

RELATIONSHIP builders



Pits and Peaks

Find a quiet time each day that you can talk with your child about his day. It could be during a drive, during bath time or at bedtime. Ask your child what were some “high points” or happy times (the Peaks), and what were some “low points” or sad times (the Pits) during his day. Share with your child the Pits and Peaks of your day to give him examples, and make sure to use examples he can understand.

Sharing happy and sad times helps your child begin to understand and express feelings and emotions.



1

three year old

Paint Your Feelings

Find three or four different kinds of music to play while your child is painting or coloring. You can also sing to him and clap if that's easier. Choose one song that is soothing and calm, two that are fast and happy but have different beats and one that has a sad tune. Turn on the first song, and ask your child to listen to the music and think about how it makes him feel. Ask him to paint how he is feeling. Do the same thing for the other songs. Then talk together about his paintings or drawings. Talk about the different feelings he was thinking about and drawing. Repeat his words to him or if this is hard, suggest the words to him, like:

Were you feeling happy when you drew this picture? What colors are happy colors to you? What are sad colors? How do you feel when you are happy? How do you feel when you are being silly?

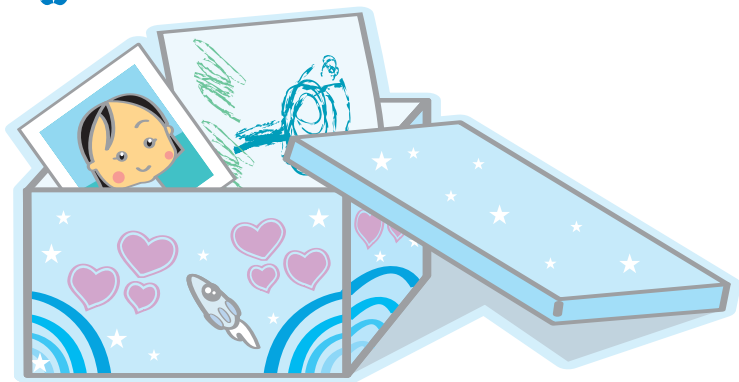
Talking about feelings helps your child learn new words for how he feels. Painting or coloring is a fun way to help you talk together about feelings.



Proud of My Work

Make a collection of your child's artwork and drawings. Find a box big enough to fit her drawings or art projects, or staple together several large pieces of paper that you can use as a "book" to hold her drawings. If she wants, have her help you decorate the box or book cover with her name and pictures that she's drawn or cut out of a magazine or colored paper. Each time your child draws a picture or does an art project, put it in the special box or book. The next time you have a "visitor" – a family member, neighbor or friend – take out your child's art collection and help her look at all the pictures with your visitor. Talk together about the drawings or art projects and let her "show off" her work. Tell her how proud you are of her work.

Showing others your child's work, and telling her you are proud of her, helps your child build a positive view of herself and her abilities.



Simon Says

Your child is ready to learn how to follow simple directions. Playing a game of “Simon Says” is a fun way to help your child practice following directions. You can play this game with one child or many children. Face your child or a group of children. Tell them to follow your directions, but only if you begin with the words “Simon Says.” For example, say **Simon Says to jump up and down.** Jump up and down as you give the direction, and give the children a chance to jump up and down for a few seconds. Then give them another direction such as **Simon Says to pat the top of your head.** Give the children a few seconds to stop jumping and pat the top of their heads. Once in a while, give a direction but do not start with the words **Simon Says.** For example, **Touch the ground.** The children should NOT do this action, because you did not start with the words “Simon Says.” If a child does the action when you did NOT say Simon Says, then the game starts over. See how many times your child or children can follow your directions. Your children will have to listen very closely! Then, let the children take turns being “Simon” – the one giving directions.

Learning to listen carefully and follow directions will help your child get ready for school, including playing with other children and following a teacher's directions.



Taking Turns

Taking turns is another important skill for your child to learn. Whenever you have the chance to be an example, show your child how to take turns and talk with her about it. For example, waiting in line at the store or bank or taking turns with other cars at a Stop sign. Give your child chances to practice taking turns, and talk about it together. For example, taking turns on a swing or slide at the park, taking turns playing a board game, or taking turns being first when playing or eating with brothers or sisters.

Practicing taking turns will help your child in school and in life. She will be able to get along with other children and follow class rules if she learns to cooperate and take turns.



5

three year old

The Party Host

Some time when you are having a family gathering or a party with friends, give your child the important job of being the “party host.” As each person arrives, ask your child to say:

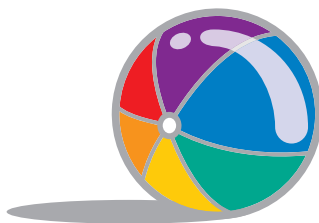
Hello, welcome to our house,

or a similar greeting. Encourage your child to smile and shake the hand of each guest or family member and to talk with them for a few minutes. When it is time for someone to leave, have your child tell the guest:

Goodbye and thank you for coming.

If this job seems too hard for your three year old, you can pair him with an older brother or sister and they can be the welcoming team.

Your child is learning to use common greetings like “hello and goodbye” and the social skills of making people feel welcome. He is also learning about using words to have a conversation.





Talent Show

At this age, many children like singing and dancing. Give your child a chance to show his ability to sing or dance by having a talent show. It will help your child overcome any shyness if you sing or dance too! Think of a few people who can be your audience – perhaps brothers or sisters, parents, grandparents or friends. Then tell your child that you are going to put on a show for this audience. Pick out a song your child likes to sing or music he likes to dance to. Practice together several times and pretend you are performing for an audience. Talk with him about where the guests will sit, and how you will announce what you are going to perform, and even practice taking a bow after you are done with the song or dance. Try to find a special costume to wear for the show – either a fun hat or clothes or makeup. Then invite your “audience” and perform your song or dance (or both). Make sure your audience knows to clap for your child when he is done performing! Take a big bow together!

Helping your child practice and perform, even if it's just for family members, will build his confidence, which is important for how he feels about himself and how he relates to others at home, with friends and at school.



Talk It Out!

When she doesn't get the toy she wanted, or another child hurts her, your child may react by hitting, kicking or biting. While this can be normal behavior, she needs to learn to use words to solve conflict with others. Take a few minutes when there is not conflict to talk with her about how it is important not to hit or kick and how she needs to use her words to tell someone she is not happy. Practice with her. For example, say, **What would you do if we were playing and I took your toy? Would you hit me? No! No hitting or kicking! What would you say to me? You could say, please don't take my toy, I am playing with it. You could give me a different toy. And if you can't work out the problem, then go to an adult like a mommy or daddy and have them help.** Then when a problem does happen, stay calm and remind your child to use her words, find a new toy, talk to an adult, say sorry, or whatever is right for the situation.

Your child is learning to use words and negotiation skills to solve conflict, and that it is never okay to hit or kick another person.



8

three year old

Consequences

You can help your child learn that his actions have consequences. "Consequence" is a big word for a three year old, but he will quickly learn what it means.

Talk about how each action that a person does – both adults and children – have a result, a consequence. For example, when he eats healthy food, your child will grow strong. When he stays in the sun too long, he will get sunburned! When he stays in water a long time, the skin on his fingers gets wrinkly. Think of situations when you can help your child learn about consequence.

For example, tell him **When you finish your chore, then we can play outside.** Or, **If you throw sand, then we will have to leave the park.**

Make sure you follow through with the consequence (play with your child after the chore is done, or leave the park if he throws sand). You can also help your child's thinking and problem-solving skills by helping him think about what the results of an action would be in the future.

For example, **What do you think will happen if you throw your juice box on the floor when you are done with it? What do you think you should do with an empty juice box?**

Learning that his actions have consequences helps your child to control his own behavior, and to think ahead to what the results of his actions will be, so that he can change his actions to have a positive result.



My Job!

As your child gets older, she will be able to help you with more difficult jobs around the house. She can help sort the laundry or silverware, water plants, set the table and clean up toys. She will probably enjoy helping with simple household tasks and gain confidence as she practices, so think of two or three chores she can help with each day or week. Routine is still important so let her do the same chores each day or week. Make a chart that you can hang on the wall or refrigerator and let her put a star or sticker on the chart each time she does her job, and make sure to praise her effort! If her areas for toys are labeled with pictures, it will help her know where to put things.

Doing chores helps your child gain confidence in her abilities and gives her a feeling of importance that she is a helpful part of your family.



Notes

