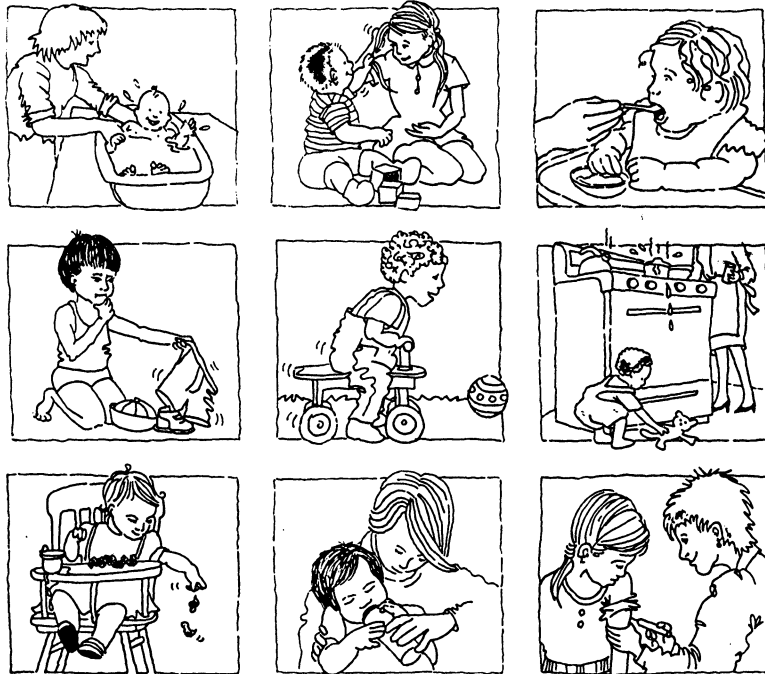


Practical Parenting



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illustrated by Roz Davis

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Introduction

When you are a parent or a caregiver in charge of a baby or young child, you have a great responsibility. You must give your baby or child the physical care she can't provide for herself—you have to dress her, keep her clean, give her a home. You also must feed your baby or child the food she needs to grow strong and healthy. You have to keep your baby or child safe and healthy, and care for her when she's sick.

As a parent or caregiver, you also have to guide your baby or child's behavior; you must teach him how to behave and how to direct his actions by himself. In addition, you have a responsibility to help your baby or child learn the many physical and mental skills he needs to develop as he grows up.

When you need substitute care for your baby or young child, you'll need to find a person or center that can effectively take over all these responsibilities for you while you're not with your child.

This is an awesome range of responsibilities! That's why we designed this *Practical Parenting* workbook—to show you simple, clear, effective ways to do all these things for your baby or young child. In these pages, you'll find parenting tips, explanations, guidelines, activities, and exercises. When you're through with the workbook, you'll feel confident and knowledgeable about your role as a parent or caregiver.

Helping Your Preschool and Kindergarten Child Learn (Age: 3 years to 5 years)

YOUR PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN CHILD DEVELOPS

(These are the average ages at which young children develop certain abilities. Individual young children will do things at different ages.)

AGE	SKILLS
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dresses self in simple clothing. Can tell about something that happened. Jumps several inches. Remembers events & places. Sorts everything into categories. Knows own name & sex. Worries about body injuries. Starts playing with other children. Has an imaginary playmate. Has trouble telling fantasy from reality.
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dresses & undresses self with little help. Uses scissors to cut. Plays collective games with other children. Rides a tricycle. Skips & hops on one foot. Shapes clay or draws to resemble real things. Very self-centered: sees things from own viewpoint. Likes to boast & be bossy. Loves new things & experiences. Is exuberant & enthusiastic.

(continued)

AGE	SKILLS
5 years	Can do small errands outside the home alone. Is calm & collected. Is easy to get along with & well-adjusted. Likes familiar places & things. Knows limits of own abilities. Accepts small responsibilities willingly. Can skate, climb trees, swing, skip with alternating feet. Prints some letters & numbers. Looks at books alone, may read some words.

DEVELOPING LARGE MOTOR SKILLS

Your preschool and kindergarten child is very physical. She's gained control of her body. Now she wants to use it. She wants to become strong and skilled. She needs to practice lots of running, jumping, climbing, hopping, kicking, throwing, catching. These are called "large motor skills."

Both boys and girls needs lots of physical play to develop strong, skilled bodies. Your young child feels good about herself when she becomes physically skilled.

ACTIVITY

Physical Activity for Young Children

Here are some situations involving young children and physical activity. Circle Yes or No for each one.

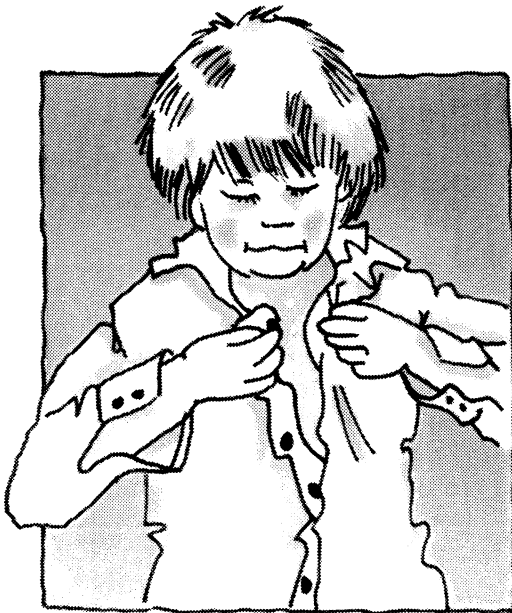
1. Kerry wants her preschooler to do well when he starts school. So she makes sure he has lots more mental activity—like doing puzzles and looking at books— than physical activity. Yes No

2. Steve has just chosen a preschool for his daughter. It's brightly decorated and has lots of books and art materials. The children seem happy, although there's very little room for them to run around. Yes No

(continued)

- 3. Sharon keeps her 5-year-old off the big slide and tall jungle gym at the park so he won't get hurt. Yes No
- 4. The other tenants in the apartment building don't like noise. Jerrell takes his kids outside a lot to run and shout. Yes No
- 5. It's too difficult to dress all the kids at the pre-school to go out in the rain and snow. The kids only go out when the weather is warm and dry. Yes No

DEVELOPING SMALL MOTOR SKILLS



Your preschool and kindergarten child works hard at improving her running, jumping, and climbing skills. She also needs to improve her “small motor skills”—her ability to use her hands and fingers well. Here are some ways to help her develop these skills.

Dressing

Your young child can dress herself—if you give her the right kind of clothes. She needs large zippers and big buttons. Pull-over shirts and pants with elastic waistbands are best. Belt buckles and snaps will be too hard for her to handle.

Drawing and Coloring

Give your young child lots of practice in drawing and coloring with large crayons and fat pencils. As he gets skilled with using these, give him thinner crayons and pencils. He's developing the hand and finger muscles he'll need when he learns to write.

Small Toys

Your young child needs to practice using smaller toys than your toddler could handle. Try puzzles, small blocks, lacing toys, small cars. If a small toy is too difficult for your young child to use, put it away for a while. Bring it out again when her small-motor skills have gotten better.

ACTIVITY

Hand and Finger Skills

Circle the items that would be helpful in developing a preschool or kindergarten child's hand and finger skills.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Large blocks | Small, connecting plastic building blocks |
| Jigsaw puzzles | Jeans with a zipper & snap |
| Fat felt-tip markers | Pull-on pants |
| Beach ball | Pullover windbreaker |
| Shirts that button up the front | |

CREATIVE PLAY

Your preschool and kindergarten child enjoys all kinds of creative play. He explores materials. He tries creative ideas. He's learning to express himself by creating images. He feels excited and proud about his creations.

Important: Your young child probably isn't creating an image of a real thing. So don't ask, "Is that a dog?" She won't understand. She was creating an interesting shape with bright colors. Don't you know that? she wonders. Is she *supposed* to try to make a dog? she worries.

You can encourage your young child to be creative by talking about what her creation *looks like*, instead of asking her what it's supposed to be. Say, "What an interesting shape" or "I like those colors."

Give your preschool and kindergarten child the chance to try these creative activities, often:

■ Drawing and painting.

Water-washable felt-tip pens, crayons, colored chalk, fingerpaints, washable water-based paint. Newsprint, cheap drawing paper, rolls of wrapping paper, clipboards, easels, fat brushes.

■ Modeling dough and clay.

■ Collage.

A *collage* is a creation of cutout shapes and small objects glued to a background piece. Some items your child could glue: cutout pictures from magazines, toothpicks, fabric scraps.

■ Tools.

Child-sized hammers, saws, screwdrivers, nails, screws, plus blocks of scrap wood.

■ Music.

Keep up with the music activities your toddler enjoyed. Your young child can learn to use a child's record player. He'll enjoy singing simple songs, too.

ACTIVITY

• • • • • **Homemade Modeling Dough**

• • • • • Make your own modeling dough using this recipe:

- • • • • 2 cups flour
- • • • • 1 cup salt
- • • • • 1 tablespoon salad oil
- • • • • 1 cup water

• • • • • If the dough is too sticky, add some more flour. Add food coloring or water-based paint to the water to color each batch if you want. Store in a zip-locking plastic bag or a plastic container with tight-fitting lid. Try using the dough yourself. Give it to a preschool or kindergarten child to use, too.

• • • • • **Collage Materials**

• • • • • Make a collection of materials you find around your home that a young child could use in making a collage. Bring your collection to class to show to classmates.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Your toddler enjoyed *acting like* someone else. Your preschool and kindergarten child spends a lot of time *being* someone else. Give her some props and let her imagination take off! An umbrella can be a sword (she's a knight) or a magic wand (she's a wizard). Hats transform her into a baseball player, a detective, an airline pilot. Cardboard cartons, large blocks, and old pillows create a house, a school, a hospital room. A bedsheet or blanket over a table makes her a camper with a tent.

Imaginary Friends

Many preschool children have an imaginary playmate. This friend exists only in your young child's mind. You can't see "Amy." But your young child talks to her and tells you, "Watch out! You're about to sit on Amy!"

Don't worry. Your young child isn't learning to tell lies. He's just exercising his imagination and being creative in yet another way. When your young child gets a little older, "Amy" will disappear. You may even miss her!

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Your preschool and kindergarten child uses language very well—almost as well as an adult. He makes some mistakes in grammar, of course. He doesn't pronounce every word correctly, but he knows a tremendous number of words. Here's how to keep your young child's language skills developing.

Two-Way Talk

When your young child speaks to you, *listen* to what she's saying. Then *respond* to her. You give her new words. You encourage her to talk and express her ideas. She says, "Can't reach!" You respond, "You can't reach that shelf, can you? It's too high. You're not tall enough." You've given her words for *shelf* and the ideas of *high* and *tall*.

Pronouns and Grammar

Pronouns (words like *I*, *me*, *you*, *him*, *she*) are very confusing for your young child. So she doesn't say, "You come with me." Instead, she says,

“Daddy come with Annie.” Help her get used to how pronouns are used by responding, “Okay. I’ll come with you.” Eventually she’ll get it.

In the same way, your young child will use incorrect grammar: “Annie goed to store.” Help her by responding the right way: “Oh, so you went to the store today.” Don’t tell her she’s wrong. Just say it right.

“Why?” Questions

Your young child is brimming with curiosity. He wants to know *everything*. Around the age of 3, your young child will start asking “Why?” about almost everything. “Why is the sky blue? Why are clouds? Why am I Brian?” Each answer you give is likely to lead to another question.

The 50th (or 20th) “Why?” question of the day may make you want to scream. Don’t! “Why?” questions show that your child is eager to learn. Keep him eager and learning by answering the questions. Try these ways of dealing with “Why?” questions:

- Give a brief answer, if you have one.
- Tell him a little more about the subject, if you can.
- If you don’t know, say you can both look for the answer in a book.
- Turn the question back on him: “Why do you think?”
- End a whole string of “Why?” questions by changing to another interesting subject or activity.

ACTIVITY

• “Why?” Role-Play

• With a classmate, role-play a “Why?” question scene. The
 • “parent” starts off with a simple statement like, “It’s time for lunch
 • now,” or, “It’s raining out.” The “child” responds, “Why?” The string of
 • “Why?”s goes on for a while. Then the “parent” uses one of the “Why?”
 • question tips to end the scene.

Books

Continue to keep your preschool and kindergarten child interested in books. Books will be very important to her when she starts elementary school.

Have lots of picture books around your home for your young child to look at, on her own and with you. Talking about the pictures helps her get ready for real reading.

Read story books with lots of pictures to your young child, too. As you read, she looks at the pictures that *show* the words you're saying. This also helps your young child get ready to read on her own.

ACTIVITY

Books for Young Children

Go to your local library. Find some books for preschool and kindergarten children. Try the books out on some real preschool and kindergarten children. What features of a book do these kids most seem to enjoy?

Be an Author

Write a children's story yourself. Then illustrate it, or have an artistic friend illustrate it. Share your creation with your classmates.

AROUND THE HOME

Your preschool and kindergarten child is ready to help around the home. She can *help* to clean her room. (The room is probably very messy by day's end. She'll need some help. You could say, "I'll put the books on the shelf. You put the blocks in the box.")

Give your young child a few simple household chores. He can put his dirty clothes in the laundry basket. He can empty the bedroom wastebaskets into the garbage can. He can set the table or wipe it off. Doing household chores makes your child feel responsible and grown up.

ACTIVITY

Household Chores

What other household chores could a preschool or kindergarten child do? Write a list of chores you might reasonably expect a young child to do in the course of a week. Compare your list with classmates' lists.

GOING PLACES

Outings with your preschool and kindergarten child are a delight compared with daily trips with your toddler. Your young child can help get things off the store's shelves. She can suggest items you've left off your shopping list. She won't often scream for you to buy her a toy or candy.

Your young child is much less likely than your toddler to get fussy or whiny on outings. Now is the time for "field trips." Here are some ideas for educational and fun places to take your preschool and kindergarten child:

- Zoos
- Farms
- Children's museums
- Aquariums
- Food-processing plants
- Playgrounds

As always, whenever you take your young child in a car, be sure to strap her into a child safety seat.

ACTIVITY

Places to Go with Your Young Child

Make a list of public places in your community where you could take your preschool or kindergarten child for a fun outing. If you don't have a car, how would you get to each of these places?

Preschool and Kindergarten Learning Review

Here are some statements about young children learning. Circle Yes or No for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Mental development is more important for a young child than physical development. | Yes | No |
| 2. Your young child asks all those "Why?" questions because he knows it annoys you. | Yes | No |
| 3. Your young child needs to develop both "small motor" and "large motor" skills. | Yes | No |
| 4. When your young child creates an imaginary playmate, it's a sign that she's disturbed about life. | Yes | No |
| 5. Your young child isn't likely to get very fussy or whiny on outings with you. | Yes | No |
| 6. Your young child will enjoy creating accurate pictures of real things. | Yes | No |
| 7. You can depend on your young child to clean his room on his own. | Yes | No |
| 8. Your young child can have trouble telling what's real from what's fantasy. | Yes | No |
| 9. Preschool and kindergarten boys need more physical play than preschool and kindergarten girls do. | Yes | No |
| 10. Your young child loves to pretend that she's someone else. | Yes | No |

Extra: Tell what is incorrect about each of the statements you circled *No* for.