



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Building Responsibility

Have you ever felt overwhelmed by just thinking of all the household tasks that you are responsible for: cooking, cleaning, organizing and fixing things? Maybe it's time to share your household tasks and responsibilities with everyone in your family, including your children. Helping your child learn how to do a household task teaches responsibility, and will give her a sense of pride, knowing that she is an important contributor to the family. When children are given opportunities to be responsible contributors at home, they learn at the same time to be responsible contributors in their communities and develop a desire to contribute to the well-being of others.

Before you assign a task to your young child, be sure that the task and your expectations, as well, are simple, clear, and age-appropriate. Provide her with repeated opportunities to learn how to do the task, so she can eventually master it and do it on her own from start to finish.

Keep in mind:

- ♥ **Learning is a process.** Your child will learn by watching and copying you, but she will also



need simple step-by-step directions and many opportunities to practice.

- ♥ **Provide encouragement.** Giving your child responsibility to do a task, and to do it well from beginning to end, while providing positive guidance and encouragement will help her develop a positive work ethic.

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
- ♥ **Activities** featured 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 to your child.



Infants

Infants are naturally curious about their world and are rapidly learning through observation, imitation, play, and interaction with others. Although your baby is too young to understand about responsibility or to help with household tasks, you can still engage her as you carry out routine activities. For example, carry her or place her safely close by as you're doing a task so she can see what you're doing. Describe your actions, and explain what you are doing. Ask questions, and let her touch the (safe) materials you are using. These are valuable ways to help your baby learn, while bonding with her in the process.



Here are some activities you can do with your baby:

- ♥ **Place your child where she can see and hear you** as you wash her bottles, feeding utensils, and wipe down the eating areas after use.
- ♥ **Talk to your child about the feel of her bed sheet and mattress covers** while you remove them for weekly laundering.
- ♥ **Ask your child to hand you some of her toys** as you gather them for regular cleaning.
- ♥ **Talk and sing to her** while you change her diaper and soiled clothes

Activity for Infants: *Copy Me*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. When your baby is watching you, encourage her to copy what you're doing. For example, clap your hands, wiggle your fingers, or make noises and ask her to copy you. You can say, "Can you clap your hands like this?"
2. When she copies you, respond enthusiastically, smiling and clapping, "You did it! You clapped your hands like me!"
3. Change roles. Copy something that she does.



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

Toddlers

With increasing curiosity and newfound mobility, toddlers are actively exploring their surroundings and looking to others to learn how to do things. You can support your toddler by providing a clean, safe environment in which to move about, and inviting her to gradually participate in simple household chores.

Toddlers typically:

- ♥ are able to follow two- to three-step directions,
- ♥ cooperate with others to get things done, and
- ♥ feel pride in personal achievement.



Toddlers are becoming more independent and can learn to perform simple tasks on their own. As your toddler is learning new skills, she may struggle at first. Monitor her progress, assist her as needed, and offer lots of encouragement and practice.

Give your toddler opportunities to be a “big kid” by giving her simple responsibilities of her own. Here are some activities you can try:

- ♥ **Show her how to wash her hands before eating, and carry her dishes to the sink** when she finishes a meal. Encourage her to do this before and after each meal.
- ♥ **Have your toddler match pairs of socks** while you fold laundry. Show her how to put colors or patterns together, then ask her to find matching pairs.
- ♥ **When you change the bedding, have her help** you pull off the sheets. Explain what you are doing and why.

Activity for Toddlers: *Washing Toys*

What You Need:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Small plastic tub | Sponge |
| Soapy water | Small toys to wash |

What to Do:

Use this activity as a time to talk about cleaning while having fun.

1. Find a suitable indoor or outdoor space to play with water (i.e., bathtub, tile floor, deck, yard, etc.).
2. Give your toddler a small plastic tub of soapy water and a sponge.
3. Show her how to dip her toys and sponge in the water and wash the toys, then let her do it by herself.
4. Use directional language, for example, “up and down” or “side-to-side.”

⚠ Safety Alert: Toddlers love water but never take your eyes off your child while she’s in the bathtub or playing with a container of water. Children can drown in just a few inches of water.

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



Preschoolers

Your preschooler is showing more signs of independence. At this age, you can give her simple tasks and responsibilities with the expectation that she can complete them.

Generally, preschoolers:

- ♥ can understand and follow multi-step directions,
- ♥ engage in more physical activity, and
- ♥ seek an active role in family activities.

Preschoolers love helping and thrive when parents and caregivers assign them age-appropriate jobs. Having her own household tasks helps your preschooler develop confidence in her abilities and allows her to play a bigger role in the family.

Here are some home activities to try with your preschooler:

- ♥ **Show her how to set and clear** the table. She can also use a sponge to wipe the table after eating and sweep the floor with a small broom or hand-held vacuum.



- ♥ **Let her dust and wipe surfaces** with a feather duster, puppet sock, or used dryer sheet. (Remember to move any breakables first!) Using different tools incorporates physical activity and makes cleaning fun.
- ♥ **Have her put away** her own laundry and toys. Use specific instructions like “put your blocks in the bin” rather than “put away your toys.” Attaching picture labels to dresser drawers and toy bins can help her learn where everything goes, and allows her to put items away independently.

Activities for Preschoolers: *Following Directions*

What You Need:

Recorded music

What to Do:

Tell your preschooler that you are going to play a clean-up game with music. Here are the instructions: When the music is playing, she should pick up her toys (or any other cleaning activity). When the music stops, she must stop moving and “freeze” in whatever position she is in.

1. Turn on the music and encourage her to move around. (She can jump, march or dance while cleaning, too).
2. Turn the music off. When she stops, acknowledge her for listening and controlling her actions. For example, “You did a good job of following directions. You stopped dancing when the music stopped.”
3. When finished, thank her for doing a good job with clean-up. This will encourage her to continue helping.

(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 large muscles
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Recognize herself as separate from other people
- ♥ Feel important and good about herself

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Increase her observation, listening, and understanding skills
- ♥ Understand more about the way the world works around her

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her curiosity about how things work
- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you prepare this recipe with your child, 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 and after preparing any food.

Heavenly Apple Rings

Adapted from: www.kraftrecipes.com

Ingredients:

- 1 medium apple
- ¾ cup Strawberry Cream Cheese spread
- Plastic coated knife

Instructions:

1. Help your child wash and dry the apple
2. Cut the apple into 4 rings, then cut out and discard the core section of each ring.
3. Have your child pat dry each slice with a paper towel.
4. Point out to your child the different parts of the apple (stem, skin, seeds, etc.)
5. Using a plastic coated knife, have her spread the cream cheese onto each apple slice...enjoy!



Community Resources

Family TLC <http://familytlc.net/index.html>

Find parenting tips, information on child development and ideas for age-appropriate activities.

Kids Health by Nemours <http://kidshealth.org/>
Discover information about health, behavior, and development from before birth through the teen years.

Green America <http://www.greenamerica.org/pubs/realgreen/articles/greencleaners.cfm>
Find information on how to make non-toxic cleaners from common kitchen ingredients.



Suggested Books

Recommended by Read to Me International www.readtomeintl.org.

For more books, visit the public library www.librarieshawaii.org.



Infants and Toddlers

On Top of Spaghetti (a Song) by Tom Glazer

Youngsters will love hearing this book sung to the tune of “On Top of Old Smokey.” Use hand motions and sounds where applicable. Your toddler will learn the tune and words in no time.

The Cheerios Play Book by Lee Wade

What youngster wouldn’t love to sit close to Mom or Dad and read this book, which allows the child to place Cheerios into circular slots on each page. Car wheels, sea bubbles, pajama buttons—and more—get eaten in this fun activity book.

Preschoolers

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

This brightly illustrated book with its simple drawings features a father and child who go from planting seeds to growing vegetables to making soup to eating the best soup ever. Best of all, there’s a recipe which the reader can make with the listener. Mmm, good!

Little Malia’s Big Poi Idea by Jocelyn Calms

Here’s a great story for picky eaters. Malia can’t think of eating anything but poi, which becomes national, even international news. Discover how her problem is finally resolved, which shows that Mom and Dad know best!

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