

# Parents as Partners

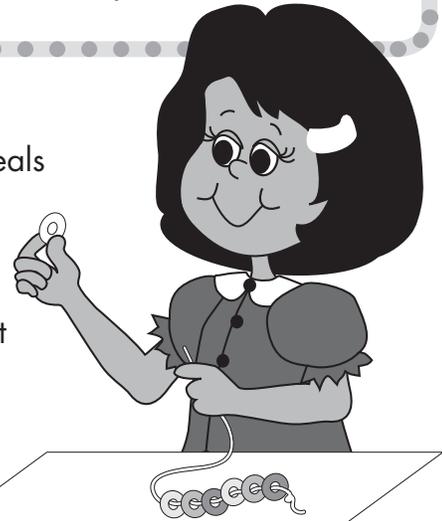
## Did You Know?

A child's attention span is typically calculated by multiplying the child's age by three to determine the number of minutes that child is capable of staying focused. Little ones have extremely short attention spans that are still developing. Yet, there are many situations in which a toddler is required to wait, such as at a restaurant, in a doctor's office, or on a long car ride. Preparing "wait time" activities will help make this time pass more quickly for you and your child.

## Try It Out

Always remember to take your child to a child-friendly restaurant where meals are served quickly. But also take along some fun "wait time" activities:

- Bring a small bag of O-shaped cereal (or other food with a hole in the middle) and a piece of yarn, ribbon, or a shoelace. Invite your child to thread the cereal pieces onto the string.
  - If the cereal pieces are different colors or shapes, invite your child to sort them into groups before eating them.
  - Also, bring along crayons and paper or a favorite toy.
- Being prepared for "wait times" will make things easier on you and your child.



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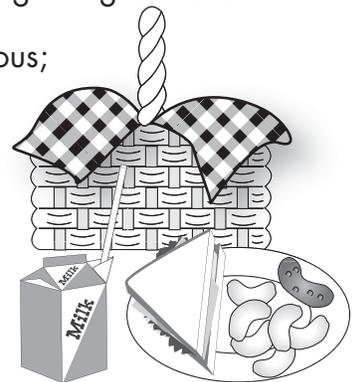
## Did You Know?

Children depend on routine. They use routine as an adult uses a clock. However, breaking routine occasionally is fun and adds novelty which in turn motivates learning by increasing alertness and interest. It is important to make thoughtful decisions about which routines you vary and when and how you vary them.

## Try It Out

Toddlers eat and sleep according to habit. Try not to vary routines that impact meals or nap times. Sticking to these routines provides security for your child. Here are some considerations for making thoughtful decisions about when and how to break routines at other times:

- Plan out the break in routine. This doesn't mean that you should never be spontaneous; it just means that when you are spontaneous, be thoughtful about your child's condition. Never break routine when your child is tired or hungry.
- Break routines once or twice a week rather than every day.
- Keep mealtime routines intact so your child does not become overly hungry and irritable but vary where you have the meal to add novelty. For example, plan for an outdoor picnic lunch.
- Try not to change bedtime routines because this may over stimulate your child just at a time when you need her to be calm.



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## Did You Know?

Children can be overwhelmed by too many visual stimuli and too many choices. As an adult, you have had years of experience learning to block out things that interfere with your ability to focus, but this is not true of young children. Your brain is capable of reviewing pros and cons of as many as six choices but toddlers are not able to do this.

## Try It Out

### Reduce Visual Distractions

The saying, "less is more" is particularly applicable to your child's bedroom and play areas at home. This does not mean that the environment needs to be sterile, it just requires moderation. You don't want your child to be distracted by décor while she is learning or calming down for bedtime.



### Offer Your Child Toddler-Size Choices

Limit choices to two or three options. This will help your toddler make thoughtful choices without feeling overwhelmed. For example, ask "Do you want to wear red or blue today? Do you want one cookie or two? Do you want to play with your blocks or work a puzzle? Which of these three books would you like to read?" Then be sure to honor your child's choice.

Frog Street Toddler © 2014 Frog Street Press

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## Did You Know?

Children's success as adults depends greatly on their capacity for critical and creative thinking. Critical thinking is the ability to evaluate a situation. Creative thinking is the ability to think of solutions to a problem and often involves using something in a novel way, such as when children use a stick for an airplane.

## Try It Out - Try out these three ways to build your child's thinking skills:

1. When your child asks you a question, ask her "What do you think?" This allows your child to organize her thinking as she verbalizes her answer. Use your child's answer as a starting point to form your explanation.
2. The next time you find a "mess" your child has created, turn it into an opportunity to praise your child for creative thinking. Instead of viewing muddy fingers or disheveled living room pillows as a "mess," see these situations as your child's creative mind at work.
3. Join in your child's imaginative play. If your child pretends to be an elephant, join the fun by pretending to be a giraffe!



**Looking Ahead**  
Next week we will be learning about colors beginning with yellow. Dress your child in his or her favorite yellow clothing next week.