

FACES NEWSLETTER

Family and Consumer Science



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Favorite Playthings Have Benefits

In the preschool years, children learn much from repetition. They will return again and again to a favorite toy, book, or puzzle or a favorite set of materials, such as blocks.

Each time children play with these familiar objects, they learn something new about them.

That information as was always there to be learned, but the child who returns to the familiar toy is not the same child who played with it a month ago.

Now he brings to his play everything that he has experienced and learned since the last time he handled the toy or material.

Because of this added experience, he is now ready to learn more from his present play than he could have learned a month ago.

The toy, puzzle, book or set of blocks is the same- but as the child brings more to the activity, he learns more from it.

Dance With Your Baby?



Why not?

A baby learns from the movement she experiences as she is being lifted, held, carried and cared for as well as from the movement of her own body.

An infant's nervous system is not yet completely developed and she startles easily.

A loud noise, a sudden movement or loss of support can be frightening to her.

However, gentle rhythmic motion is soothing. This is why babies respond to being rocked or walked when they are uncomfortable or wakeful.

But dancing? Yes, dancing! Remember, babies learn from being moved as well as from moving.

A very young baby cannot yet learn from rapid or jerky movements, but she can learn from smooth, rhythmic changes of position.

So, if you enjoy moving to music, your baby will likely enjoy it, too. Find some music that is soft and rhythmic.

Hold your baby gently but firmly so that she feels secure.

Then sway from side to side, move forward and backward, turn and twist in time to the music.

Your movements will stimulate the sense organs deep within the baby's ears.

The sensations and experiences will help her develop the position sense and balance she will need when she tries to sit, stand, and walk later on.

If you hum along with the music, your baby will get additional stimulation from the vibration of your chest.

If you enjoy moving to music, your pleasure will communicate itself to your baby as you hold her.

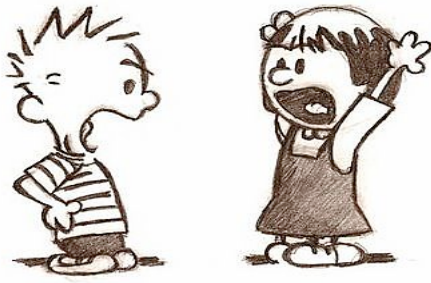
Sweet music and gentle movements while holding your baby securely are the ingredients for some happy moments for both of you!

Listening Helps Settle Arguments

Bicker, bicker, bicker! Sometimes it seems that brothers and sisters are always fighting.

You can't stop it all, but you can help your children learn to settle their disputes in constructive ways.

- Try to get the whole story of what caused the problem before jumping in and blaming anyone.



For example, say: “You must have been really mad at the baby to hit him,” and then let the older child explain.

Let her know that angry feelings are acceptable but that you can’t let her hurt the baby.

- In an argument between two children who can both talk, give each a chance to tell his or her own point of view.

You can help by describing the situation rather than judging it: “It looks like you two can’t agree on a television program. You both seem pretty upset. Want to tell me about it? Laurie, you go first. Then Joey, I want to hear your side of the story.”

This kind of approach will save a lot of her hurt feelings and resentment between the kids, and it will help them learn to settle disputes themselves without fighting.

Praising Children

Children flourish and thrive when they receive praise from the important adults in their lives.

Praise is an essential component of a child’s daily life. Through it a child receives positive, ego building messages that say: “You are unique.” “You are important to me.” “You can do it,”

Here are some effective ways to offer the gift of praise.

- **Increase your praise level.**

Criticism is often long and detailed but praise is short.

It’s easier to find fault than it is to see and express the many positives in a child. Every family should try to increase the level of praise in their home.

- **Be specific.** Rather than using vague and general terms, shape your vocabulary to be explicit and precise about what you want to commend.

Instead of saying, “I love your painting,” try saying, “You have a fantastic eye for color.”



Rather than saying, “You are such a good helper,” say “Thank you for putting all our clothes in the right drawers.”

- **Stay honest.** Indiscriminate praise over every act and event

will make the child question your sincerity as a parent. Children know their skills.

- **Identify progress.** Like adults, children want to know that they are developing and improving their skills.

Imagine how the young girl felt after completed a series of cartwheels and heard her mother say; “Wow! You did four cartwheels in a row. That’s something you couldn’t have done a year ago!”

- **Don’t compare.** Stay away from statements like these: “you are the best reader in your class.” “You run faster than the older team players.”

While such statements may not be false, they put someone else down. Comparisons can work against a child by promoting unnecessary competition and the fear of failure.

Also, no parent should ever compare his or her child negatively with another child. (“Why can’t you be good like your friend Billy?”)

Each little comparison may seem unimportant in itself but added together they can cause a child to believe that he will never be able to measure up.

- **Avoid negative compliments.** Unwittingly, some parents undermine their own efforts at

praise by offering negative statements.

For Example: “It’s great to see you being good for a change.” “I can’t believe you’ve finally cleaned up your room.”

Children believe what they are told about themselves. If you suggest negative qualities, the child may begin to think of himself that way.

- **Commend effort, not results.** Children will be greatly motivated when they are praised simply for the attempt at doing something new.



If a child is unable to dress himself completely, you can point out how nicely he has pulled on one stocking. Then he may go ahead and try to put on his shoes. You should commend the effort, whether he is successful or not.

In addition to words of praise, try reinforcing your comments with a physical act. A warm embrace, a loving kiss and a high five will serve to strengthen words of approval and admiration.

Spring Cleaning Tips and Tricks

Spring is almost here! It's time to get rid of a winter's worth of dust and grime. Unfortunately, it's also the time of year when we all want to be outside enjoying the fresh air. The last thing on our minds is cleaning. The good news is that with a thorough spring-cleaning, all of the fragrant crispness of springtime can be felt throughout the house. And with the following tips to guide you, you'll be able to clean up quickly and efficiently, with plenty of time left over to stop and smell the newly budding roses.

Even before you clean, there are a few precautions you should take so that cleaning can be finished as painlessly as possible.



-- Wear comfortable, old clothes that you won't mind staining or getting dirty.

-- Take stock of your cleaning needs and supplies. Don't wait until you're about to clean the oven to find out that you don't have any oven cleaner left. Have everything on hand and ready to go for a smooth time.

-- Prepare one bucket of supplies to bring with you to every room. All you really need are a few rags, some paper

towels, furniture polish, and one good all purpose glass and counter cleaner. These items will do the trick for most cleaning jobs. Also, grab two empty garbage bags: one to carry garbage you find along the way, and the other to fill with things you no longer want but are still useful. You can give these items away or sell them at a later date.

--Turn off the TV and the phone! The quickest cleaning is accomplished without any distractions.

--Get organized. Make a list of the rooms you want to tackle, then clean each room fully before moving on to the next.

--Let the sun shine in! Open the windows and let the clean, green aroma of spring's new flower and plant life enter your home. Not only will the mustiness of winter be removed, but you'll also protect yourself from inhaling dust and dangerous fumes from cleaning products.

--Play some fun, lively music. Before you know it, your adrenaline will start pumping and you'll be dancing your way through the house.

--Toss away everything you don't use. I mean everything! Be ruthless. Less clutter not only makes future dusting easier, it also has a tendency to give us a freer, more relaxed frame of mind when we enjoy these rooms. Feng shui, the art of uncluttered living, has long been practiced by Chinese people. It is believed that if the universe's energy, or chi, can easily flow through a room, our lives will be more harmonious and joyful.

Decorators worldwide are now embracing the simple beauty of barer rooms for easier living.

--Gather the extra items in your life and give them to charity, or sell them at a spring-time yard sale. Get the whole family in the act by telling kids that they can keep the profits from selling toys they no longer use.

--Work around the room in one direction, either left or right. This way, there won't be any time wasted in criss-crossing the room, or vacuuming that same spot twice.

--Clear it off and put it away. This is really the first step to cleaning any room. In the living room this means putting away books and recycling old magazines. Clear away all knickknacks and family photos so that dusting and polishing can be finished in a snap. In the bedrooms, remove items stored under the bed, and file away or throw out papers. In the kitchen, remove everything from counters and take down curtains. In the bathroom, clear away potpourri holders, magazines, and waste-baskets. Take down the shower curtain and liner for laundering. Just remember to tackle one room at a time. Remove these items and cleaning will be much easier.

-- Wear rubber gloves! Even though it is harder to grip things with gloves than it is with bare hands, it is worth using them to protect your skin from the harshness of hot water and drying chemicals.

When you're finished cleaning, it's time to put back those items you need and love. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

--The only necessary appliances on kitchen counters are the ones that you use daily or weekly. Stash anything else in cabinets or cupboards. Also, if you have a counter full of cookbooks you seldom use, you may want to put them on a shelf for more living and cooking space.

-- Try putting treasured knickknacks and photos on different tables, shelves, or even in different rooms. This will give your home a fresh new look.

Making a Budget

The first step in developing a personal or family budget that works is to decide upon the specific financial goals you want or need to reach. These goals will probably have different time frames.

Immediate goals, such as paying bills on time, buying new ties, setting aside funds for a vacation or improving your insurance coverage.

Short-term goals, such as reducing consumer debt to less than 12 percent of take-home pay. Building an emergency fund or saving toward a large down payment on a car.

Long-term goals, such as purchasing a home, or developing an investment plan for further education, retirement or the possibility of dependent elder care.

As a starting point, write down your individual goals. If there are other family members, make separate lists and then compare them. Make a final list you can all agree upon that shows your family's priorities. No child is too young to understand that "you can't have

everything you want.” Each of us must learn to compromise with other family members on how to use the limited resources available for the family’s greatest overall satisfaction.

Next, find out the current cost of each of the goals you agree upon, and set a realistic target date by which you hope to accomplish each one.

Finally, figure out how much money you would have to set aside every pay period in order to save enough to reach each goal by the chosen date. (Remember that inflation will cause prices to rise before you reach your long-term goals. You must estimate how much money to set aside or invest to keep up with or ahead of inflation.

Many people believe they can’t save anything. But when they have a specific objective, most folks are able to save toward it. Unless you take the time to identify and agree upon high priority goals, your money will simply disappear on less important purchases that have no lasting significance.

Even with a careful plan, there is no guarantee of success. But to have no goals at all is to settle for “just wandering around” financially. If you can follow a thoughtful, self-directed course, you can achieve some of the financial goals you believe are worth working and saving for.



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