate or bowl with raised sides.

\*Give a child-size spoon and a small fork with dull prongs.

\*Make sure anything you serve is mashed or cut into small, easily chewable pieces.

\*Try finger foods like cheese slices, thinly sliced apple "moons" or cooked and diced carrots.



To minimize the risk of choking, follow these safe feeding tips for children less than 4 years of age:

\*Make sure your toddler eats only while seated and supervised by an adult.

\*Discourage talking, laughing or playing while a child has food or beverage in their mouth.

\*Avoid raw fruits and vegetables that snap into hard chunks, such as carrot and celery sticks and firm apples.

\*Choose snacks for the car carefully.

\*Never offer peanuts, grapes, carrots, whole or large sections of hot dogs, meat sticks, popcorn or hard candies to young children—hot dogs and carrots in particular should be quartered lengthwise and then sliced into small pieces.

\*Peel and slice grapes lengthwise. Whole grapes can cause choking.

Brought to you by Dairy Council of California.

## Eating Patterns and Behaviors

A toddler wants to be independent and will want to feed himself or herself, although sometimes will look for your help.

Your child needs to learn to feed himself or herself and needs to feel successful. They need to make a mess?



## Helping in the Kitchen

Allow children to help prepare the meal. It takes longer but encourages interest in the food.

Make sure your toddler has a safe place to stand and work at the counter.

# Day Care Activities for Busy Providers



As a former daycare owner, and provider, I know how hard it can be to accomplish all of the many job functions that fall into a daycare provider's job description. Organization is the key to success. You can keep your children busy with easy, educational activities while you are completing some of the other tasks that are a necessary part of your day. Particularly, if you are a home daycare provider, then you can involve your children in your chores.

Make a game out of cleaning up. Set a timer and race the clock. See if you and your children can put everything away before the buzzer sounds. Your children will become great helpers, if you make cleaning up a fun time for all!

Have your children help you set and clear dining tables. This instills a sense of responsibility in children. Preschoolers love to help with "grown-up" chores, so make a big deal out of the process to keep them interested in helping. Be sure to handle any dangerous utensils yourself, however.

If you need time to do paperwork, there are many quiet activities that you can oversee, and you do your book-keeping chores. Let your children work on fine motor skills by drawing or "writing." Take advantage of naptime to

do your paperwork. Schedule a half an hour of book time for your children. Have them look at books while you are catching up on important paperwork. Ask them to tell each other stories for a little while and watch their imaginations soar! Let them learn a little science by quietly blowing bubbles and watching them, as you write. Tell them to do this quietly, but to think of questions to ask you about bubbles. Have a question and answer time at the end of their bubble session.

Free play is important for young children, also. It may not be as quiet, but it is educational and does not require your direct involvement. Give them half an hour of free playtime with blocks, dress up clothes, and other toys. This allows your charges to work on fine and gross motor skills, social skills, language skills, and more.

Dirty tables? Cover them with shaving crème and turn your children loose! Remind them not to eat the shaving crème or to wipe their eyes when playing in it. Let them write their names, ABC's, and draw pictures in the shaving crème. When they are done, your tables will smell fresh and wipe clean!

Are your toy shelves a mess? Teach sorting and classifying skills, as you and your children reorganize the

toys. You can also teach colors and counting skills as you are doing this! (One red truck goes with the other two red trucks.)

Lesson planning becoming a challenge? Tired of doing the same old same old? Talk to your children! Ask them what they want to do. Ask them what they want to learn about in daycare. Choose a theme and stick with it for a week or even a month. Brainstorm with your children all the possible activities that you could do that relate to your theme. This will recharge your creative juices and teach your children teamwork and brainstorming techniques.

Remember that organization is the key to success! Let your children help you and learn as they are helping. Plan quiet activities that you can oversee, but that still allow you to focus on paperwork. When all else fails, talk to your children and ask them what they want to learn and do in daycare. Their answers may spark some great educational activities and help you fill your lesson plans.

Written by Colleen Madonna Flood Williams - ©  
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# Next Child Care Provider Training - September 12, 2009

Since several Mini Sessions were offered this summer, I have moved the next Child Care Provider Training to September 12th, from August 8th. Details for the next AgriLife Extension Sponsored Child Care Provider Training include:

## Child Care Training September 12, 2009

**First United Methodist  
Church**

**106 S. Cleveland**

**Dayton, TX**

**8:00 to 3:00**

**7 Clock Hours offered**

(.7 CEUs offered at a \$25 fee)

Lunch will be Provided

Registration begins at 7:15 am

### Topics will include:

Depression in Tough Economic Times

Thrive by Five

How to Make and Use Puppets

### Registration Deadline:

**August 31st**

Please mail or bring your registration to the AgriLife Extension Office in Liberty, TX. If you have questions or concerns, please call Alexis Cordova at phone number below.

## Prevent Child Abuse Training Announcements

Upcoming Prevention Trainings  
For child care & school personnel

Lufkin - August 1, 2009

Huntsville - September 26, 2009

Baytown - October 10, 2009

San Antonio - October 17, 2009

Kilgore—November 14, 2009

Time—8:30 am to 3:30 pm

Registration— \$15

To Sign Up Visit -

[www.preventchildabusetexas.org/  
trainings.html](http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org/trainings.html)

*Our mission is to prevent child  
abuse and neglect in all its forms  
throughout Texas.*

*(Please detach and make copies for each participant registering for event and send with payment.)*

## Registration Form

Dayton, Texas—Child Care Providers Training

September 12, 2009

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Center/Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Please select the following as they apply:**

- General Registration (7 clock hours) — \$10.00
- General Registration + CEU fee — \$35.00
- I would like to be added to the child care mailing list.
- I require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting. If you checked this box, please indicate the aid required so appropriate accommodations can be arranged.

**Registration  
Deadline  
August 31st**



*(Checks and money orders can be made out to FCS Advisory Board; receipts will be provided at the time of training; no money will be accepted the day of event)*

### Lunch will be served!

This is a good place to make a special offer for joining your organization, purchasing a product, or requesting your service. You can also transform the feedback into a sign-up or generic feedback form.

*\*Note: No Participant will be allowed to leave during the training for any reason including lunch. This training is for adults only; there will not be child care available during training.*

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Extension program serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

# Extension Online

Convenient, Affordable, Self-Paced eLearning.



- Online courses for child care professionals seeking to fulfill state-mandated training requirements or obtain hours toward the **Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credential**.
- To receive **official credit** for the courses, participants must pass a course exam and pay a processing fee to obtain a printable certificate.
- Cost averages \$5.00 per clock hour.
- Set up your **FREE** account, view course listings, visit <http://childcare.tamu.edu>



## Courses Offered Include:

- Positive Guidance and Discipline
- Little Tummys, Big Appetites: Nutrition
- Controlling Asthma Triggers in the Indoors
- Understanding Infant Toddler Development
- The Value of Play for Preschool Children
- Establishing Positive Partnerships with Parents
- Fostering Children's Self-Esteem
- Creating Literacy Rich Early Childhood Program
- Helping Children resolve Peer Conflict
- Keeping Kids Safe: Emergency Planning
- Intro to Child Safety Seats for Care Providers
- Reducing Children's Exposure to Asbestos & Lead
- Testing for Radon in Child Care Settings
- How to Control and Remove Biological Pollutants
- Controlling for Combustion Pollutants

### Spanish

Promoviendo Actividades de Alfabetización en Centros de Lugares Infantiles



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2103 Cos Street  
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