

THE **CHILDTIME** CONNECTION

September 2010

Help Your Child Cope with Stress

Signs and suggestions to help your child during difficult times

The Fine Art of Sharing

How to teach your little one this important social skill

Bring the Learning Experience Home

Fun, family activities for your child's educational development



Bring the Learning Experience Home

Childtime is committed to providing an enriching learning experience to every child in our care. But we also know how important it is for families to incorporate educational activities into their home as well. Here are some great things to do with children of all ages!

Infant

Have a clean shower poof ready for this experience. Sit on the floor with your baby between your legs. Put the poof on her head saying, “It is on your head.” Encourage her to remove it. Acknowledge when she gets it. Continue with other body parts.

Toddler

Sit face to face with your child. Clap your hands slowly and say “slow, slow” along with the beat of the clapping. Clap faster as you say “faster, faster.” Now clap really fast as you say, “fast, fast.” Slow down the rhythm and say “slower, slower” until you are back to “slow, slow.” Can you find other things that you can do slow and fast? How about stomping your feet or shaking your head?

Preschool/Pre-K

Set a container on a counter top. Guess how many cups of water it will take to fill the container. Write your guesses down on a piece of paper. Begin to pour cups of water into the container. Make a tally mark for each cup you pour in. How many cups did it take? How close were your guesses? Repeat the activity with a smaller cup or a larger container. What does your child think will happen?

School-Age

Look at a phone number / key pad that has numbers that represent three numbers (for example, “5” = “JKL”). Write a simple message using the numbers that represent each letter (like texting). Challenge your child to decipher the message. Encourage your child to write you a message.



Helping Children Cope with Stressful Times

As parents, you may have questioned why your child may sometimes exhibit new or different behaviors. It may be due to stress. Children can be affected adversely by what may seem to adults like “little” things such as a new classroom, holidays, a new home or car, a new sibling, a new daily routine, a new caregiver or a change in the family structure.

If you think your child may be stressed, observe them carefully for these signs* which may appear for a short time and then go away or may last awhile:

- Changes in eating, sleeping, or bathroom habits
- Increased separation anxiety from parents or teachers
- Bad dreams or extended crying spells
- Nail-biting, thumb-sucking or hair-pulling
- Feeling sick, i.e. headaches, stomach aches
- Chewing on clothing or other items
- Wanting to be alone or withdrawn from others
- Increased aggressive behavior or “acting out”

How can we help our children cope with stress?

- Encourage children to express their feelings. Let them know that it is okay to feel the way they do. Support them and allow for “quiet time” where they can be alone to think.
- During stressful times, lower your expectations and avoid putting children under too much pressure.

- Provide nutritious foods and plenty of rest. Try relaxation exercises such as breathing, stretching or listening to soothing music.
- Avoid “busy” schedules and consistently maintain your daily routines. Children feel safe and secure when their routines remain the same.
- Encourage drawing, painting or writing. Children need creative outlets to express their feelings. Encourage movement, dancing, and physical exercises. Physical activity also decreases stress.
- Encourage puppet or doll play. Children will be able to create a reality they can control and recreate stressful events in ways they can manage.

Most importantly, express your unconditional love to your children, paying close, respectful attention to what they tell or show you they need from you.

***Note:** *If a child shows excessive signs of stress for long periods, it is in the best interest of the child to seek professional advice and support.*

The Fine Art of Sharing

A universal topic for all families is sharing. Have you ever experienced these toddler’s “Rules for Living?”

If I want it ... it's mine.

If I had it ... it's mine.

If I thought about touching it ... it's mine.

If I might want it any time in the future ... it's mine.

You get the idea. Oh, the challenge of sharing when you are still trying to make sense of what belongs to you and what belongs to others! Sharing is indeed difficult for young children. Fortunately, over time, sharing becomes easier. Watch for these social developments in your child:

- With support, some three-year-olds begin experimenting with various sharing techniques, such as taking turns and trading toys for short periods of time.
- Older three-year-olds begin to cooperate. They understand that giving doesn’t mean giving up, and are more willing to give and take with friends.
- Four-year-olds begin to grasp the concept of sharing, although they cannot always share in practice. They play cooperatively with their friends and are sometimes willing to share their possessions.

What can you do to help your child make this transition?

- Don’t force sharing. A reluctant sharer may feel that his needs are less important than the other child’s needs. Forcing a child to comply is not the same as teaching him to be generous. Acknowledge sharing when you see it.
- Provide children with support in sharing. Sit down and model taking turns. Show how a game can be more fun when people cooperate. Label sharing behavior when you see it.
- Acknowledge that sometimes it’s hard to share. Use empathy rather than scolding to encourage sharing.
- Give your child opportunities to not share. Allow her to put away a few special toys before a play date so that the children do not have to share those toys.
- Share with your child. Be a role model for the behaviors you wish your child to exhibit. Share food, books and other “treasures” to reinforce the benefits of sharing.

So, about those toddler’s “Rules for Living” – take heart! The more your child practices sharing, the easier it will get.



One Week Free Parent Referral Program*



As participants of the Parent Referral Program, the referring and referred families listed below are entitled to **ONE FREE WEEK OF TUITION** at our school. Thank you for being a part of the Childtime® family.

Referring/Current Family:

Parent's Name

Referred/Future Family:

Parent's Name

Child's Name

Parent's Address

Parent's Phone Number

Date of Enrollment



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*Offer valid at this location only. Subject to availability, offer available only to those accounts paying full tuition in advance. Not valid with any other discount or offer. Referred family must enroll for a minimum of three half days per week. Offer valid only for families who have not been previously enrolled at Childtime. Applicable on tuition for each child in referred family if more than one child is enrolled. Referring (current) family will receive free week after referred (new) family has been enrolled for four weeks. Referred (new) family will receive free week after being enrolled for four weeks. Offer not valid for Learning Care group associates or their immediate families. Code: ReferFRWK

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www.stretch-n-grow.com

* Program availability varies.