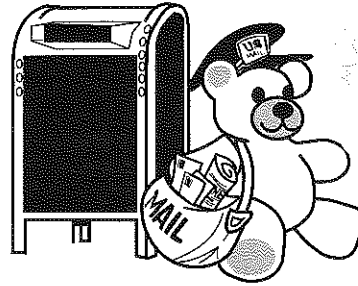


THE TEDDY



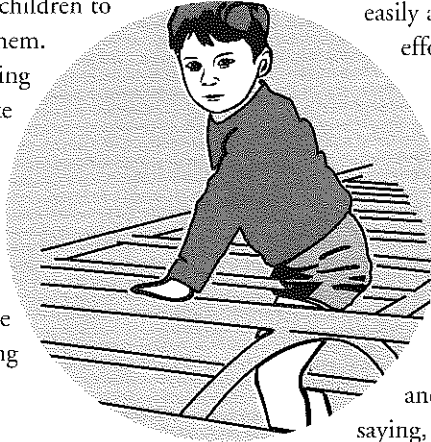
BEAR POST

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS

Gaining Cooperation from Your Child

Parents often wonder how to get their children to cooperate with each other and with them.

Unfortunately, children are not born wanting or knowing how to cooperate. The give and take of cooperation is a learned behavior needing lots of modeling and practice. To help children develop cooperative behavior, establish a structured and nurturing environment. Open communication is important; let children know what to expect. Explaining to children the reasons for family rules and limits, and providing opportunities to practice are ways to encourage cooperation in your child.



easily and successfully, and be sure to praise your child's efforts. Make a game out of it if your child resists a request. If it's time for cleanup, pick up the big blocks and let your child pick up the small blocks. See who can do it faster or pick them up by colors.

Use humor and creativity. If it's time for bedtime and your child is resistant, try putting the pajamas on backwards or upside down and let your child tell you the right way. Be gentle and understand your child's needs and interests. When it's time to get in the car, try saying, "Let's take your doll for a ride" rather than

"Get in the car."

1. **Allow Transition Time.** Prepare your child a few minutes before it is time to change activities. You might say, "In five minutes, it will be time to brush your teeth and get dressed for school." This gives your child a "heads up" to allow him/her to prepare for the activity change and know ahead of time what you expect to be done. Allow your child enough time to finish his/her activities. A stressed, inflexible schedule tends to leave a child angry and frustrated, which does not promote cooperation.
2. **Practice** with your child so she/he knows what to expect in new situations. For example, use a toy doctor's kit to show your child what to expect before going to the doctor's or dentist's office. Read a book to your child about going to the doctor, and discuss some of the office rules. They might include: playing quietly with toys while waiting, sitting quietly near you, using a quiet voice, answering the doctor's questions, etc. On future visits, ask your child beforehand if she/he remembers the rules and review if necessary. Praise your child for cooperative behavior or remembering rules. Your child's cooperation will most likely be repeated when his/her behavior is recognized and appreciated by you.
3. **Respect** your child's attempts at cooperation. Let your child help you with chores or ask for your child's help with something else. Look for simple chores that she/he can do

4. **Give choices** by allowing your child the opportunity to pick between acceptable alternatives. For example, offer your child a choice between two outfits to wear. This decision-making gives your child some sense of involvement and control in an activity, making it more likely that your child will cooperate.

Be a strong model of cooperation. Children develop cooperative skills when they live in a home where family members work and play together respectfully. Get involved in games and family fun that emphasizes mutual cooperation. Cooperation is a behavior that is learned over time. It needs to be practiced, appreciated, praised, nurtured and modeled. It's not always easy but it's always worth the effort!

SUGGESTED READING:

- *The Turnip* by Pierr Morgan
- *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni
- *Herman the Helper* by Robert Krauss
- *Feast for 10* by Cathryn Falwell
- *The Little Red Hen* illustrated by Byron Barton



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"A PARENT ASKS"

Q: How do I get my son to do chores around the house?

A: Nothing is more frustrating to parents than trying to get their children to accept the responsibility of chores. When your child first shows an interest in "helping"



with something, encourage it, even if it does take more time and is not as good a job as you might like. Children need praise for their efforts and thanks for the job. Always

remember to give your child praise and a "thank you" for helping.

Children need to learn that everyone in the family has to help by doing their part. Start with one simple chore that he can do successfully such as placing napkins on the table, or putting away cans and boxes when you return from the grocery store.

Gradually increase the chores. As he gets older and more competent, ask him what he'd be interested in doing. Create a chart to list your child's weekly chores and then check them off or use stickers to show completion of each chore. This may encourage your child to help with household chores.

Show your child how to do his chores so he learns the necessary skills to do the job. If your child feels overwhelmed, tired or frustrated, help him with his jobs. Doing chores together can be a special time to teach your child about cooperating, feeling good about himself, and being a part of the family.

Excerpts from: Tri-County Health Department, Englewood, CO



PARENTS WANT TO KNOW

As parents, we usually know what we mean to say to our children, but often send a mixed message that leads to an argument and frustration for both parent and child. In order to avoid a power struggle, the choice of words we use when talking to preschoolers is very important. If your statement is not meant to be a question, be careful not to ask it like one.

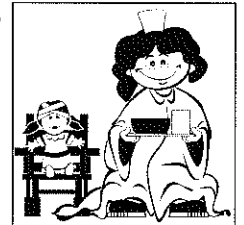
Two common communication errors parents make are:

- 1. Giving the child a choice whether or not to follow the instruction.** When you say to your child at bedtime, "It's time to go to bed now, O.K.?" you have left the conversation open to negotiation. Your child will probably answer by saying, "No, I don't want to go to bed yet." or "I'm not tired." or "I want to finish watching this cartoon." A more direct way to communicate what you want would be to say, "It's time for you to go to bed now."
- 2. Stating a personal preference rather than a rule** leaves room for arguing from the child. For example, when you say to your child, "I would like you to pick up your toys." you are stating that you would like the toys picked up but are not stating that the child actually has to do it. Instead say, "Now that you are finished playing, please pick up your toys and put them away." The statement says what you mean and leaves no question that what you expect your child to do is... pick up the toys.

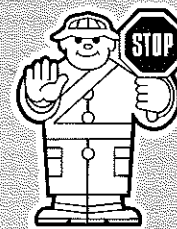


COOPERATIVE PLAY

Pretend play is very important in the development of a preschooler. Research has shown that children who are active in pretend play are usually more cooperative, more willing to share and take turns, and have larger vocabularies than those who do not. Imaginative play helps young children to concentrate, be attentive and use self-control. For example, while pretending to work at a grocery store, a child must first set up the counter, put out pretend food, invite friends to shop, use the "cash register", and bag the groceries. All these actions help a child learn about sequential actions and help them perform these steps in a logical and orderly way. Children can also learn flexibility through imaginative play. They often will substitute items for those they do not have. For example, a doll stroller can become a shopping cart while playing grocery store.



Cooperative play between preschoolers, such as building a sandcastle together or planning a tea party, is an important social skill. In cooperative play, children learn to respect the ideas of others, to take turns, and to participate in a joint effort. They also learn how to problem solve by working together to find a solution.



SAFETY WORKS

It is vital that families practice and teach their children personal

safety. Never leave your child alone in a store, car, stroller, or public place, even for a moment. Always accompany your child to a public bathroom.

Teach your child not to accept rides from strangers. Avoid clothing with your child's name displayed to discourage strangers from approaching your child. Teach your child his/her full name, address, phone number, 911 or other emergency number.

The Parent Line: Free statewide phone line for parents and others caring for children. Call for support, encouragement, information, and ideas about handling behavior or about community resources. Mon-Fri 8 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sat 9 a.m.-1 p.m. O'ahu Ph. 526-1222. Neighbor Island parents call toll-free: 1-800-816-1222.

Please visit The Parent Line website: <http://www.theparentline.org> The site includes: the Keiki O Hawaii, the Parent Resource Directory, the Teddy Bear Post, and The Parent Line Flyer. The Keiki O Hawaii packet has helpful information for raising newborns to three-year-old children. The Parent Resource Directory provides phone numbers for resources ranging from childcare, crisis services, health and nutrition, to family support. The Parent Line Flyer includes services that the phone line provides.