



TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*...

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

2006 – ISSUE FOUR

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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Using the Potty is a BIG Step

Nancy E. Wallace, MS, CFCS

Extension Educator, Westmoreland County

Toilet use is a developmental milestone. It is a complex task and can not be rushed. Girls usually start toilet training around 18 months or later, boys around 22 months or later. Methods for toilet training vary. In today's busy life, parents may also depend on child care providers to assist.

While other parents, friend or relatives may pressure you to start potty training, the child must be ready. How can you tell? First, see if the toddler can pick up a raisin or regular size crayon between the thumb and forefinger. **Control of the small muscles located in the hand is an indicator that the bowel and bladder muscles are developing.** Usually toddlers cannot control their toileting if they do not have this type of finger control.

Second, **children will show you that they are ready.** The child wants to imitate and please his/her parents. They can follow simple instructions. The diaper stays dry for long periods of time. The child prefers to be clean and dry. Finally, the child tries to pull his/her pants up and down.

So, what is a parent to do? Toddlers learn through imitation. **Let the toddler watch you or their siblings use the bathroom.** They will learn how the toilet works.

(cont.)



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Using the Potty is a BIG Step (cont.)

Decide what terms you will use to talk about urinating and bowel movements.

When you change the diaper, use the words. Avoid using negative words to describe this normal action.

Teach the child to dress and undress. Use pull-ups. Let the toddler sit on the toilet to see how it feels. Have your toddler wash his/her hands when you do so they learn the importance of hand washing.

Wait to train the toddler when there aren't a lot of stressors, such as a new baby or puppy, vacations or a visit from grandma.

You might want to introduce potty training via reading a book or two to your toddler.

Take a look at the following:

Once Upon a Potty – Boy (Girl)

by Alona Frankel

A Potty for Me by Karen Katz

Everyone Poops

by Taro Gomi, Amanda Mayer Stincheum

The Potty Book: for Girls (Boys)

by Alyssa Satin Capulli



Finally a word of caution; proceed slowly; take your signals from the child.

Don't forget to use plenty of praise, too.

17 Things a Five Year Old Should Know About Money

Nancy E. Wallace, MS, CFCS

Extension Educator, Westmoreland County

1. Spending, saving and sharing are ways to use money.
2. Buying (spending) means trading money for things.
3. Saving allows you to buy something in the future because you don't have enough money today.
4. People have jobs that pay money.
5. Money can come from gifts.
6. You can keep money safe at home and other places.
7. Paper money and coins are worth different amounts.
8. Different things have different prices.
9. People pay for things in different ways.
10. People have different needs and wants.
11. People have limited amounts of money to spend. **(cont.)**





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17 Things a Five Year Old Should Know About Money (cont.)

12. Money can be spent only once – after you buy something you need more money to buy something else.
13. Planning helps people set goals and make choices about money.
14. Some things do not cost any money.
15. People do some things for each other without being paid.
16. People give money to help others.
17. People in a community share the cost of some work done for everyone.

Source: Thrive by Five: Teaching Preschoolers about Spending and Saving

The Story Lady's Tip

Ellen Helfrick (A.K.A.: Miss Ellen)

Reward Reading

Visit your library and get in the habit of looking for books featured in displays. It's fun to read a book that your librarian has recommended. They'll welcome your feedback on the book. Find out if your library offers reading incentives, such as a Summer Reading Club, and participate. The displays and incentives offer additional encouragement and help keep reading fun. (continued on page 6)

What's to Eat?

Fran Alloway, Nutritional & Family Living Educator, Delaware County

Grains = Toddler Favorites MyPyramid was introduced in 2005 as an update to the 1992 Food Guide Pyramid. For nutritional guidance MyPyramid.gov has children's info starting at age 2. New to this pyramid is the recommendation to **make "half of our grains whole"**. This means that toddlers should eat whole grain foods. Most toddlers thrive on pasta, cereal, bread and snacks.

Start them off eating whole grain pasta with this recipe.

- ½ cup whole wheat wagon wheel pasta
- ¼ cup frozen mixed vegetables
- ½ cup pasta sauce
- Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta in boiling water, adding frozen vegetables at end of cooking time. Drain. Mix with pasta sauce and top with cheese.

Gifts to Give Your Children

Karen Bracey, County Extension Director Wyoming County

THE GIFT OF SACRIFICE: Sometimes giving hurts a little. We could really use that money or time for ourselves but there is always someone else who needs it more. Teach children that we don't have to have everything we want before we start giving. *"We don't have to do great things – only small things with great love."* Mother Teresa



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Parents as Child Care Partners

Cheryl Miller, Family Consumer Science,
Perry County

When you enroll your child in child care, think of your caregiver as a partner. Work together so that your child is receiving the best care possible. Here are some tips to help you become an involved parent.

Before enrolling your child in a child care program, read and talk with the caregiver about their policies. Read written policies regularly, to avoid forgetting something important.

Understand that child care providers must keep information about children and families confidential.

Volunteer to help for special outings or projects. Attend parent meetings.

Daily communication is important so that your child's needs are met. Find out how his day went at child care. Tell the provider about anything going on in your child's life that could affect his mood or behavior.

Find out his favorite things to do at child care and try it sometime at home. Tell the provider about other things he likes to do.



Drop in for a visit whenever you can. Good providers should welcome unannounced visits from parents.

Take time to read any notes or newsletters that are sent home.

Work together with the caregiver on any problems that may occur. Develop a plan together to teach your child correct behaviors. Follow through at home.

Send in extra clothing and supplies for your child when needed.



Provide emergency contact information and keep it updated. Leave a phone number where you can be reached at all times.

Be sure to complete health forms for your child. Keep current with immunizations and make sure your caregiver has these records.

Be on time dropping off and picking up your child. If you do have a change in your schedule, call to let the provider know.

Have back-up child care for illness or vacation times.

Greet your caregiver with a smile and show appreciation for what she does.



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Sharing – Will They Ever?

Marcia Weber, M Ed., Family Living
Educator, York County

Perhaps one of the most common complaints that parents have about their children during the toddler years is that they find it difficult to get them to share.

Sharing is not something that is innate in a child and they will only learn it through your constant observation and guidance. Furthermore, there is a whole lot of concern about when a child needs to learn how to share. Do they always need to share? You can help your child learn how to be more discerning with the sharing game if you just pay very close attention and follow some simple concepts.

Don't ever force your child to share.

The whole point of the exercise is lost if you have to force it. This means, don't threaten them in any way – like telling them they will have to go home, telling them they will miss out on a treat or you will punish them. Not sharing something is a whole different ball game than being willfully mean so the outcomes should also be different.

Ownership counts

In the greater scheme of things, you have to remember that ownership does really count for something. After all, you don't go out in the world and give your cell phone or car to a complete stranger simply because they ask. Teach your child that it is OK to refuse a request if someone asks for something

special that they have. This may apply to a bike or a new toy.

Playground rules are a little different. If you are taking along a load of sand toys to the park - to explain to your toddler before you go that other children are going to be sharing them. Perhaps you can help them pick out some toys that you will take along that other children can use and something that they will use. Most importantly, involve them in the process.

If, once you get to the park it is obvious that your child is simply not up to the challenge of sharing, you don't have to turn around and come home. A toddler doesn't have the ability to look at things rationally. All they know is that someone else is trying to take away their stuff. In their mind they don't know if it will ever come back!

There are things that you can do to help them along.

Introduce the concept of sharing by saying something along the lines of: "We are going to share, which car can Johnny have? - The red one or the blue one?" In this way, they are making the decision (in a roundabout way) and you are doing it without force or aggression.

(cont.)





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Sharing – Will They Ever? (cont.)

Leave it at home.

If you know that it is going to be an issue to share a special toy then leave it at home. Don't expect other kids not to want to play with it and don't expect your child to want to share it. Explain that this is a toy for home. Trust me, other parents will appreciate it much more than you think. After all, how many times have you had to try and explain to a toddler why they can't have someone else's toy?

Don't expect too much. Sharing is not something that comes naturally and it is not something that is always warranted. **Maybe what we should be teaching our children is to respect the property of others, that they can't always have what they want and that it is OK to say no.**

Source: www.essortment.com

The Story Lady's Tip (cont.)

Prizes and praise from the librarian for reading – now that's a win-win situation!

Your library should have brochures for you that suggest books. Two super lists are: **It's Never Too Early: Great Books to Share with Your Infants and Toddlers & 101 Great Picture Books of Preschoolers**

Both these lists can also be found on-line. Visit www.statelibrary.state.pa.us and enjoy the reading support you'll find there.

Exploring the Development of Literacy in Children, Ages 2-4

Nancy Crago, PhD., C.F.C.S.
Senior Extension Educator, PSCE

What does learning to read and write have to do with your toddler's development? Research shows us that **our children begin to learn about reading and writing from the time that they are infants.**

Learning to read and write is as natural a part of children's development as learning to walk. The term used to describe this natural development is **emergent literacy**. This means children can use their daily experiences to build an understanding of oral and written language. Providing an environment that allows your child to discover language is not the same as sitting down with your child and formally teaching him to read and write. Activities such as drills or paper exercises are stressful for toddlers and preschoolers.

A child's development is nurtured naturally when parents do the following:

- Provide plenty of books and other examples of written language in your child's environment.
- Be a role model by making sure your child sees you doing a lot of reading and writing.
- Give your child the tools to try reading and writing on their own. Encourage your child to practice using these tools.