



TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*...

A parent newsletter for Toddlers,
Pre-schoolers and beyond!

2006 – ISSUE SIX

TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*... a learn-at-home newsletter created by Penn State Cooperative Educators welcomes you. In an ongoing effort to serve the families in our community, we've expanded our intended audience to include the families of not only Toddlers but Pre-schoolers and beyond! Our 2006 Issues continue to be available on-line as well as in hard copy.

We hope you will find helpful tips and techniques to improve your family's time together while providing you with information that will enrich your child's learning process. **Contact the Penn State Cooperative Ext. office in your county for information on other educational programs of interest to you and your family.**

Ellen Meanix Helfrick, Editor

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Best Books for Young Children

Nancy Crago, PhD., C.F.C.S.

Senior Extension Educator, PSCE

Here are some suggestions for books that your child may enjoy reading. Several of the books have predictable patterns. This means that words, phrases, events or sentences are repeated in the story.

Predictable patterns make it easier for your child to remember the story line and recall what comes next.

Bang, Molly: Ten, Nine, Eight

Bridwell, Norman: The Clifford Series

Brown, Margaret Wise: Goodnight Moon;
The Big Red Barn

Carle, Eric: The Very Busy Spider; The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Fleming, Denise: Mama Cat Has Three Kittens; In the Small, Small Pond;
In The Tall, Tall Grass

Galdone, Paul: The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Guarino, Deborah: Is Your Mama a Llama?

Long, Sylvia: Hush Little Baby; Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

Martin, Bill, Jr.: Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?; Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

Martin, Bill, Jr., and Archambault, John: Chica Chica Boom Boom

McBratney, Sam: Guess How Much I Love You?

Numeroff, Laura: If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

Piper, Watty: The Little Engine That Could

Seuss, Dr.: Hop on Pop

Wadell, Martin: Owl Babies



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Waiting without Whining

Cheryl Miller, Extension Educator,
Family Consumer Science, Perry County

Several weeks ago I was standing in the check out line, I was tired, my feet hurt, and I was impatient. As an adult, it is tedious to stand in line waiting for service. Can you imagine how a young child must feel? Waiting in line is extremely difficult for preschoolers.

Try one of these activities to help your child enjoy their time waiting.

Money - Discuss coins...

- Denomination
- Big – small
- Thick – thin
- Ridges – smooth

Have your child close her eyes. Place a coin in her hand and ask her to guess what she is holding without looking in her hand.

“Penny, penny where is the penny?”



Have your child close his eyes. Shift the coin from hand to hand. After you stop the shifting, have your child open his eyes and guess which hand the coin is in.

Chances are your child will want to practice this game with you – a great chance to work on small motor skills!

Standing in Line - Challenge your preschooler to walk the lines on the tile floor.

Have your child stand inside the tile on the floor. See how long she can balance on one leg.

Introduce simple geometry. Begin by reviewing some shapes. Have him make shapes with his fingers and arms. Start with triangle or the letter L.

In the Restaurant - Order the child’s meal first. Request it to be served as soon as it is ready. Don’t forget to request crackers for nibbling while waiting for the meal.

Chime your spoon on the water glass.

Play peek-a-boo through a glass of water.

Play the Straw Game. Remove protective paper from straws. Tear small pieces of paper that will be blown from one side of the table to the other without blowing it over the edge of the table. Children of all ages like this game!

Create a Matching Puzzle. Trace around objects on the table; salt shaker, sugar bowl, spoon, etc. Have your child match the object to the shape.

Make a Relief Drawing. Place objects under a piece of paper, using a pencil or crayon scribble on top of the paper.



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Successful Parent-Provider Communications

Cynthia E. Pollich, Family Childcare
Advisor, Better Kid Care Coordinator,
Lancaster County

Parent boards, daily sheets, newsletters, lesson plans, and “What we did today” notes are a few of the ways providers communicate with their parents. But, it's face-to-face conversation that typically works the best.

Child care providers bring their knowledge of children’s educational and developmental needs and parents know their particular child’s strengths, needs, and interests. Together, they develop goals that are best for each child within the child care setting. (Have you done this?)

Positive relationships between parents and providers require two-way communication, sharing of goals and expectations, info and resources, and joint decision making. This will yield a feeling of trust on both sides.

Try these tips to improve communications.

1. Email connects parents and provider and children. Parents can send updated info to a provider or just check in on a child who was feeling down. Providers can scan and send artwork. An older child can send Mom or Dad a simple message.

2. The age of digital cameras and scanners means that special events or parties can be shared quickly and easily. Parents can send an image from work providing a learning experience for the class
3. Parents should plan a visit from time to time to the child's provider. Assist with an activity, eat lunch with the class, or stop in with a special hug. While there, take a few minutes to visit with the provider--you'll hear about the day's events while they are fresh on everyone's minds.
4. Parents should ask questions of the provider each day. Discussion of activities fosters a stronger bond between parent and child. Be sure to let your provider know of any special needs or concerns.
5. A daily notebook that goes back and forth from home to the child care program allows providers and parents to write notes to each other about the child, issues or concerns.
6. Schedule regular meetings to discuss the child’s progress. Use phone calls when concerns arise or when there is an immediate issue to address.

A successful parent-provider partnership is good for everyone, especially the child.



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Gifts to Give Your Children

Karen Bracey, County Extension Director
Wyoming County

THE GIFT OF NOT HAVING IT ALL:

Most of us will never have everything we want. It's what keeps us working toward our goals and improving ourselves along the way. Teach your children the value of not having everything they want.

“We make ourselves rich by making our wants few.” Henry David Thoreau

THE GIFT OF NOTICING THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE:

If we only enjoy the big anticipated events in life, we are missing out on sunsets, a beautiful moon, or many of the little joys available to us everyday. Point out these wonderful things to your children and remind them how lucky they are to have the opportunity to witness them.

“Think big thoughts but relish small pleasures.” H. Jackson Brown

When you say ‘NO’ to your child’s requests remember these gifts that you are giving:

THE GIFT OF **THANKFULNESS**
THE GIFT OF **ANTICIPATION**
THE GIFT OF **WORK**
THE GIFT OF **SACRIFICE**
THE GIFT OF **APPRECIATION**
THE GIFT OF **NOT HAVING IT ALL**
THE GIFT OF **NOTICING THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE**

PENN STATE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

What’s to Eat?

Fran Alloway, Nutritional & Family Living
Educator, Delaware County

Dairy Daily

As babies move from bottles to a cup, they may drink fewer fluids. Breast milk and formula provided the nutrients that babies needed in liquid form. Toddlers replace this liquid nutrition with solid food, but still need the calcium and vitamin D found in dairy foods. Some children prefer soy milk that is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Dairy foods include yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese and ice cream, as well as milk.

Toddlers should get 2-3 servings of dairy foods each day. A serving is one cup of milk or yogurt and one ounce of cheese. Serve whole milk until children are two years old. Enjoy as a smoothie! It’s sure to please the entire family, so you may want to make a double batch.

1 cup of milk
1 ripe banana
½ cup fruit flavored yogurt

Place the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Try changing the fruit or the flavor of yogurt for new taste sensations.

Time for Manners?

Sue Giarcharo, Extension Educator,
Berks County

We expect it to take time when it comes to teaching a child to ride a bike or tie a shoe. Yet when it comes to issues such as **(cont.)**



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Time for Manners? (cont.)

discipline or manners we often expect children to just “get it?” **Children need time and lots of practice to get their manners to become second nature.**

Teach your child to be considerate, and she should grow up to be a well mannered adult. **Considerate people care about, and think about, how other people feel.** Help children to understand that when we are mean or rude to others we are causing hurt. This is more effective than pointing to a rule in a book.

Long before a child ever enters school, the home is where he or she learns to get along with people. **As parents, model simple acts of kindness, consideration and common sense.** Children can learn skills needed to relate to others that will last a lifetime. Think about your family and your daily routines. Be aware and ask yourself, “How can I use concrete examples to model good manners to my children?”

Sharing is an area of stress for many families. Model sharing by taking turns when it comes to choosing television shows and by cleaning up after yourself as you share common spaces. As a parent, set expectations within the framework of family rules. Talk with your children about why you are doing what you are doing. Remember to point out kindness, consideration and respect for others.

Let children know that you expect respect for the rights and feelings of everyone in the family. It is important that the thoughts and opinions of everyone be listened to and given value. **Show your children the respect that you expect.** Privacy is one area that needs to be respected for each family member. You can model this for your child by knocking when a door is closed, asking permission before looking through personal items and by not reading mail or personal papers. Your children should never hear you discussing their problems or shortcomings with others. Children who are respected grow up to respect.

In almost every instance, if you treat your child with love and respect they will learn manners on their own. **Children become what they see around them.** Be what you want them to become, and treat them the way you wish them to treat others.

Free Family Activities

Laurie Weinreb-Welch, Extension
Educator, Clinton County

There are many activities that families can do together that require little effort or expense, yet provide hours of enjoyable family time. Here are some ideas to use with your family:

- No matter what time of year, **get outside with the kids and take a nature walk.** In the fall, you can collect colorful leaves, **(cont.)**



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Free Family Activities (cont.)

in the spring and summer; you can collect a variety of flowers. Even in the winter, you can collect a variety of outdoor treasures.

- Institute a **family game night**. Have one family member pick a board game to play as a family. Each family member can choose a new game each week.
- **Go to the public library**. The family can spend hours of enjoyment reading books there and selecting books to take home and share.
- **Have a picnic**. Even in the winter, spread out a blanket in your house and have fun eating picnic foods.
- **Explore your hometown**. Contact your local visitor's bureau to see what free events are being offered in the community. You'll be surprised by the number of free activities that your own community has to offer.
- Contact a local factory or business to see if they offer **free tours**.
- **Creating crafts** out of normal household items.
- Have a **family cooking night** where all the family helps plan and cooks.
- **Plant a garden**. Family members participate and help maintain the garden by weeding, watering and harvesting throughout the season.
- **Volunteer**. Many organizations are looking for families to volunteer for a variety of events.

It doesn't have to cost a lot of money to have a fun night with your family. All you need to be is a little creative. Have fun!

Tips for Reading Aloud

Sue Giachero, Extension Educator,
Berks County

- If you are not reading to your child, start today! Even babies benefit from being read to.
- Create a routine. Choose a time **everyday** when you can sit and read. Eliminate distractions during your time together. No phones, television or other conversations.
- Choose a comfortable place to read.
- Choose books that are above your child's reading level but not above their interest level.
- Young children love books that rhyme or have repetition. Children may request the same book again and again. That is fine!
- Choose a variety of things to share with your child both in subject and in format.
- Before you begin the story, show your child the cover and the back of the book. Tell them the title and the author of the book.
- Change your voice to fit in with the story.
- Ask questions before, during and after you read.
- Show pictures and talk about them.