



As They Grow

Early Learning News for Families of Young Children

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Child Development Issues

Nurturing Your Child's Development



Parents and child care providers can do a great deal to create an environment that nurtures children's cognitive, physical and social development. Following are some ideas that can help you with this important process.

Help Develop Cognitive Skills

Young children are acquiring thinking and reasoning skills: memory, language, pre-reading and writing, and problem solving. They begin to store and later retrieve information from their long-term memory. Preschool children can sort, match, classify, and understand simple concepts of cause and effect. They learn simple songs, rhymes, and finger plays.

Young children can arrange items from smallest to largest, lightest to darkest, and heaviest to lightest. They can pick out opposites such as big and little.

You can stimulate thinking and reasoning skills:

- ▶ Provide children with many writing utensils — pencils, crayons, washable markers, and different kinds of paper to develop their imagination.
- ▶ Help children create picture-charts for chores and activities to help them understand responsibility and cooperation. A picture of a dog would remind a child to fill the dog's water dish.
- ▶ Plant seeds. Plant a windowsill garden. Gardening helps teach consequences, responsibility, and concepts about living things.
- ▶ Go on field trips. Children learn from seeing and doing. Zoos, pet stores, farms, markets, or parks are examples of learning trips that are fun.

Help Develop Physical Abilities

Provide indoor and outdoor activities in large areas so children can use different large muscles. Children can run, jump, climb, and stop on command. Balancing and throwing activities challenge them, too.

Encourage children to master activities such as cutting, using a paper punch, simple typing, and writing tools. These activities increase eye and hand coordination, hand strength, and finger flexibility.

- ◇ Sing action songs that use muscles, like: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," or "Itsy, Bitsy Spider."
- ◇ Make a simple hopscotch game by using masking tape on a floor or chalk on a sidewalk.
- ◇ Do balloon chases. Have children try to keep a balloon in the air with hands or feet.
- ◇ Provide paints, writing materials, clay, dough, glue and scissors. Encourage the use of cutting, pasting, tearing, and coloring. Provide opportunities for free expression, as well as patterns to learn shapes.

Help Develop Social/Emotional Abilities

Socialization is how children acquire values, beliefs, and behaviors acceptable to others. By socializing, children gain the knowledge, skills, and aspirations that help them adapt to their environment and the people around them. Family interactions help mold a child's social and emotional development.

Preschoolers can pretend, create, and work cooperatively. They are learning skills to play together and share the same equipment. As they learn, you can expect disagreements.

Small children may enjoy simple board games. They are not skilled at following rules. Since preschoolers are not good losers, the best activities are those with more than one winner or those where everyone wins.

▶ Plan games and activities that encourage two children to work together. Having children do project in twos creates a safe environment for friendships to develop.

▶ Provide materials so children can build a fort or a tent. Use tables and blankets.

▶ Provide dress-up clothes.

▶ Expose children to books. Books help children think about their world and often lead to discussions. Encourage children to make up different endings. Read daily to a child!



References: J. LeFebvre, UW-Extension, Parenting the Preschooler.

Vegetarian Chili

Makes 10 servings. Serving size: 1 cup

Nutrition Information - 146 calories, 14 grams of fat per serving

Ingredients:

- √ 1 onion chopped
- √ 2 cans diced tomatoes (14.5 ounces)
- √ 1 can garbanzo or kidney beans (14.5 ounces)
- √ 1 can black beans (14.5 ounces)
- √ 2 cups frozen corn
- √ 3 to 4 teaspoons chili powder
- √ pepper, to taste

Instructions:

1. Peel and chop onion.
2. Combine all ingredients in large pot. Bring to a boil.
3. Simmer for 10 minutes. If you want the onion to be soft, simmer the chili longer.

From: Iowa State University Extension, *Food and Fun for Active Families*, 2007 Nutrition Calendar.

Provided by: UW-Extension, Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program, 1220 Mound Ave, Racine, WI 53404 (262) 635-6824.

UW-Extension Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

- ◇ **Potty Training** — **Barbara Stoffel-Emde**, Racine County UW-Ext. Family & Community Educator
Monday, March 30, 6-8 PM — **Ives Grove Office Complex**, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant
Learn the readiness signs for toilet training and how to help prepare young children for this important step. Parents and those interested in young children's issues may register by calling **262 886-8460** by **March 23**. To receive **Registry Credit or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order** to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of **March 23**. See flyer for detailed information or contact, Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262 833-8732.
- ◇ **Gender Issues** — **Barbara Stoffel-Emde**, Racine County UW-Ext. Family & Community Educator
Wednesday, April 22, 6-8 PM — **Ives Grove Office Complex**, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant.
Learn how to answer young children's questions about gender issues and reproduction. To receive **Registry Credit or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order** to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of **April 15**. See flyer for detailed information or contact, Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262 833-8732.

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