

# Can You Smell Spring In The Air?

## DEAR FAMILIES,

Spring weather wakes us from our winter doldrums and makes us want to get out and have some fun. Even though the trees look bare, we can smell the beautiful blooming trees and fields of daffodils. The brisk wind draws us to the park for kite-flying. The warm sun welcomes us into the garden for outdoor projects. Is it our imagination or are these wonders of spring just around the corner?

Here are some ideas to jump right into spring with your family:

- Invite a group of your child's friends to join you and take a nature walk in the park. If you can, bring home some rocks for some "Rock and Roll Crafts." Make crawly critters with glue, googly eyes, pipe cleaners and cotton balls.
- Do you and your child want to attract some butterflies to your yard? Make a butterfly feeder from a clear plastic deli container lid by using a sharp knife (adult use only), some twine and over-ripe fruit.
  - Using the sharp knife, poke four evenly spaced holes in the clear plastic lid about an inch from the edges. Try to make a diamond or square shape out of the holes so the string won't slip out easily. (For safety purposes, ONLY parents should do this step.)
  - Paint colorful flowers on the lid or use stickers. This will help attract the butterflies to your feeder.
  - Run each of the four pieces of twine down through the holes you poked in the top of the plastic lid and knot them so they won't come back through. Tie all four pieces together at the top.
  - Hang your feeder from a tree, but make it low enough so you can reach the lid and place the day-old fruit on it. The butterflies will be attracted to the color of your flowers and the overripe fruit!

- Why not work with your child to combine the fun of gardening with some art? You still have another few weeks to buy pansies and you should be able to find some at your local garden center. Load them with fertilizer when you plant them and then harvest/cut a few flowers to create some pressed pansy art with your child. Press them between pages of a book or iron them between 2 pieces of wax paper. Then, you can glue them on a hat or use them as illustrations for a book about the smells of spring that you and your child write together!

If you would like more ideas about spring projects and fun things to do with your children, there are many wonderful resources out there for you. One place to start might be to visit a website that will help spark a parent or caregiver's imagination like [www.create-kids-crafts.com](http://www.create-kids-crafts.com).

Respectfully,  
The Education Team

**If you would like to respond to anything you read, have parenting questions or child development topics that you'd like to see explored in future issues of this monthly newsletter, please email us at [education@childtime.com](mailto:education@childtime.com). We would love to hear from you!**



## IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT?

We have all been there ... we stare helplessly as our toddler screams in the middle of the store or as our preschooler (once again) hits a neighbor, bringing their play date to a screeching halt. Supporting our children in learning the rules of behavior and getting along with others is a daunting and challenging prospect.

As we provide guidance to children, remember that the goal of discipline is to help children learn expected behaviors, not to punish them for misbehavior.

Keep in mind four things as you support your child in positive behaviors.

- **Have realistic expectations:** Remember that children don't have years of experience, they're "new" to our world. In their short lives, they have had to conquer a variety of difficult tasks (walking, potty training, communicating, etc.). So it is important that we have realistic expectations of our children. For example, it is not realistic to expect a young child to behave properly in a restaurant when they are hungry and bored. It is also not realistic to expect that a child not want a treat and will try anything (including begging or tantrums) to get it.

Once we understand that these behaviors are to be expected, we can either avoid those situations or plan ahead to help a child be successful.

- **Set your child up for success:** As parents realize that certain behaviors happen due to children's lack of understanding about the world, they can better help the child navigate some situations. For example, make sure that your child has interesting things to occupy their time when you and he will be waiting. Or before walking into a store with fragile items, give your child something to hold.
 

For older children, this can mean creating pictorial schedules that show the steps he must follow. Notes posted in visible places, such as "homework" on the door, can help a child remember to take his assignments to school.
- **Pick your battles:** Because children are learning, it is important that they are not always hearing "No" or being told what they cannot do. Let little things go and focus on those behaviors that can cause harm or damage. Before saying "No" take a minute to ask "Why not?" If there is not a good reason, perhaps the behavior is okay.

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## CHILDTIME'S THE EMPOWERED CHILD™ CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

The Empowered Child™ curriculum supports your child by developing the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed to succeed in kindergarten, throughout elementary education and across a lifetime of learning. Childtime teachers plan lessons in many important academic disciplines, including:

### READING & WRITING

Your child learns to love and understand the written word by journal-writing, experiencing wonderful books, storytelling and participating in regular large and small group activities that focus on letter shapes and sounds.

### MATHEMATICS

By counting, patterning, sorting, classifying, estimating and predicting, your child develops foundational math skills and an appreciation for the world of numbers.

### SCIENCE

Performing experiments, investigating properties and observing cause and effect help your child build scientific thinking skills and a connection with the natural world.

Through The Empowered Child curriculum, children feel valued for who they are. Students leave our program well-prepared for their future education, empowered to acquire the skills they will need to become responsible members of their community, creative problem solvers and life-long learners.

If you have questions about the Childtime classroom experience, please speak with your director or contact us at [info@childtime.com](mailto:info@childtime.com).



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

For example, children experience a great sense of satisfaction when they are able to dress themselves. Does it really matter if the shirt does not match the pants? In the grand scheme of things, a feeling of “I did it” is much more important than having everything look perfect.

- **Give choices you can live with:** Children develop a sense of autonomy when they have opportunities to make choices and experience some power in their lives. This sense of autonomy is important to healthy development. If you do not give your child healthy chances to have power, they will look for it in unhealthy ways (such as tantrums or power struggles). Look for opportunities to give your child controlled choices.

For example, “Do you want to brush your teeth or put on your pajamas first?” Either way, your child is in the process of getting ready for bed. “Do you want to hold the keys or my purse as I get you in your car seat?” In both of these scenarios, your child has a sense of power and you are still in charge of the situation.

These proactive approaches to supporting positive behavior make it less likely that problem behaviors will occur. When they do, the best teaching happens through natural or logical consequences. When you throw your food, you are done eating. When you hit a friend, he does not want to play with you anymore. When you refuse to put on a coat, it is cold. These can be hard lessons, but when a caring adult lets a child experience the small consequences of poor behavior, the child is more likely to learn from their decisions.

The role of discipline is to teach for the future, not punish for the past. It takes time, patience and lots of love. However, the time we invest now will result in children that are better able to control themselves and make good choices tomorrow.

## EXTEND THE CHILDTIME EXPERIENCE INTO YOUR HOME

**There are many ways to support your child’s development at home. Here are some activities you can do together that will support your child’s growth.**

**Infant** – Use a paper towel or toilet paper tube and gently blow on different parts of your baby’s body. Does she seem to like it when you blow on different body parts more than others?

**Beginning Steps/Exploration Station** – Place a pillow on the floor. Encourage your toddler to jump on the pillow. How many jumps can he do before he steps off the pillow or gets tired?

**Early Learners** – Gather some of your eating and cooking utensils and put them on a table. Help your child sort the utensils into groups. How many different ways can you come up with to sort them?

**Skill Builders/Kindergarten Connection** – Get a pillowcase or a box and place several items in them. Encourage your child to put her hand in and feel the object. Have her guess what she thinks the item is before taking it out. Was she correct?

**Discovery Club** – Choose a favorite color of your child’s. Go on a hunt around the house (or just one room) and make a list of all of the different things you can find which include your child’s favorite color.

## FOCUS ON LEARNING AT CHILDTIME®

Children of all ages enjoy pretend play, partly because these experiences allow them to act like the adults they see in their lives. Children learn a variety of skills and concepts when they participate in pretend play including how to:

- Express themselves in a sentence
- Be flexible in their thinking
- Solve problems, especially socially, through negotiation with friends
- Sort and organize play things
- Make decisions
- Improvise and use things in a symbolic way to represent something else (a form of abstract thinking)
- Carry out their ideas with the cooperation of others
- Exercise their imagination and creativity

The next time your child is interested in pretend play, either at home or at school, support her in learning the skills and concepts listed above by playing along with her!

