

Parents Make the Difference!



Teach your child the importance of responsibility

Even though your child is still quite young, she is old enough to learn that there are some things people must do, even if they don't want to. This is called responsibility.

Here's how you can instill responsibility in your preschooler:

- Give your child an age-appropriate task. Your child cannot follow through on a job if she isn't capable of doing it in the first place. She cannot clean up the whole house. But she can pick up her toys and put them in the box.
- Make it clear that this job is your child's, not yours. "Every day, you must put all of your toys in the box. This is your job. If I have to do it, the toys will go up on the shelf where you can't reach them."
- Explain to your child. "I know it is fun to play. It isn't fun to pick up toys. But the toys belong in the box and not on the floor. If you want to play with them, you have to clean up when you are finished using them."
- Follow through on consequences. Put the toys out of reach if your child refuses to pick them up. Leave them there for one day, then get them back down. Remind your child again. "The toys are back, but you will have to pick them up when you are finished playing. If you don't, they will go away again."

A new season can result in new experiences for your child

The changing of the seasons may be familiar to you, but it is exciting for a young child. There are so many new ways to use his senses. And a whole new set of possible activities opens up, as well. This is especially true now, as winter changes to spring.

Here are some ways to enjoy this new season with your child:

- Show your child the fun in a windy day. Go to the park and fly a kite together. Or put on oversize T-shirts and pretend to be kites as the shirts flap around you. Take note of what other things blow around in the wind. What are the flags doing? How about the trees?
- Walk outside with your child when the weather permits. What signs of spring can each of you find? Have a "spring scavenger hunt." Look for crocuses pushing up, buds on the trees and birds nesting.
- Explore the grocery store with your child on a day when you have to be indoors. Search for fruits and vegetables that are coming into season now. Choose one together. Take it home and prepare it for your next meal.

Conversations help you prepare your child for school

It is always important to talk with your child. But when your child is about four, his language skills are exploding.

Having as many conversations as you can takes advantage of his new skills. And it also puts your preschooler on the best track to be ready for kindergarten.

Here are some new ways to talk to your child:

- Use more complex words. Instead of telling your child, "I'm happy," try saying, "I'm delighted!" Say it with a big smile on your face and he will likely get your meaning. And you have just expanded his vocabulary.
- Introduce concepts. Your child can now understand more about time, for example. He knows everything does not happen right now. Use the words yesterday and tomorrow. With a calendar, show him next week or even next month.
- Use figures of speech. "You are being as quiet as a mouse!"
- Continue reading to your child daily, and talk about the story, setting and characters in the book.