



# Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Using Positive Guidance 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 display, and to reinforce desirable behaviors. 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 for each age group is different. In this newsletter we will address: (1) examples of behaviors that your child may exhibit that are part of his normal development and (2) positive ways to help guide your child's behavior.

The following are some things to keep in mind:

- ♥ **Be aware of what your child can and cannot do.** When your child acts in ways that you may interpret as misbehaving, it may be that he is

not developmentally ready to do what you are asking or does not understand what you are asking of him.

- ♥ **Be consistent.** Establish simple rules and consequences, and follow them consistently from day to day. When you are consistent, he will be able to make sense of his actions and the world around him and you are helping 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.

### 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 about this topic, 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; and
- ♥ are curious about the things around them.

During infancy, it may be particularly challenging to understand your child's needs and wants, even though he is communicating with you in many ways. 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 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 tips to soothe your baby:

- ♥ **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 and respond to physical contact. Try dancing with your baby, gently rocking or bouncing with your little one.



## Activity for Infants: *Kick, Kick, Kick*

What You Need: None

What to Do:

1. During times when baby is awake and on his back, encourage him to kick his legs back and forth.
2. As he kicks, sing in rhythm to his kicking.
3. Add motions such as tapping a finger to the bottom of his foot to keep the beat.
4. When he stops kicking, stop singing, however, if he starts kicking again, start singing and tapping his foot.

*(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 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!” 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 you might fall off.”

Here are 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: *Fingers and Thumbs, Legs, and Toes*

Adapted from: <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/games-preschool.html>

What You Need: None

What to Do:

1. Before you begin this activity, talk to your child about his different body parts. Ask him to point to her legs, toes, fingers, etc.
2. Tell him you are going to sing a song about these body parts. Start slowly and gradually increase the speed as your child gets comfortable with the song.

*Fingers and Thumbs, Legs and Toes  
Fingers and Thumbs, Legs and Toes  
Head and shoulders and mouth and nose!  
Fingers and thumbs, legs and toes  
Legs and toes!*



(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; and
- ♥ recognize and talk about their emotions, points of view, and opinions.

At this stage of development your child is learning more complex thinking skills; therefore, it may not be enough to ask your preschooler to do or not do something. At this age he asks “Why?” often to get more information. 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 reminders of what behaviors are okay; this helps him understand your expectations.

The following are some tips to use with your child:

- ♥ **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 the answer to your child’s question together.
- ♥ **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.”



## Activity for Preschoolers: *Counting Steps*

What You Need: None

What to Do:

1. Call your child’s name and tell him to take a number of steps forward.
2. Ask him to count aloud as he takes the steps.
3. Repeat the activity with a different number and for variety, ask your child to take different kinds of steps:

-baby steps- small steps  
-giant steps- large steps  
-bunny steps- hopping



(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
- ♥ develop large muscle coordination

### Social and Emotional Development

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

### Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ increase his observation, listening and comprehension 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, 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. Remember to follow food safety guidelines when working in the kitchen: wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meats from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate food promptly.

### Carrot Cake Parfait

Ingredients:

- 6-ounces low fat vanilla yogurt
- 2 Tablespoon grated carrot
- 2 Tablespoon small diced fresh pineapple
- 1 Tablespoon granola
- 1 Tablespoon raisins
- 1 Tablespoon honey or agave
- Dash of cinnamon
- \*nuts (optional)

Directions:

1. Spoon  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the yogurt into a tall cup.
2. Together, sprinkle carrots over the yogurt.
3. Cover with another  $\frac{1}{3}$  of yogurt. Ask your child to describe what he sees.
4. Have him place the pineapple onto the yogurt and then scoop the remaining yogurt on top.
5. Garnish with nuts or raisins, granola, honey, and cinnamon.
6. Talk about the different layers of ingredients and how each one tastes and how it all tastes together.



## Community Resources

### PATCH

[http://www.patchhawaii.org/news\\_events/training](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.

### 1-2-3 Magic Parenting

<http://www.123magic.com/parenting-tips.html>

The parenting tips section provides free, simple, and straight-forward tips to help parents guide their child's behavior.



## Suggested Books

Recommended by **Hawaii State Public Library** [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).

### Infants and Toddlers

***Uh Oh!*** by Shutta Crum

This is a wordless picture book which depicts a toddler's favorite words, Uh Oh!

***Snuggle the Baby*** by Sara Gillingham

This interactive board book is like a paper doll. Babies are swaddled, tickled, fed, diapered, rocked, and tucked. It is interactive for children to play and learn literacy and empathy.

### Preschoolers

***Flora and the Flamingo*** by Moly Idle

In this wordless picture book a little girl and a flamingo explore the ups and downs of friendship through synchronized dance. This dual goes through flips and flops before learning to dance together in harmony.

***How Full is Your Bucket?*** By Tom Rath

As Felix goes through his day, he begins to understand how his every day interactions affects the emptying and filling of his bucket. This metaphor is used to teach children how our actions and words affect others.



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