

# Parents as Partners

## Did You Know?

Desiring things is a basic human trait that causes us to be curious about our world. But without limits, our desires can lead to unhappiness and a lack of gratitude. As a parent, you want to provide everything your child needs but giving your child everything he desires can actually lead to an ungrateful attitude.

## Try It Out

- Let your child see you being thankful in everyday life. If your child sees and hears you express gratitude naturally, he will follow your example. Express thanks to waitresses, store clerks, bank tellers, and helpful friends and family members.
- Teach your child that he doesn't get everything he wants. Explain that we have to wait for some things and other things are just beyond our reach.
- Involve your child in charity events. A toddler can help you pick toys to give to less fortunate children and he can go with you to make the donation. A toddler can also do charity walks (or tricycle-a-thons) and can help choose gifts for less fortunate children during the holidays.
- Each evening share something you are thankful for with your child. Invite her to offer suggestions of things for which she is grateful. Create a gratitude box. Invite your child to help decorate it. Write things you are grateful for and drop them into the box. Invite your child to draw pictures of things he wishes to drop in the box. You can include family photos in your box or use them to decorate your box.



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## Did You Know?

We frequently do things for children because we are in a hurry and can accomplish a task more quickly and efficiently than a child can. But, if you help your child do tasks he can do for himself, you may make him feel that he is not capable or that his own efforts are not good enough.

## Try It Out

- Once you know your child knows how to do a task, avoid standing over her while she works to accomplish it.
- Give your child chores. Teach him how to do the chore and leave him to it. Avoid dictating exactly how chores should be done.
- Share ideas with your child about how something can be accomplished more easily, such as scrunching socks up before pulling them on, laying a coat on the floor face up and putting your hands in the arms before pulling the coat over your head, or stepping into a pair of pants one leg at a time.
- Place self-care items within your child's reach. Store clothes in lower drawers. Keep a step stool by the bathroom sink.
- Start simple. If you are teaching your child how to brush his teeth, start by teaching him how to put the toothpaste on the toothbrush. Pump toothpaste dispensers work great.



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## Did You Know?

Creativity is more than artistic and musical talent. It also includes problem solving. Creative thinking wires in the brain between birth and age four. Young children are good at generating creative approaches to a task. We should not squelch their ideas by expecting perfectionism, restricting choices, or having unrealistic expectations.

## Try It Out



- Provide an environment that allows your child to explore and play without unnecessary restraints.
- Adapt to your child's ideas rather than trying to structure your child's ideas to fit your plan.
- Let your child solve problems that naturally occur in everyday life. For example, if you run out of jelly for her sandwich, ask her what other spread might work. If your child's favorite toy breaks, ask him how to fix it. Be ready to accept your child's solutions and allow your child time to explore all possibilities. The journey is more important than the destination.
- Ask your child "what if" questions, such as, "What if people had giraffes for house pets?" and "What if dogs could talk?"
- Embrace failure. Failing at a task gives us information about what doesn't work which always leads us one step closer to something that will work.

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## Did You Know?

Toddlers need to build a strong learning foundation between birth and three years of age. This foundation is best built through exploration and discovery and will later lead to academic success. Don't pressure your child to learn "academic" concepts, such as letter sounds and numbers.

## Try It Out

- Nurture your child's curiosity by calling attention to flowers, seeds, animals, and plants.
- Talk about numbers and letters within a natural context, such as when you write your child's name or discuss his age. Point out that the first letter of the grocery store's name is a "T." Don't drill and practice letters and numbers.
- Enhance your child's vocabulary by offering synonyms for words they use and adding information to their conversations. For example, you might tell your child that another name for a car is an automobile and then talk about why we use cars and how they help us travel from place to place.
- Read to your child and express your love of reading and interest in what words say.
- Invite your child to help you put the groceries away. Call attention to the letters on cans and how cans that look alike all go in the same area of the pantry.

