

Growing Child[®]

Childhood Memories

Remember the baby book you kept when your child was an infant? Maybe it's tucked away on the shelf in a closet or in a drawer. Wherever it is, take it out. It will provide many hours of sharing and learning and fun for you and your child.

A memory book is a particularly great resource for any special time you set aside to spend with your child such as a rainy day or a story at bedtime. She will delight in hearing stories about herself at a time she can't remember—when she was a baby and a toddler.

It can also help you to see better her point of view of her life as she shares her memories. You may be amazed to hear her tell of things you'd forgotten, or to listen to her versions of shared events.

Obviously it's great for her language development. It can also help with those thinking skills we've talked so much about—understanding time, space, and order, as you talk about things that happened “last year,” “when you were a baby,” “in the old house,” “before your baby brother was born,” and so on.

The memory book is also a good way to help your child see how skilled and competent she is now compared with the ways she used to do things. “Oh, look at this picture of you before you could walk.” “When you were a baby, it was so hard for you to hold onto anything.” “Now, you're so good with your hands, the way you use scissors and crayons and put on your own clothes.” “I really appreciate how you help



me with setting the table. That takes a lot of skill with your hands.”

The memory book will probably give you many ideas of ways you can share with her how she's grown and learned since she was a baby. It will help her to understand herself and grow in positive self-concept as she realizes her accomplishments.

If you never kept a baby book for your child, or if it's been a long time since you added any material, now is a good time to start a current memory book. Keeping a memory book of her life can be a useful and enjoyable project that she'll love having for years to come. Here are some of the things you could include:

1. Photographs. Take pictures of her—eating; sleeping; having fun with friends and family; enjoying favorite activities such as playing with special toys. Be sure to label the back of each photo with a short description and a date.

Have a special “Photograph Day” and have your child help in

planning the project. Her creativity, visual awareness, thinking and social abilities will gain much stimulation through such involvement with you and others who are a part of her memory book projects.

2. Artistic creations. Keep samples of your child's art work in her memory book. Save early scribbles as well as her work with fingerpaints, crayons, watercolors, collages, self-portraits and treasured colorings. You don't need to save everything she does. Have her help you choose a few favorites. Remember to date them.

3. Physical measurements. Make a growth chart marked off in inches. Every few months, measure your child and make a notation on the chart of the date on which she reached that height. Alongside make a note of her weight on that date, if you have access to a scale. Help her make handprints and footprints every few months using fingerpaints. Again, be sure to date them.

4. Transcriptions of verbal creations. Write down stories that your child makes up, songs she composes, interesting or funny things she says, insights she has about life and people. Include any particular things she'd like kept in her memory book, such as favorite stories or songs.

5. Voice recordings. If you have a cassette tape recorder, or can

CONTINUED ON PAGE 320

borrow one, make a sound recording of her voice. Record her singing, telling a favorite story, or talking on the telephone. Include her conversations with friends and family. Do this every few months, if possible.

6. **Video recordings.** If you own a video camera, or have access to one, use it to record special events such as holidays, birthdays, and other significant happenings.

7. **Anecdotal record.** Keep a written record to go with the pictures, tape recordings, creative products, and other records of your child's development. Make a few notes about what she likes to do at different age levels. De-

scribe the skills she's learning. Note the things she likes and doesn't like (e.g. foods, toys, colors). Write down interesting comments others have made about her. Be sure to record experiences she has particularly enjoyed. Keep your notes anecdotal, as if you were telling someone a story about your child.

With the collection of these kinds of materials and notes, you're creating a gift for your child more valuable than any toy that money could ever buy. You're keeping a record for her of a time of which she would otherwise have only glimpses and sketchy memories.

You're also helping her

develop self-confidence by providing her with a record of her growth—a word-and-picture story of who she was and who she has become. As she grows older it will become a special treasure not only for her but for others too who will come to know and love her.

Ashley Montagu once wrote that "... the most important job in the world is the making of another human being, one to whom we have given roots and wings." In providing your child with a memory book, you are not only helping her to establish her own "roots" by informing her about her past, but you are also helping her to grow her "wings" with which she will soar into the future. ■

Self-Concept: How Does Your Child See Himself?

Self-concept or self-image is how a child thinks of himself in relation to the people and things in the rest of the world. What is your child's concept of himself? Is he a very important person in his own eyes? Or does he think he's not too good a person? It is very important that a child have a very genuine feeling that he matters in the world, that he is important.

Psychologists have developed several measures of self-concept. An extensive body of research on school-aged children shows that a child's self-concept is directly related to achievement in school. Children who have a poor self-concept tend to do poorly in school learning tasks. Those who feel good about themselves generally do well in school.

In one of the research studies, researchers gave two tests to a group of kindergarten children.

One was an IQ test which measures intellectual functioning, and the other was a test of self-concept. Two years later these same children were given a test of achievement in school to measure how well they performed in reading, writing, and spelling. It turned out that the measure of self-concept was a better predictor of their school achievement than was the measure of intelligence.

Parents can influence their child's self-concept development. Here are three general principles which will help your child develop a good self-concept.

Principle No. 1: *Let your child know that you love him.* A child needs to know that he is important to you, that he has your love—even when he has engaged in some unlovable activities. ("I love you, but I don't like what you have just done.")

Principle No. 2: *Help your child handle his failures.* What

messages are you giving him when he fails? He needs to know that you're on his side, that you accept him—win or lose—for who he is. Your corrections should reflect what he's done, not what he "is."

Principle No. 3: *Don't be dishonest.* Your child knows when he hasn't done well, when he has failed. If you acknowledge that you know this, but that it isn't the end of the world, your child gains confidence in you to reflect an honest value to him.

At this age your child is trying to find his place in the world. He's experimenting with different ideas and concepts, looking to you for guidance and support. Make sure you give him the room he needs to learn and make mistakes. But also make sure he knows you're on his side—win or lose. Helping to develop a positive self-concept is one of the most important things any parent can do for a child. ■

The Chalkboard Experience

Children love to draw on a chalkboard. The chalkboard need not be an expensive slate. A discarded piece of wallboard or Masonite™ painted with several coats of chalkboard paint—green or black—will serve the purpose.

For young children scribbling is the forerunner of form perception—the recognition and reproduction of geometric forms and letters. They first scribble lines, angles, and curves. They will later go on to produce the complicated combinations of lines, angles, and curves that form letters and numbers.

It has been found that young children don't scribble in a random manner. They follow a certain sequence in their scribbles.

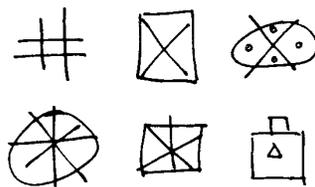
There are 20 basic scribbles. From a combination of these scribbles there are structures which are identifiable by age. According to Rhoda Kellogg the evolution of scribbling into pictorial drawing goes something like this:

20 Basic Scribbles

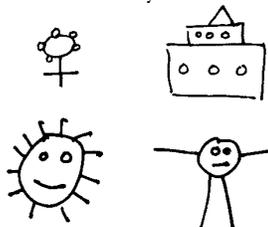
For the 3-year-old:



The 4-year-old takes the basic scribbles and turns them into new forms or aggregates.



For the 5-year-old:



Here are some variations of the chalkboard experience:

1) Chalk on dry paper. Paper may be highly textured, sandpaper, butcher paper, or newsprint. Varieties of colored chalk on dark paper or dark chalk on light paper will enhance your child's enjoyment.

In addition to learning about different shapes and forms, your child is also learning about the effects of his strength on what he is drawing. The more pressure he exerts on the chalk, the more intense the color becomes on paper.

2) Chalk on wet paper. Moisten heavy-duty paper with water.

Your child will observe the differences in the use of chalk on dry and wet papers. On the latter the colors become more brilliant on contact with moisture. He must also use greater control—a lighter touch is needed to prevent tearing the wet paper.

3) Chalk on wet paper, moistened with buttermilk or liquid starch.

In addition to learning about shapes and forms and how the intensity of a color can change depending on the amount of pressure used, your child will also learn about different cause-effect relationships. For instance, he will discover that when the paper is moistened with buttermilk or liquid starch, the effect will be that the colors won't rub off when the paper dries.■

Listening Skills

Our senses let us see and hear and taste and smell and touch the world. Children need experiences

with their senses, to develop them, to sharpen their awareness of the qualities of things.

Here are some listening games to help your child learn to tell the differences between sounds.

Say, "Close your eyes." (Be sure there's no peeking.)

Now, make a noise.

"What noise was that?"

Now, make a different noise and ask each time, "What noise was that?" Knock on the floor, on the wall, on a table. Knock on the refrigerator door. Knock on a box of cereal.

Tap on the counter with your fingernail, with a fork, a pencil, a pie tin, an empty milk carton.

It's more fun for your child when you take turns. Close your eyes and let her make a noise which you are to identify. It's not as easy as you might think!

Another game to develop listening skills is to play "What Sounds Do You Hear?" Again, take turns.

For example, your child might identify the sound of birds singing, while you say you hear the church bells ringing. She hears the sounds of a truck going by, you hear the sound of a passing train.

If you use a tape recorder to record different sounds, (for example, running water, a car horn, the telephone or doorbell ringing), you can ask your child to identify each sound. Later you can help her sequencing ability by asking: Which sound did you hear first? Which one was second?

These games help to develop awareness of sounds in our environment. They also help to sharpen your child's attention skills.■

When Someone Teases

Sooner or later your child will experience teasing. Teasing occurs when someone says or does something to bother another.

It may take the form of one child calling another a name (“You’re a nerd!”) or doing something to annoy (for example, poking someone repeatedly in the back).

Child psychologists have noted that, between the ages of 2 and 6 years, physical forms of aggression, such as shoving or hitting, decrease. At the same time, however, non-physical forms of aggression, such as teasing, tend to increase.

Whereas 2-year-olds are likely to struggle physically to establish ownership of some toy (which probably neither 2-year-old really wants!), a 5-year-old is more likely to tease than to hurt another child in a physical manner.

As preschool children develop perspective-taking skills, i.e. the ability to see things from someone else's point of view, (which we discussed in the 4 years 3 months issue of *Growing Child*), they are better able to understand specific characteristics of another child. And they may use these newly developed skills—being able to surmise what another child may be thinking or feeling—to engage in teasing behavior.

How can you help your child deal with teasing? Usually the most effective way to deal with people who tease is to ignore them. So teach your child to look away or even walk away without answering or reacting in any other way.

Sometimes a group of children may pick on one child to tease. If she responds in an angry manner, the other children will most likely laugh because she behaved in a predictable manner. They teased her in order to make her angry. The angrier she becomes, the more likely the other children will tease

her again and again.

If, on the other hand, she just looks away or walks away, the other children have nothing to laugh about. So they will most likely just leave her alone.

Teasing can be a difficult problem for some children to deal with. If parents are aware that their child is being teased by others, they may help in the following ways:

1) Talk to your child about why other children tease and what outcomes they expect. This will help your child avoid provoking more teasing from others.

2) Let your child know that the most effective way to deal with teasing is to look away or walk away without saying or doing anything else.

3) Role-play for your child what you would do if someone teased you. (“Here’s what I would do if someone called me ‘stinky pants’”).

4) Have your child practice role-playing a similar situation (“Show me what you would do if someone pushed you to annoy you.”).

5) Once your child knows how to deal with one form of teasing (for example, being called names), have her role-play a different form (such as when someone pulls her hair or unties her shoestrings).

By anticipating such situations and by role-playing what to do, your child gains the self-confidence she will need to ignore the teasing behavior.

If your child doesn’t want to role-play the situation, you can use two puppets. One puppet engages in teasing behavior while the other puppet demonstrates how to deal with it by looking away.

Even though the teasing by other children may not immediately stop—it may in fact even increase initially—ignoring the teasing has been found to be, in the long term, the most effective way to deal with this problem. ■

Pool Safety

For some families swimming is a summer activity. For others, who have access to an indoor pool or who live in a warm climate, it can be a year-round source of fun.

Unfortunately, the fun can turn to tragedy if basic safety rules are not observed.

Here are some pool safety guidelines:

- Never leave young children unattended—even those who know how to swim—near a swimming pool area. If the supervising adult has to leave for any reason—such as to answer the telephone—make sure first that all children are out of the pool area. It only takes 30 seconds for a toddler to drown.

- No diving should be allowed in an above-ground pool.

- In an in-ground pool, no diving should be permitted unless the pool has at least 8 feet of water at the diving end. A safety nylon rope with a colored buoy attached should be installed to distinguish between the shallow and deep ends of the pool.

- Don’t allow your child to use flotation devices, such as inflatable animals or mattresses. Your child might slip off them or they may deflate unexpectedly in water that is too deep for him.

- No glass containers should be allowed in the pool area.

- No running near the edge of the pool.

- Horseplay, such as pushing others underwater, should not be permitted.

- If you have an outdoor pool at home, it should be surrounded with a high fence and a gate that is kept locked. Consult your insurance company to determine how high the fence should be.

- Keep a safety ring and a rope near the pool at all times. Don’t let children use the safety ring as a toy because otherwise it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 321

A Word of Caution



Although much is known from recent research studies about young children's amazing cognitive abilities, does this imply that it's time to start them on school-like activities in reading, writing, and mathematics?

Some children, in trying to be "parent-pleasers," will "polly-parrot" rote answers. And parents need a word of caution to distinguish rote answering from true learning.

Children who "polly-parrot" rote answers, without any real grasp of the relevant underlying concepts, are actually developing an unsound foundation for later learning. They merely learn to mimic behaviors and sounds in a mechanical parrot-like fashion.

Unfortunately these inappropriate behaviors are reinforced if they hear their parents boasting to other adults about how "bright" they are ("Nancy is already doing algebra!").

For good learning experiences to occur it is important to provide Youngster with a high level of choice in play. Allow lots of opportunities for her own initiative and creativity. The secret is to surround the

child with appropriate materials—books, puzzles, blocks, and other educational toys—which provide opportunities for academic-type learning in a playful environment.

A young child's room can be given a highly attractive appearance by decorating it with colorful alphabet letters or numbers and with pictures and labels of familiar objects (such as bears and dolls). Youngster first gets to like her room because of the colors, shapes, and objects. Later she will gradually become familiar with the various written symbols in the room and with their meaning.

In this way academic learning is integrated into Youngster's life experiences in a manner that is pleasant, enjoyable, and age-appropriate.

Young children's best learning occurs when their interest is aroused. ("What's that?" "What's she doing?" "Why?") That's the time for responsive and supportive teaching on the part of the parent. Our advice is to avoid turning this valuable teaching into formal school-like academic training.

Although some preschool

children can be taught to read, most experts in early childhood education consider it unwise to engage at this age in formal academic training. Such training usually requires a child to sit quietly and to be attentive for long periods of time. These demands on a young child are not appropriate for her developmental level and often have an adverse effect later on school learning. They also take time away from more appropriate developmental activities such as interacting with peers and adults and learning through play.

So how can we use important findings on early childhood cognitive development to give Youngster the type of learning experiences she needs? Youngster will learn best when important learning experiences—such as language and simple number concepts—are embedded in everyday fun activities. To the child the focus is on *play*, even though to the adult who engages in a play activity with the child, the primary focus may be on *learning* some new concept. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 322

may not be available when needed.

- If your child doesn't know how to swim, now is a good time for him to learn.

- If you don't know how to perform CPR, now is a good time for you to learn. It could mean the difference between breath and death.

Swimming is meant to be a safe and fun activity for children and adults. By observing basic safety rules, you and your child can enjoy many hours of fun. ■

Healthy Handwashing



If you have not done so already, four years of age is a good time to help your child develop healthy handwashing

habits.

In that way she will be prepared to practice cleanliness when she goes to kindergarten.

Proper handwashing can prevent the spread of many communicable diseases. Water alone, however, won't kill germs. Soap—preferably liquid soap—is needed too. Drying the hands with a disposable paper towel

will help stop the spread of germs.

Here are some appropriate occasions for your child to practice handwashing:

- When she comes into the house after playing outdoors.
- After using the toilet.
- After petting an animal.
- Before eating food.

Good habits—learned during the preschool years—can last a lifetime.

So help your child develop the good habit of washing her hands. ■

Catch Them Being Good



few years ago some teachers decided they wanted to give more attention to good behavior in the classroom than to bad behavior.

So, instead of correcting the student with bad behavior ("Bill, you're not paying attention again"), they decided to give a "Gotcha" award for good behavior ("Joe, you just won a 'Gotcha' award because I 'Gotcha' being good: listening to what I was telling you.")

Parents can use a "Gotcha" award just as effectively as teachers.

Create a certificate which says in large letters: "GOTCHA" AWARD (see box).

Each time, you can fill in your child's name, the good behavior that you noticed, and the reward that you wish to give (the "value" of the award).

You can award the certificate for any good behavior you wish (a cheerful smile, a courteous "thank you," or a neatly kept bedroom, for example).

Your child will particularly enjoy receiving the "Gotcha" award when it comes as a surprise.

So, try to be creative and innovative in selecting the good behavior for which you give the award.

Likewise, be creative in deciding the "value" of each individual "Gotcha" award (50 cents, a big hug, a piece of fruit, or a candy bar, for example).

It's a good idea to ask your child what are some rewards he likes to receive. They may be as simple as accompanying you to the grocery store, a visit to you or your spouse's place of work, or an outing to the park. If you compile a list of possible rewards, you can then choose the one most appropriate for each occasion.

By getting a "Gotcha" award, your child will learn that good behavior (not just bad behavior) is noticed, that good behavior is important, and, because it is important, good behavior is often rewarded by parents.■

Dear Growing Child:

*"I want to express my sincere appreciation to **Growing Child**.*

Your articles have helped me tremendously to enjoy and participate in my child's growing experience.

"This is my second child, and it is amazing how much you forget about how involvement in the little one's activities really matters to a child's development."



Sue McN.
Corona, CA

"GOTCHA" AWARD

This certificate is awarded to

(write your child's name)

for

(your child's good behavior)

The value of this award is:

(specify your child's reward)

www.growingchild.com

Contributing Authors

Phil Bach, O.D., Ph.D.
Miriam Bender, Ph.D.
Joseph Braga, Ed.D.
Laurie Braga, Ph.D.
George Early, Ph.D.
Liam Grimley, Ph.D.
Robert Hannemann, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Sylvia Kottler, M.S.
Bill Peterson, Ph.D.

Growing Child, Inc.
P.O. Box 620
Lafayette, Indiana 47902
Telephone: 1-800-927-7289
© 2004 Growing Child, Inc.



Next Month

- **Shyness**
- **Sibling Relationships**
- **Making Books With Your Child**

We hope this list of the best childhood memories. Things have changed a lot since we were kids, but our precious childhood memories will stay with us forever. We hope remembering beautiful moments from this list will put a warm smile on your face. P.S. Cool personal stories from people included! #1 Playing with your favorite stuffed animal. In order to never forget the magical days of their childhood, some people keep their favorite toys forever. A comment by nujurzy87, reddit 500+ Words Essay on Childhood Memories. Memories are a vital component of our bodies. They shape our personality as all our knowledge and past experiences are stored there. All of us have memories, both good and bad. You have memories from long ago and also from recent times. Furthermore, some memories help us get by tough days and make us cheerful on good days. Memories are the little things which help in running our lives smoothly. In other words, memories are irreplaceable and they are very dear to us. For me, childhood memories are all made up of recollections of tasty food. I had this sandwich made up of two cookies and just some butter between them. Now that's the taste of childhood! Tomorrow I'm going to grab a can of condensed milk; I just realised how much I miss it. You all know what I'm talking about!