

LEARNING TO GROW

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Building a Partnership with Your Care Provider

Your child's early years are a unique period of development. During this time, the relationships she experiences provide the context for her development and learning. As your child spends time with her child care provider, it is important for you to help nurture their relationship, even if the provider is a familiar person to your child, e.g., grandparent, aunty, or family friend. The interactions your child has with the adults who care for her teaches her that she has people to rely on to meet her needs, giving her a sense of security and comfort.

It is important for you and your care provider to work together to develop consistent routines, schedules, and learning experiences based on your child's needs. Child care is a partnership, and communication between parents and care provider is the key to making the partnership work. The following are ways to build this partnership:

- ♥ **Develop a plan.** Share information such as home routines, your child's interests, child rearing values, and discipline techniques with your care provider and together develop a plan for incorporating them into your child's care.
- ♥ **Keep your provider informed.** Let your provider know about events that may affect your child's mood or behavior. For example, talk about your child's morning

or if there were any disruptions to her typical routines at home.

- ♥ **Share daily pleasures.** Ask about what your child did or experienced during care. The more you understand about how your child spent her day, the more you will understand how she is learning and growing.
- ♥ **Check in.** Periodically discuss with your provider how things are going, how your agreed-upon plan is working, and where you might need to make some adjustments.

This newsletter will focus on ways to partner with your child care provider. In each section, an example of topics to talk over with your child care provider is presented: feedings, transitions to a new environment, and discipline. The newsletter also includes ideas of age-appropriate activities you may enjoy doing together with your child.

In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ Age-specific information and suggestions about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ Featured activities for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.



Infants

Good nutrition during a baby's first year is essential since she is growing and developing rapidly. Your baby's feeding habits are unique to her and it's important to share her routines, schedules, likes and dislikes with the people who care for her.

It's important to know that you have a choice about feeding your baby breast milk or formula even if your baby is being cared for by someone else during parts of the day. If you are breast feeding your baby, talk to your care provider about options while your baby is in their care. These might include going to the provider's home throughout the day to breastfeed or having your provider feed your baby breast milk that you have expressed and saved.



In addition to talking about the kind of milk your child will drink, talk to your care provider about how to feed your baby. These might include the following things:

- ♥ **How to handle breast milk.** Work together to come up with a system of how to store, prepare, and use breast milk for feedings so that the milk is safe and handled properly for your baby. Seek help from a lactation consultant or your child's pediatrician, if needed.
- ♥ **Interactions during mealtimes.** Talk with your care provider about your child's hunger signals, positions in which to hold her while feeding, special songs that you sing while feeding her, how to soothe her, or anything that you'd like your care provider to do that is similar to what you do to make meal time a special bonding time with your child.

Activity for Infants: *Play with Sounds*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. During everyday routines such as feeding, respond to the facial expressions and sounds that your baby makes. When she smiles and gurgles, smile back and talk to her. For example, "Look at that big smile! Now you're saying 'ooh,' aren't you?"
2. Copy her sounds.
3. Make silly sounds (smacking, blowing, popping) and shapes with your lips.
4. Encourage her to copy you.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Toddlers

It takes time before children feel secure at their child care setting, even if their care provider is someone familiar to them. Children need time to adjust to their new surroundings, routines, and people, including other children. You can work with your care provider to help your child adjust to these changes.

Talk to your care provider about what she will be doing with your child during the day. Share this information with your child. Keep it simple. For example, you can say, “You’re going to Tutu’s house today. She is going to read you a book about bugs. Then, she’s going to take you outside to see if you can find some bugs in her garden.” This will help your child know what to expect and even look forward to the day.



In addition, talk to your care provider about ways to help your child feel comfortable at your care provider’s home.

- ♥ **Provide a comfort item (“Lovie”).** Send an item with your child that serves as a source of comfort. A photo of the family, a special blanket, or toy can help your child feel secure, if she begins feeling uncomfortable or lonely.
- ♥ **Discuss activities to do.** Talk with your care provider about activities that your child can do to help her stay connected to you when she’s feeling sad or lonely. For example, having her draw pictures or “dictate” letters about what she’s thinking or feeling can help your child validate her feelings while being engaged in a fun learning activity.

Activity for Toddlers: Card for Someone Special

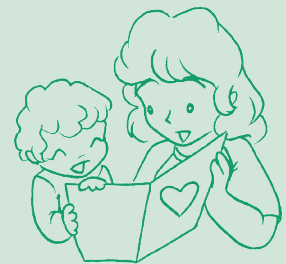
Materials:

Paper

Washable markers or jumbo crayons

What to Do:

1. Fold a blank sheet of paper in half.
2. Draw a big heart on it and have your child decorate the heart with markers or crayons.
3. Talk about a special person in your child’s life. Ask questions about what your child likes about that person. For example, “What do you like to do with Tutu? What’s your favorite thing about her? What do you want to say to her?”
4. Write her responses inside of the card.
5. Have your child give the card to her special person.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Preschoolers

One of the most challenging aspects of caring for children is deciding on a style of discipline that is age-appropriate, effective, and in the best interest of your child. Discipline can be one of the most difficult issues for parents and care providers alike.



There are many different reasons why children behave in challenging ways. There are also different ways that parents and care providers deal with these challenges. In addition, acceptable discipline methods may differ among cultures. It is important to be aware of these differences and work together with your child care provider to agree upon a method of discipline that is acceptable to you.

Part of effective discipline is prevention. Talk with your care provider about ways to create positive opportunities for your child such as childproofing the home to make the home safe for exploration, modeling appropriate behavior, and providing engaging activities for your child.

(continued on page 6)

Activities for Preschoolers: *Ornaments*

Materials:

- Thick paper, a cereal box, cardboard, or flat foam trays
- Marking pens (washable for paper; permanent for foam trays)
- Blunt, child-sized scissors
- Pencil
- Ribbon, yarn, or string
- White glue or glue stick
- Glitter (optional)



What to Do:

1. Help your child draw different shapes such as angel, star, tree, or menorah on the cardboard or foam tray. (If using food trays, wash them thoroughly with soap and hot water first and let them dry.)
2. Show your child how to carefully cut out a shape and encourage her to do the cutting; help as needed.
3. Have your child decorate each shape with markers, or with glue and glitter. As she completes each ornament, have her describe it to you. Discuss similarities and differences among the different ornaments she has made, for example, color, shape, size, shiny with glitter or not shiny.
4. When the decorations are dry, poke a hole in the ornament with a pencil and thread a piece of ribbon, yarn, or string through the hole, and tie a knot at the end, making a loop.
5. Hang the ornament in a place where everyone can admire it.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development.

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop a close bond with you
- ♥ Develop her unique identity

Language and Literacy Development

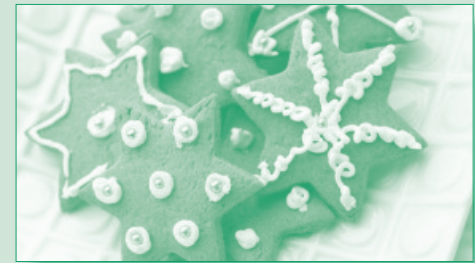
- ♥ Increase her observation, listening and understanding skills, and attention span
- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills.

Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show her how to safely handle the items and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before preparing any food.



Easy Gingerbread Cookies

Adapted from: <http://www.pbs.org/food/recipes/easy-gingerbread-cookies/>

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 package Jell-O butterscotch pudding mix (not instant) | 2-¼ cups flour |
| ¾ cup margarine | 1 teaspoon baking soda |
| ¾ cup packed brown sugar | 3 teaspoons ground ginger |
| 1 egg | 1-½ teaspoons cinnamon |
| | Cookie cutters |

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cream pudding mix with margarine and sugar.
3. Add egg and have your child help you blend the mixture well. Talk about how the mixture looks and smells.
4. Combine flour, baking soda, ginger and cinnamon into a separate bowl. Then, blend it into the pudding mixture.
5. Chill dough until firm, about 10 minutes. Talk about how the dough changed after being refrigerated.
6. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough out on a floured board to about ¼ " thickness.
7. Let your child use cookie cutters to cut out shapes; name and count the shapes that she cuts out. "Wow, you cut out lots of circles. Let's count them."
8. Place on lightly greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes.
9. Remove from oven and cool on wire rack. Decorate as desired.

Preschoolers (continued from page 4)

In addition, talk about the following regarding discipline:

♥ **Identifying causes of behavior.**

Understanding why your child behaves in a certain way is important. This will help you respond more effectively to her and her behavior.

♥ **Values underlying discipline**

methods. Talk about your beliefs about what is appropriate discipline. Talk about different situations of challenging behavior, how you address them, and how you would like your care provider to address them. Then, come up with alternative solutions that are agreeable to both of you, if needed.

Community Resources

Resource Guide for Family Friends and Neighbors Who Care for Children <http://www.childcare.org/ffn-care/index.asp>

Scroll to the bottom of the page to find the resource booklet that provides questions and topics that parents and care providers should discuss. Booklet has translated versions available.

Supporting Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families <http://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200609/RockNRollBTJ.pdf>

Additional resources on how to build a partnership between child care providers and families.

Suggested Books

Recommended by Read to Me International www.readtomeintl.org.
For more books, visit the public library www.librarieshawaii.org.



Infants and Toddlers

Leonardo the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems

As a monster, Leonardo is supposed to be scary. But after much research and a failed attempt at scaring the most “scaredy-cat kid in the whole world,” Leonardo realizes that instead of being a horrible monster, he can be a terrific friend.

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss

A persistent little boy plants a carrot seed. Everyone in his family tells him that the seed will not come up, but the little boy perseveres until, finally, a giant carrot grows.

Preschoolers

Little Hoot by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

To be the best owl that he can be, Mama and Papa Owl want Little Hoot to lead a nocturnal lifestyle. By staying up late, Little Hoot is building the character that it takes to become a successful night owl.

Do Unto Otters: A Book About Manners by Laurie Keller

When Mr. Rabbit discovers that his new neighbors are otters, he stresses over whether they will get along. Young children will enjoy the illustrations and also learn the values of manners and the golden rule.

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