



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Using Positive Guidance Techniques with Your Young Child



Children learn by observing, listening, and copying what they see others do and say. Therefore, the keys to providing positive guidance are to model the behavior you want them to see, and to

reinforce desirable behaviors that children show. Guiding children's behavior with encouragement and praise, rather than harsh words or actions, sets the stage for success. If you are pleased with your child's behavior, let him know, and you are more likely to see it again!

At times it may be difficult to understand your child's behavior and know what he is trying to communicate to you. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, behave and communicate differently. Positive guidance techniques for each are different. In this newsletter we will address: (1) examples of some behaviors that your child may exhibit that are part of his normal development and (2) techniques that can help you guide your child's behavior in a positive way.

The following are some things to keep in mind:

- ♥ **Be aware of what your child can and cannot do.** Each child is unique and develops at a different rate from other children. When your child acts in ways that you may interpret as misbehaving, it may be that he is not ready developmentally to do what you are asking or he does not understand what you are asking of him.

- ♥ **Be consistent.** Establish simple rules and consequences, and follow them consistently from day to day. Your young child needs consistency from you to make sense of his actions and the world around him. When you are consistent, you help him understand what is and is not appropriate.
- ♥ **Pay attention to your child's cues and feelings.** Are there times when "misbehavior" tends to happen? For example, does your child tend to act out when you are leaving for work? He might be trying to tell you that he is sad that you're leaving. Understanding your child's feelings and his temperament will help you find ways to support your child's development.

In This Newsletter:

To support you in guiding your child's behavior, 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 how your child progresses developmentally by doing these activities;
- ♥ **Community Resources:** online resources for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Infants typically:

- ♥ make sounds and use body movements to communicate;
- ♥ cry when they need something;
- ♥ are curious about the things around them; and
- ♥ learn by using their senses—touch, taste, sight, smell, sound.

During his infancy, it may be particularly challenging to understand your baby's needs and wants, even though he is communicating with you in many ways throughout the day. He coos, babbles, and gazes at you to let you know how he is feeling or to get your attention. He cries to let you know when he is hungry, thirsty, lonely, wet, scared, or tired. Sometimes your baby may cry just because he wants to be close to you. Over time you



will learn to distinguish his different types of cries, and how to address his needs.

The way you respond to your baby's cries will help him learn to trust and depend on you to meet his needs. Your consistent response lets him know that he is safe, and encourages his interaction with adults around him. The following are some tips to use with your baby when he cries.

- ♥ **Redirect his attention.** Offering a toy, activity, or change of scenery will often redirect your baby's attention, and he may stop crying as he focuses on something new.
- ♥ **Hold your child.** Babies like slow, repetitive motions. Try dancing with your baby, gently rocking or bouncing with your little one. Babies respond to physical contact, and are often soothed by it.



Activity for Infants: *Dancing with Baby*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. Carry your baby while doing different movements, e.g., walk, jump, gallop, bounce, or tip-toe. All these movements have different rhythms.
2. Sing favorite songs or play soft music, and gently dance with him while singing.
3. Vary your pace and see what your baby likes. Explore different ways of carrying, rocking, and swaying your baby.

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



Toddlers

Toddlers typically:

- ♥ are curious about everything and want to explore;
- ♥ are possessive of their belongings and often say "my" or "mine";
- ♥ have short attention spans; and
- ♥ may resist when asked to take turns or share.

Your toddler is beginning to recognize and assert his feelings and preferences. He is learning to become independent. You may hear him say "No!" a lot or see him express his frustrations through "tantrums." This is normal for toddlers since they are still making sense of their emotions, and trying to find ways to express themselves.

Setting rules and limits lets your child know you care about him and want to keep him safe. Because toddlers are curious about themselves and their surroundings, your toddler may challenge the rules or test the limits to see how far he can get. This is his way of understanding what rules and

limits are about. Toddlers tend to be impulsive, and may "forget" rules, needing frequent, gentle reminders. Giving your toddler reasons for rules helps him understand more about them. For example, "I cannot let you climb on this shelf, because I am afraid that you may get hurt."

The following are ways to encourage age appropriate independence with safety. Here are some tips to help guide your toddler:

- ♥ **Using words.** Help him begin to understand different emotions, and acceptable ways to express them. "It looks like you're feeling angry because Kehau took your toy away. Let's go and talk to her."
- ♥ **Offering choices.** Provide limited, age appropriate choices (from two or three alternatives) to promote his independence. Be prepared to follow through with any of the choices you offer, and praise your toddler's efforts.

Activity for Toddlers: *Choices*

Materials:

- Cups
- Small bowls (1 for each type of fruit)
- Spoons
- Assortment of diced fruits, each separated into a different small bowl

What to Do:

1. Have your toddler create his own fruit cup, allowing him to have a choice in what goes into his daily snack.
2. Place a variety of diced fruits in separate bowls.
3. Say "Choose which fruits you would like to put in your fruit cup today."
4. Name each fruit as you point to it.
5. Give your child a spoon. Let him choose and scoop each fruit into his cup.
6. Plan more opportunities for your toddler to make his own choices, such as asking him to choose which shirt he would like to wear for the day, or which book he would like to read at story time.

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



Preschoolers

Preschoolers typically:

- ♥ ask a lot of questions;
- ♥ begin to form friendships with others;
- ♥ create stories; and
- ♥ recognize and talk about their emotions, points of view, and opinions.

Preschoolers are learning what behaviors are acceptable in different circumstances. At this stage of development your child is learning more complex thinking skills; therefore, it may not be enough just telling your preschooler to do or not do something. He will probably want to know why. At this age he asks “Why?” to get more information from you. He is trying to understand how things work, including relationships with others, and what is appropriate in different situations. He is learning self-control and how to deal with his emotions. He may need lots of reminders about what behaviors are okay; this helps him understand your expectations.

(Continued on page 6)



Activities for Preschoolers: *Family Rules*

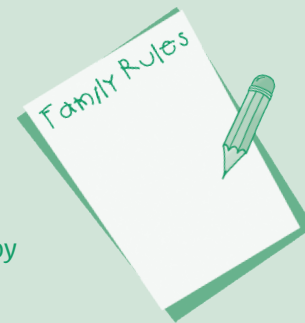
Materials:

Pencils
Crayons

Markers
Unlined paper

What to Do:

1. Your preschooler can help you create simple rules that can be followed by everyone in the family.
2. Ask your child to think of actions that will keep the family safe and happy.
3. Take turns listing rules on a piece of paper. For example, pick up toys after you are finished playing with them.
4. Talk about why each rule is important. Keep the list short.
5. Choose one of the rules, and have your child draw a picture of what that rule means.
6. Review the rules together daily and help your children follow them. This will let your child know what is expected of him ahead of time.
7. Acknowledge your child when he follows the rules.



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

How This Helps

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

Physical Development

- ♥ develop eye-hand coordination
- ♥ learn to use his body with intention

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ learn to cooperate with others
- ♥ feel important and good about himself

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ increase his observation, listening and understanding skills, and attention span
- ♥ learn to ask and answer questions

Cognitive Development

- ♥ develop his curiosity about how things work
- ♥ understand cause and effect

Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show him how to safely handle the items and allow him to do as much as he is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage his thinking skills, such as “What do you think will happen to the water in this recipe?” Most of all, have fun.

Tuna Cakes

Adapted from: www.kraftfood.com

Ingredients:

- 2 cans (6 oz. each) light tuna in water, drained, flaked
- 1 pkg. (6 oz.) stuffing mix for chicken
- 1 cup shredded mild cheddar cheese
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. sweet pickle relish
- ¾ cup water



Instructions:

1. Have your child help you gather and prepare ingredients ahead of time. Show him how to drain, measure and shred specific ingredients.
2. Together, combine and mix the tuna, stuffing mix, cheese, carrots, mayonnaise, relish and water in a bowl. Talk about how the mixture changes as you add each ingredient.
3. Cover the bowl and refrigerate it for 10 minutes.
4. Have your child make the tuna mixture into cakes/patties, scooping about 1/3 cup for each one. Try using an ice cream scoop to make evenly portioned cakes.
5. Heat a large nonstick skillet sprayed with cooking spray on medium heat.
6. Place the tuna cakes in a skillet, gently flattening the cakes using a spatula.
7. Cook 3 minutes on each side or until they're golden brown on both sides, turning cakes over carefully.

⚠ Safety Alert: Do not let your child handle boiling water or play close to the stove when it is on. He could be seriously burned.

Preschoolers *(continued from page 4)*

You can help your child's learning by encouraging his questions and giving feedback on what is or is not acceptable behavior. Some tips to use with your child are:

- ♥ **Have basic rules.** Come up with simple rules together that everyone in the family can follow.
- ♥ **Encourage experimentation.** Treat your child's "Why?" questions as a conversation and don't worry about saying "I don't know." Use this as an opportunity to find out together the answer to your child's question.
- ♥ **Provide positive reinforcement.** Give him praise when you see him behaving in ways you want to encourage. For example, "I really liked how you shared your toy with your brother."

Community Resources

PATCH http://www.patchhawaii.org/news_events/training

PATCH's newsletter is filled with statewide information, including information on classes for child care professionals such as family child care providers, preschool staff, infant/toddler care givers, informal care providers and anyone who is caring for Hawai'i's young children.

Parent Magic, Inc <http://www.parentmagic.com/newsletter-view.cfm>

Simple, straight-forward tips to help parents guide their child's behavior.



Suggested Books

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



Infants and Toddlers

Barnyard Dance by Sandra Boynton

An invigorating read-aloud that is sure to get the tiniest of bodies moving to the words in this story.

The Everything Book by Denise Fleming

This book indeed has everything for toddlers to explore. Simple rhymes, numbers and letters, shapes, animals, seasons, and many familiar objects are illustrated in a bold and energetic style.

Preschoolers

The Flea's Sneeze by Lynn Downey

A barnyard ruckus ensues as a tiny sneeze sets off a chain of events that wakes the animals on an old, old farm, in a rickety, crickety, tumbledown barn!

Hand, Hand, Fingers, Thumb by Al Perkins

Little hands, fingers and thumbs will enjoy moving to this rollicking, rhyming book, all about making music and sound.

Learning to Grow is a project of the Center on the Family at the University of Hawai'i, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. www.learningtogrowhawaii.org