

First Steps

PARENTING IN THE FOURTH YEAR

WEXFORD, MISSAUKEE & NORTHERN OSCEOLA COUNTIES

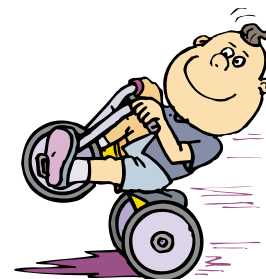


4
Years



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Talk, Talk, Talk

Playing word games can be a fun way to fill up empty moments while waiting in lines or riding in the car. Here's a simple game you can do to help your child hear how sounds are similar or different:

Begin by saying "I'm going on vacation and I'm going to bring my cat. What are you going to bring?" Then have your child repeat what you said, plus one other item that rhymes. For example, he could say, "I'm going on vacation and I'm going to bring my cat, and my bat. What are you going to bring?"

Continue to play the game until you can no longer think of any new items that rhyme. Start over with a new word, such as "man" or "car."

Communicating with Young Children

Here's some tips for communicating effectively with young children:

- Use positive direction instead of negative statements. Instead of: "Don't be so loud!" try saying: "Talk in a quiet voice."
- For every "no", offer two acceptable choices. "No. That book is mine. You can have this book or that book."
- Say things that show you

are confident in your child's ability and willingness to learn. "When you get older I know you will (whatever you expect). Next time you can (restate what is expected in a positive manner)."

- Try saying "you need to..." instead of just telling the child what to do.
- Avoid talking about children in their presence or saying things you don't want repeated.

Helping Bullies Change Behavior

What do you do if someone tells you your child hits, kicks, shoves or bites sometimes?

- Don't hide behind lame excuses like, "My child would never do that." Listen carefully.
- Deal with anger. Show your child positive ways to get her anger out. Look at your own behavior. If you're a screamer or hitter, stop. Your child is copying you.
- Watch for good behavior. Notice and praise your child's moments of kindness.

- Talk with your child about how hurtful it is to be hit or kicked.
- After firmly stating what is not to be done, demonstrate "how we can do it." For example: "We don't hit because hitting hurts. You need to use words to tell how you feel." If she is having trouble putting her feelings into words, try to do it for her. "I know you're mad because he took your toy, but we must never hit others."

Your Child Wants You To Know

How I Grow

- I can climb, jump and gallop.
- I can pedal a riding toy.
- I can hop on one foot and I can hop in place.
- I can throw a ball overhand and catch a ball that is bounced to me.
- I run well and enjoy climbing.
- I can use my thumb and fingers to hold a crayon or pencil.
- I can copy a circle.
- I have all my baby teeth.
- I am curious about the body and how it works.

How I Talk

- I use "bad" words sometimes.
- Adults can understand what I say most of the time. I still have trouble with the sounds l, r, s, sh, ch, th, j, and z.
- I have lots of questions about everything! I like to answer your questions, too.
- I understand words like over, under, around and through.
- I am starting to be able to match letters to words. I like it when you show me picture books and show me how C is for CAT, or how Stop starts with S.
- Sometimes I see signs that I can recognize.

What I Have Learned

- I can put objects in order by size, from big to little.
- I am learning more and more about how things are alike and different.
- I am starting to know what is coming next in my day, and I understand about "after lunch" and "at bedtime."
- I am beginning to know about birthdays and holidays.
- I know about 6 basic colors.
- I know my age, sex and last name.

How I Get Along With Others

- I like other children and have a friend.
- I can follow rules and sometimes I get upset when others don't follow the rules.
- I am getting better at sharing.
- I enjoy pretend play with other children.
- I like to make up jokes and riddles.
- I like to show off and sometimes I can be bossy.
- I like to be a part of a group.

What I Can Do For Myself

- I like to take care of myself. I can button and unbutton, get myself dressed and undressed.
- I can brush my own hair and teeth if you help me "finish up."
- I can wash my hands by myself.

Play I Enjoy

- I like to draw. I can make lines and circles.
- I love to build houses, towers and roads with blocks and boxes.
- I like music, dancing and singing.



So many teachable moments...

Everywhere you look there's an opportunity for you to extend your child's learning. Here's some examples:

When You and Your Child...	You Might Say...	This Helps Your Child Learn to...
<p>Discuss everyday experiences in your neighborhood. No matter what you see in your neighborhood, you can talk about what is happening.</p>	<p>"I wonder what's making that loud sound. What do you think that truck is carrying? Where do you think it's going? Let's pretend we are driving a truck."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe people and objects • Understand time concepts • Understand roles people play in society
<p>Wash the car together. Talk about what you're doing as you soap the car, wash off the suds, and wipe it clean.</p>	<p>"Want to help me wash the car? Here, rub this soapy sponge on the front fender while I do the hood. You're a hard worker, that looks very clean. Next, we rinse off the soap with the water."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate with others • Learn spatial concepts • Understand time sequences • Learn new words
<p>Collect objects in a bag. Children love to gather collections of things: leaves, sticks, stones, etc. You can describe them, sort them into piles, label them.</p>	<p>"What shall we look for on our walk? Ok, leaves. You found two very different leaves. How are they different? Yes, one has points and the other is kind of round."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharpen observation skills • Describe objects • Count • Sort
<p>Fold napkins. Encourage your child to try to think of different ways to fold napkins to make different shapes and sizes.</p>	<p>"Last night we made triangles. Let's make a different shape tonight. What would happen if you kept folding and folding the corners down?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase small muscle coordination • Make & identify shapes • Use language



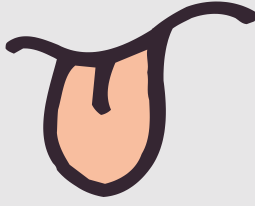
Children with special needs may not develop at the same rate as other kids, but they can still enjoy many of the same activities that can be adapted to meet the needs of the child.

Books!

- Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile
- Two of Everything: A Chinese Folktale
- Whistle for Willie
- The Story of Ferdinand
- Flossie and the Fox
- The Tale of Peter Rabbit
- Chicken Soup with Rice: A Book of Months
- Sylvester and the Magic Pebble
- Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale
- Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China



Please don't smoke.
There's a child in the house.



Sweet, Salty, Bitter

Did you know that different parts of the tongue taste certain things better than other parts?

For example, the back of the tongue is sensitive to bitter tastes. The middle is best at sensing salty and sour. The tip of the tongue is extra sensitive to sweet tastes.

Next time you eat something salty, sweet, or bitter, try to see if you can notice these differences when eating.

Our senses of taste and smell are so closely connected that sometimes we don't notice which sense we're using.

Here's an experiment for kids (and adults!) about taste and smell:

Place a small amount of fruit, such as orange, grapefruit, or lemon, on your child's tongue. Can she tell what it is? Now have her smell the food with her eyes still closed. It might be easier to identify by smell!

Homemade Toys to Help Children Learn

Children can learn just as well when they play with household items and simple toys as they can with expensive ones.

There's no "right" way to play with a toy. Coming up with different ways to play with a toy helps children to solve problems and to be creative.

Before you throw out "unwanted" items, look at them through a child's eyes. An old purse may be just right for carrying treasures. Empty paper towel tubes might become a telescope. Empty coffee cans are just right for making drums.

Here are some suggestions for free or inexpensive toys your child will love to learn with:

- Aluminum pie tins
- Balls of all sizes (except those small enough to swallow)
- Boxes, boxes and more boxes
- Wooden and plastic spoons
- Sponges
- Egg cartons
- Measuring spoons and cups
- Pails and shovels
- Old clothes, hats and jewelry for dress-up
- Plastic dishes
- Old telephones
- A special drawer or cabinet filled with safe objects
- A stack of discarded envelopes to play "office"

Paddle Ball

To make this game, you'll need a wire coat hanger, old panty hose, masking or duct tape, and balls of yarn or balloons.

Pull a wire coat hanger out from the sides to form a circle. Cut a leg section from the panty hose, and stretch it over the hanger. Tie at the top and bottom. Wrap the "handle" of the coat hanger with layers of tape so that there are no sharp edges. The finished product is a big, soft paddle that is perfect for batting balloons or balls of yarn.

Giant Shape Box

On a large appliance box, draw and cut out child-size triangles, squares, and rectangles. Reinforce the cut edges with duct tape to make the box last longer.

Children will have fun crawling in and out of the box. They can make up simple games such as climbing in and out of certain shapes. They may enjoy turning the box into a skill box by throwing balls in and out of the shapes.



Parenting Tips for Fathers

Show That You Care

- Give your child hugs and kisses often. Children need comfort and contact from their fathers.
- Tell them how much they mean to you.
- Praise their efforts, especially if they don't succeed. Teach them the importance of doing their best.

Give Guidelines For Conduct

- Give your children rules and make sure your rules are clear to them. Don't say "maybe" when you mean "no."
- Explain your rules. It's important that children understand why they need to follow those rules.
- Be consistent with your rules. Children get confused when you seem to change your mind without any reason.
- Use effective discipline to help children develop self-control. Set limits and encourage children to feel good about themselves.

Communicate With Care

- Look directly at your children when they talk to you.
- Gain your children's trust by listening to them when they come to you with problems.



- Children will welcome your guidance but are not likely to listen to lectures.
- Be honest with your children. Admit your mistakes and teach your children the importance of taking responsibility and making amends.

Become Your Children's Educator

- Tell your children that they can come to you with any questions. Otherwise, they may receive inappropriate answers from other people.
- Remember that you are your children's role model. They are looking to you to learn how a responsible and mature adult acts.
- Do household chores with your children. Make them feel good about helping you and teach them that fathers also share household duties.
- Encourage your children to think for themselves. Guide and help them with their decision-making process.

Snack Ideas:

Juicy Yogurt Pops

Meets a meat/meat alternate requirement.

2 10-ounce cartons of frozen strawberries

1 tablespoon unflavored gelatin

2 cups plain yogurt

Mix all ingredients together in a blender until smooth.

Pour into paper cups. Place popsicle sticks or spoons into the center of the paper cup. Freeze. Makes 8 child-size servings.

Try serving with French toast sticks.



Fun Projects!

...TO DO TOGETHER



Instant Volcano

This amazing volcano starts with a fizz, then reupts in a bubbling flow of lava.

What You Will Need:

- 2 small paper cups
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 4-6 drops red food coloring

How to Make It:

1. Fill the bottom of one small paper cup with 1/4 cup baking soda. and set it on a plate.
2. Place 4-6 drops of food coloring on top of the baking soda.
3. Poke a hole, about the size of a dime, in the bottom of the second paper cup.
4. Place the second paper cup upside down over the paper cup filled with baking soda.
5. Pour vinegar into the hole until the volcano begins to erupt. The more vinegar you pour into the hole, the more foam the volcano will erupt.

Ideas:

- Try adding blue or green food coloring and 1 teaspoon of fine glitter to the baking soda for a "fantasy" volcano.
- Decorate the paper cups to look like real volcanos with markers or paints.

World's Best Bubbles



What You Will Need:

- 2-1/2 quarts water
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup liquid dish detergent

How to Make It:

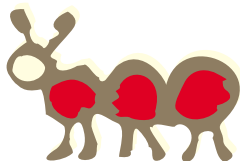
1. Mix water and corn syrup together until completely blended.
2. Gently stir in the liquid dish detergent.
3. Bubbles will store for several weeks in an airtight container.

Ideas:

- Add a little color to your bubbles by stirring in a few drops of food coloring.
- Dip different sized items into the bubble solution for different sized bubbles. Try a plastic strawberry basket or wire whisk.

Quick Idea:

Make a caterpillar from an egg carton. Cut out 4-5 cups and decorate with crayons or markers. Draw on eyes and poke sticks into the head for feelers.





If You're Happy

If you're happy and you know it
Clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it
Clap your hands.

If you're happy and you know it
Then your face will surely show it.

If you're happy and you know it
Clap your hands.

Other verses:

Shout "hooray."

Wave your arms.

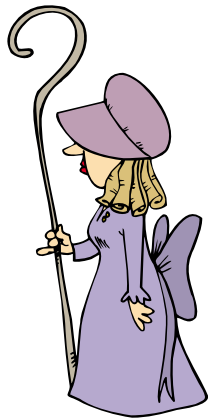
Nod your head.

If you're mad and you know it
Stomp your feet.



Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.



Little Bo Peep

Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep,
And can't tell where to find them.

Leave them alone,
And they'll come home,
Wagging their tails behind them.



Three blind mice, three blind mice,
See how they run, see how they run.
They all run after the farmer's wife
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife.
Did you ever see such a sight in your life,
As three blind mice.

When You Need Help

Catholic Human Services	775-6581	Love, Inc.	779-1888
Cradle To Classroom	876-2300	Mercy Hospital	1-800-33-MERCY 876-7200
Child's Doctor	_____	MSU Extension	
Day Care Information (4 C's)	1-800-968-4228	Missaukee	839-4667
District Health Department		Wexford	779-9480
Missaukee	839-7167	North Central Community Mental Health	
.....	825-2040	1-800-49-ALPHA	(1-800-492-5742)
Wexford	775-9942	OASIS/Family Resource Center	
Family Independence Agency		Car Seat Loans	775-7299
Missaukee & Wexford	779-4500	Crisis Line	775-7233
.....	1-800-684-2170	Poison Control	1-800-POISON-1 (1-800-764-7661)
Emergency	911	Wexford-Missaukee ISD	
Head Start Enrollment/Information		(Intermediate School District)	
Cadillac	775-9781	Preschool	876-2300
Lake City	839-4012		
Manton	824-3385		
Mesick	885-1915		

Talk to me.
Play with me.
Love me.

Fathers have a special place in their children's lives. Children whose fathers take an active part in their daily lives tend to be more well-adjusted and better equipped for success. Your interest in your children can make a significant difference. Be proud of your responsibilities and your efforts. Children don't need perfect fathers — they need caring and involved fathers.



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