



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Science & Nature

## Environmental pick-up

The next time your family is ready to take a walk, take along a few litterbags.

As you stroll along, keep an eye out for litter and trash and pick it up. (It's a good idea to wear some gloves for safety.)

This gives you a good opportunity to talk about our planet and what we can do as individuals to help preserve nature's resources.

Talk about the positive examples you see as you walk, such as containers for trash or recycling, as well as problems that need to be addressed such as litter and pollution.

Children who grow up aware and respectful of their world are in a much better position to help in its preservation. □

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## Parenting

### Someone will be watching you

What kind of example are you setting for your children?

Even if you are just experiencing the arrival of your first child, it isn't too early to start thinking about the fact that somebody will soon be watching you, watching to see if your actions square with the way you tell them to behave.

Think about the behavior example for a child when a mother shopping for groceries breaks open a box of cookies, gives a handful to her nagging children, then returns the box to the shelf.

Have you ever crossed the street against the light when there was no traffic? Haven't we all done it?

One grandfather thought about doing that while standing on a cold, windy street corner. Then up walked a young father and a small boy of two or three who had a firm clasp on his father's hand.

The little boy stared at the older man curiously, as young children do, while they waited for the light to change. The grandfather was ready to dash across the street but was very conscious of this father and son. What kind of example would he set for this young fellow by dashing across the street against the light?

It seemed important for him to stand there under that little boy's gaze

and freeze, if he had to, rather than provoke the question: "Why did that man run across the street?"

By our actions, we set the examples for other people's children, too. Think about it.

Think about the example you set when you go faster than the speed limit and ask the family to watch out for the police.

Think about the example you set when you buckle the kids into the car seats, then "forget" to buckle your own.

Think about the example you set when you talk about "beating Uncle Sam" on your income taxes and then restrict privileges when your child tells a lie.

Think about the teenage years. Can you really expect your children not to feel there is a double standard if you try to convince them not to experiment with drugs if you drink and/or smoke heavily, and if you reach in the medicine cabinet for a pill every time you have a headache or trouble getting to sleep?

The next time you're tempted to take something or do something that you wouldn't normally do, remember, somebody is probably watching you.

Maybe your own child. □

## Necessary losses

It happened again this week—a new child started in the two-year-old room. Poor little soul. For brief seconds he would allow himself to be distracted, and then return relentlessly to the question, “Where’d my mommy go?”

With quivering lips and overflowing eyes, he tugged at the heartstrings of every adult he encountered.

One of the earliest pains in our lives is learning to separate from our loved ones.

When you consider the strength of the mutual attachment bonds that develop during the first two years of life, it is not surprising that the first steps away from each other are hard for both child and parents.

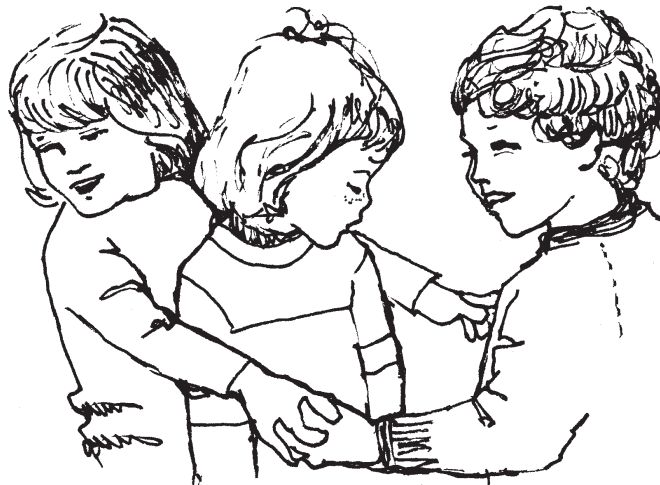
The task has two parts: learning to trust one’s ability to function without the presence of the other, and learning to trust that the relationship can be picked up again when they are back in each other’s presence.

Let’s focus on the little ones at this point. What can we do to help them learn to trust that they can survive without their parents, and what can we do to build trust that they have not lost the relationship?

From the beginning, allow little ones to do as much as they can for themselves. This builds self-confidence that will help them without the familiar support of parental presence.

Prepare them to ease in to separation. Provide brief opportunities for others to care for them in parental absence, so that experience gradually builds the idea that they will be okay, and mom or dad will return.

Play out the new experience, over and over, before it actually happens. Pretend you are going to school to-



gether, then say goodbye with a kiss, and go out the door, returning a minute later, then a few minutes, and so on.

Describe what will happen as best as you can at the new place, pointing out the exciting and fun aspects. Talk about it casually, without anxiety.

Have the child meet the new adults, if possible at your home, where the child is most comfortable. Many preschools arrange brief home visits.

Arrange a brief visit to the new place, with parent staying throughout the visit, so that the child has the security of your presence while observing the new place.

When the first departure occurs, tell the child exactly when you will be back, kiss, smile, and walk out.

If you hear heart-rending cries, keep walking. And save your own tears for outdoors. Portray confidence that this is a great place, your child can handle it, and you have every faith in the teacher.

Above all, return exactly when you say you will, calmly, and assuming the child has been well cared for and comforted when distressed.

If possible, leave the child for a shorter than usual time in the first days, when time must seem eternal to

a child who has never been far from your presence.

If your child has been upset, calmly reassure him/her that s/he will be having fun at school soon, and it’s okay to be sad and miss you, because you miss her too, but you will always come back and you will have a good time together later.

Accept any and all feelings of sadness without an attempt to turn off their expression, or to bribe/shame them into stifling the feelings. Life is sometimes hard and we all learn to do difficult things.

Such necessary losses bring your child strength and life coping skills. And before long, you’ll have adjusted as well. □

“Grandma Says” is a twice-monthly email that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children’s book reviews.

Issues are free of advertisements; email addresses are shared with no one.

Get the next issue by signing up at:

<https://growingchild.com/grandma-says>

Written by a very wise grandmother;  
From the publishers of **Growing Child**  
and **Growing Together**

## Helping brothers and sisters learn to help each other

Parents can help brothers and sisters learn to help each other by providing them with opportunities to cooperate in activities or daily routines. For example:

- At the supermarket, one child (sitting in the cart or walking) can locate an item and the other child can get it.
- An older child can help a younger one use the toilet when he or she is ready.
- An older child can make simple toys for the baby, such as a touch-and-feel book or a stuffed mitten “reach and grab” toy.
- An older child can teach the younger one a favorite song or finger play.

Be sure to notice and compliment your children any time you see them working and playing together cooperatively: “Tommy, thank you for helping Michelle get dressed. You’re really a help!”

Or “Ann and Angie, I’m so glad to see you’re enjoying playing dress-up together.” □

## Games & Activities

### Snake tag

Here’s a simple game to play outside when the weather is nice and there are several children on hand to participate.

First, select one person to be “it.” The rest of the players are divided into groups of at least three. One person is the head, another is the middle, and the third person is the tail of the snake.

More children can be added to the middle of the snake if there is an uneven number of players.

To make the snake, the children hold onto each other at the waist.

When the game starts, the person who is “it” chases the snakes and tries to hold on to a snake tail, the last person.

When “it” manages to hold onto a tail, he or she calls out “Snake!” And attaches him- or herself to that snake as the new tail.

Then the head of that snake becomes “it,” and the middle moves up to become the new head.

Players will quickly learn how to maneuver, twist and turn to avoid the person who is “it.” □

## Discipline is teaching

Discipline is our way of teaching children about safety and societal norms. Whatever type of discipline parents choose, the key is that some form of it is essential.

When you are faced with a two-year-old who is throwing a temper tantrum, or who is being unkind to a playmate:

- **Be specific.** Instead of vague instructions like, “Cut it out,” use specific words like: “Don’t take Jeremy’s toys. It’s not nice.”











- **Use body language.** Move next to your child, put a hand on her shoulder, make eye contact.

- **Toddlers like to say the word “no.” So, avoid the word as much as you can** when dealing with the child. Instead save “no” for times when you describe unacceptable behavior.

- **With older children, set guidelines in advance.** If your child knows the consequences of his misbehavior, he will think twice about acting up.

- **Be consistent, even when it’s hard to follow through.** Children need to know their parents’ word is good—for punishments **and** for rewards. □

# March, 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5</p> <p>Draw a great big rainbow on a paper sack.</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Make a paper airplane. Give it a name. See if it'll fly.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Purim</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Sing a song at bedtime.</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Name four sports that are played with a round ball.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>International Bagpipe Day Oh, you'll want to look this one up!</p>	<p>11</p> <p>March 11, 1892: First public basketball game in Springfield, MA</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Girl Scouts Birthday</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Ear Muff Day. What in the world are ear muffs anyway?</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Find four things that roll.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Ides of March. Look this one up!</p>	<p>16</p> <p>National Panda Day If you had a panda, what would you name it?</p>	<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day. Wear green today.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Draw funny faces on your knees with make-up.</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Finger paint with pudding.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Spring begins.</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>National Crunchie Taco Day</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Make a noise like: a chicken a cow a kitten a dog a turtle</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Ramadan starts.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>National Chocolate-covered Raisin Day</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Dump all your shoes in a pile and sort them out by pairs.</p> 
<p>26</p> <p>National Spinach Day. Oh, come on. Eat some! It's good for you!</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Start some seeds in a window garden.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Play someone's favorite game!</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Sing a "good morning" song today.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>How many colors can you name?</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Go outside and see if the grass is turning green yet? See any plants coming up?</p>	