



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

## What is it?

Here's a simple word game you can play any time, any place, and with children of a variety of all ages.

Name several objects that all fit into one category and have the children try to guess what the category is. In other words, what the objects have in common.

For example:

Robin, cardinal, blue jay — are all birds.

Shoe, sweater, shirt — are all articles of clothing.

Cow, pig, horse — are all animals found on a farm.

You can make the game easy or make it hard, depending upon the players and their ages. When things get dull, turn the game around and name a category. Players then have to name objects that fit into that category.

Games like this help children learn about sorting into categories, and about how things are different and how they are the same. □

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Language

## Questions! Questions!

Questions! Questions! Does your child drive you crazy with questions? It's only the beginning.

There are three kinds of interrogative behavior:

1. The question-and-answer game where he asks pseudo questions—he asks for answers he already knows.

It's a device for making conversation with an adult. For example, he asks, "What's that?"

If you in turn say, "What do you think it is?", he replies, "Milk."

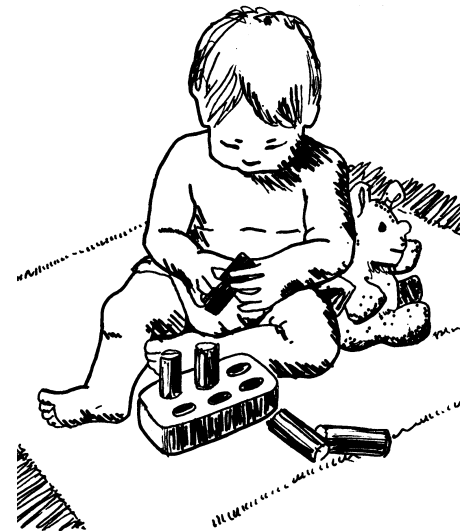
2. He asks questions as a way of checking on the accuracy of what he believes.

Really it is a primitive form of testing a hypothesis. "That hat?"

It isn't always possible to separate these kinds of questions, but does it matter?

It is practice, however crude, in learning the question form, making a verbal exchange with someone, gaining knowledge and eventually associating the fact that specific types of questions bring forth specific types of responses.

For example, he will discover that "what" questions supply names; "who" and "why" questions deliver information about a source or the purpose for an action.



Youngster hears others use "wh" words when they question him and each other.

As he listens, he learns that "wh" words can be expected to elicit an audience and a response. □



## Learning math is a lot more than learning how to count

Children begin to learn math concepts long before they go to school—by determining the difference between these things and those things, for instance, or sorting objects which belong together or ordering objects in space.

An example of how children order things in space is when your preschooler helps put away the pots and pans in the kitchen.

At first he may push them into the cupboard any old way.

But when he does this, the door won't close.

Then you might suggest, "Why not try putting the cookie sheets in first? I always put them on the bottom."

Then you might ask, "Why not put the little pan inside the big pan?"

When the child does one or the other, the door will close. And he has expanded his knowledge

of order — of how parts fit together.

Children also learn math concepts by cooking. Sugar, flour, and eggs can be measured, mixed, sifted, and stirred.

There are all sorts of abstract mathematical concepts in the kitchen — heavy, light, long, short, more, less, a little bit, a lot, a spoonful, and a cupful.

Just as with so many other aspects of growing up, children learn something from even the simplest of operations. □

## Discipline

### How to cope with whining, tantrums, sulking, and clinging

Some children seem to whine all the time. Nothing ever pleases them. They will whine for an ice cream cone. When the parent delivers, they whine that it's not the right flavor. When the parent provides another flavor, they whine that it's melting and sticky. No matter what the parent does, it does not please the child.

Whining, like temper tantrums, sulking, and clinging, is a negative behavior. If parents consistently reward negative behaviors, they will continue. If parents consistently ignore these behaviors, they will stop.

Of course, ignoring these kinds of behavior is easier said than done. But be patient. If you do not get involved, you will be surprised at how quickly your child will stop, because he isn't getting your attention.

A sulky child is one who withdraws from any challenging situation. He will not try. A good way to deal with this is to insist on him trying his best, even if you must insist or guide him through the task.

A clinging child is too dependent on his parents. He cannot do anything by himself. Parents of a dependent child can ignore the dependent behavior, but at the same time make him do things on his own and praise him highly when he does. □

### Something New!

"Grandma Says" is a twice-monthly special message that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children's book reviews. To receive your free issues, go to: [www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays](http://www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays) and enter your e-mail address.

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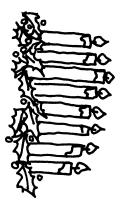



Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

[www.growingchild.com](http://www.growingchild.com)

# February, 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7</p> <p>Read a story from a book of folk tales.</p> 	<p>8</p> <p>Boy Scout Day. Do you know someone who is a boy scout?</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Talk about something you did yesterday.</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Does your toaster make noises when it toasts? How about the refrigerator? Does it make noises? Describe them.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Who fixed dinner? Tell them "thank you."</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Abraham Lincoln's birthday. What job did he have? What is his nickname?</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>What can you do today? Yes or no?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rake leaves</li> <li>• Help build a snowman</li> <li>• Go swimming</li> <li>• Sit in the sun</li> </ul>
<p>14</p> <p>Valentine's Day.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>President's Day. What's the name of the U.S. president?</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Play pat-a-cake with someone.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Ash Wednesday.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Wear something purple today.</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Draw a picture of two pandas. What color are they?</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Help make a fresh fruit salad for dinner.</p> 
<p>21</p> <p>Use your crayons to draw some pretty spring flowers.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>George Washington's birthday.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>How many rolls of toilet tissue can you carry without dropping one?</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Draw a picture with the hand you don't usually use.</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>In what month is your birthday?</p>	<p>26</p> <p>How many different colors can you find in your house? Count them.</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Tell a joke.</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Bake something new today: scones, rye bread, short bread.</p> 