



Seeing, Hearing, Speaking

Age three is a magic time for children. Once they have reached that milestone, they can tell you what they see and hear so that these two vital senses can be accurately evaluated.

It is also possible to evaluate their ability to speak. This doesn't mean that children don't speak before age three. On the contrary, many of them, particularly girls, speak very well at two or two and a half.

Many boys, however, although they understand and follow directions, do not speak in sentences until age three.

Many doctors who care for children test vision, hearing, and speech as early

as the child is able to cooperate. Those who don't provide this testing can refer parents to organizations and clinics that can do it at a reasonable cost.

Parents should not hesitate to request this important testing for their children.

Vision testing can be done using an eye test chart that uses the letter E in different sizes or positions which the child is asked to identify or imitate.

Hearing is tested with a set of earphones through which instructions are given to point at objects such as horses, birds, and dogs, on a chart.

Speech screening can be done by having

the child identify objects or tell what is happening in pictures, and repeating what the examiner says, such as: "The horse is running." "The dog says bow-wow."

State and federal laws, such as Public Law 99-457, now require that assessment and treatment services be made available to infants and young children who are developmentally delayed or considered "at risk" of substantial developmental delay.

For more information on these laws, contact your local member of Congress, your school administration, or the Department of Education in your state. ■

Language Development at Three Years

During the preschool years, a young child's vocabulary is developing very rapidly. Just think that whereas your child knew only about 300 words one year ago, he will most likely know about 1,500 words by age four.

By age six his vocabulary will have typically increased to between 8,000 and 14,000 words.

Parents play an important role in this amazing change by talking to, listening to, and reading to their child, as well as asking and answering questions.

Besides learning new words, a three-year-old is also starting to use past tense, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, superlatives and so on.

During this period of development,

many children exhibit articulation errors (such as saying "wettuce" instead of "lettuce").

They also exhibit many grammatical errors (saying "I goed" instead of "I went," "worsen" instead of "worse"). Often these errors conform to some rule in the child's mind (a past tense always ends in "ed," or comparatives end in "er").

What should parents do—or not do—about these errors? In general, it is not helpful to focus attention on the child's errors.

Correcting a child will most likely cause the child embarrassment and annoyance. Frequent or harsh correction may inhibit the child from speaking.

There are other methods that are more

appropriate. If, for example, you have frequently heard your child say correctly, "I went," it is probably best to ignore the rare occasion on which she says, "I goed."

If a child consistently uses a wrong form ("I goed there"), the parent can continue the conversation, inserting the correct form ("Yes, I went there too")—even sometimes with some stress on the corrected word.

Parents can also expand on their child's utterances. For example, if a child says, "Me want to go store," the parent might respond, "I hear you saying 'I want to go to the store.' Yes, we'll leave in about fifteen minutes." In this way, the child is helped to learn the correct expression without humiliation or embarrassment. ■

Songs: A Way to Develop Space Awareness and Speech Improvement

Now is a good time to introduce new vocabulary. An enjoyable way to teach a child new words, with their correct forms and sounds, is by using songs.

When you accompany the words of the song with gestures, you'll have even more fun. And you will provide a better learning experience for your child.

Parents can even adapt the words of a song in order to teach a specific sound that is deficient.

Here are some examples of some popular childhood songs:

(1) **The Bus Song** (tune: The Mulberry Bush)

*The people in the bus go up and down;
Up and down, up and down;
The people in the bus go up and down, all
around the town.*

(Don't forget the gestures as you sing)

Other verses (or make up your own):

*The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish.
The brakes on the bus go roomp, roomp,
roomp.*

*The money on the bus goes clink, clink,
clink.*

*The baby on the bus goes wah, wah, wah.
The tires on the bus go eek, eek, eek.*

(2) **Old MacDonald's Farm**

Children love to imitate animal sounds in this old favorite.

*Old MacDonald had a farm, Ee-i-ee-i-o.
And on his farm he had a (cow) (or any
animal),
Ee-i-ee-i-o.*

*With a (moo), (moo) here,
And a (moo), (moo) there,
Here a (moo), there a (moo)*

*Everywhere a (moo-moo),
Old MacDonald had a farm, Ee-i-ee-i-o.*

Other animals and their sounds: duck (*quack*), pig (*oink*), horse (*neigh*), chicken

(*cluck*), rooster (*cock-a-doodle-doo*), cat (*meow*), bird (*tweet*).

Stuffed animals and their make believe sounds can be created to add to Youngster's enjoyment.

(3) **The Hokie Pokie**

This song helps to teach the different parts of the body.

Since three-year-olds cannot yet easily discriminate "right" from "left," it is best not to make an issue if they make this error.

It is best to stand in a circle so that everyone can participate in this song. Here's how it goes:

You put your head in (place head forward into circle).

You take your head out (place head away from circle).

You put your head in, and you shake it all about (shake head back away from circle).

You do the Hokie-Pokie (raise arms above head)

And you turn yourself around (turn around in place).

That's what it's all about (clap hands three times).

Variations of body parts: *left leg, right leg, left arm, right arm, left hand, right hand, left elbow, right elbow, left knee, right knee, left foot, right foot.*

(4) **Loobie-Loo**

Again each of the body parts must do the same thing, "shake," "put in," "take out," "turn."

*I put my right foot in,
I take my right foot out,
I give my right foot a shake, shake, shake,
And turn myself about.*

Chorus:

*Here we go Loobie-Lee,
Here we go Loobie-Lie,
Here we go Loobie-Loo,
All on a Saturday night.*

Again the variations of body parts may be used: *left foot, right foot, left hand, right hand, left elbow, right elbow*, etc.

At this age children cannot usually distinguish accurately between left and right. So don't worry about correcting left/right errors at this stage. Just enjoy singing and acting out the song.

(5) **One Little Duckling**

This song can teach simple number concepts, matching the number of fingers to the number word.

One little duckling, yellow and new (hold up one finger),

Had a fuzzy brother and that made two (hold up two fingers).

Two little ducklings and now you can see,

They had a little sister and that made three (hold up three fingers).

Three little ducklings watched the river flow,

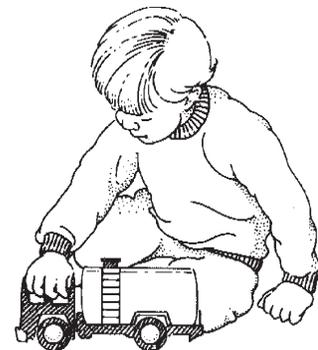
Along came another and that made four (hold up four fingers).

Four little ducklings went to swim and dive,

They met a little neighbor and that made five (hold up five fingers).

Five little ducklings, watch them grow,

They turn into five big ducks, you know. ■



Some Characteristics of Good Parenting

Some research studies have been conducted to determine the characteristics of parents whose children exhibited appropriate developmental progress.

The parents in these studies represented a cross-section of backgrounds and income levels. They were observed in their own homes by professional observers.

What did the observers report?

Children who exhibited good social, emotional, and intellectual development were found to have parents who enjoyed child-rearing. These parents also had confidence in their own parenting skills.

The *quality* of parent-child interactions was found to be more important than the *quantity* of time spent with a child.

The most successful parents exhibited these characteristics:

- They talked to their children a lot and encouraged them to express or act out their own ideas.
- Discipline was consistent and reason-



able, without yelling or spanking.

- Many opportunities to learn were offered—stopping to answer a question or read a book, allowing the children a chance to manipulate or explore with their hands in order to discover answers to their questions.
- Encouragement and praise were high on the list, yet the parents were not so absorbed in their children that they could not enjoy them.
- Finally, regardless of age, the child was well-liked by the parent.■

The Scribblers

Most three-year-olds like to scribble. They've just got to close their fist around that fat black crayon and scribble around and around, in huge arcs, angular zig-zags, blurs, blobs—sometimes even on a bedroom wall!

Scribbling may look like useless nonsense. But there is some sense to it. Scribbling gives birth to drawing—and to writing, too—some day. A big circle will eventually become a face. Tight round scribbles make eyes, looser ones make curly hair. Short lines make arms, fingers, mouth, spiky hair.

What do you say when Youngster comes home from the babysitter's or from pre-school class with a proud collection of scribbled pages?

A parent's first reaction should be one of encouragement. It isn't necessary to make comments that evaluate the papers but rather make personal observations: "Good job, Johnny! I see you did a lot of work with your markers today."

If possible, hang these scribbles on a bulletin board or on the refrigerator door. In your child's eyes, they aren't meaningless scribbles, but creative works of art.

Even the great artist Picasso was once an ardent scribbler!■

It's for the Birds

Wherever you live—in the city, in the suburbs or on a farm—there's one kind of wildlife that's always around: birds. There's something about birds that can delight and intrigue almost everybody.

Birds, with their different colors, sounds, shapes, and sizes, bedazzle toddlers. Three-year-olds are delighted by their chirping, tweeting, and hopping around.

If you sprinkle birdseed on your windowsill or hang a feeder in your yard, sparrows will certainly spy their breakfast.

If you go out with bread every day to the same spot, birds will learn your schedule. Some, like pigeons, will cluster at your feet for a treat. What a thrill for Youngster!

In winter, for hungry winged visitors, you can tie a piece of suet to a string. Hang it outside your window. Or use a big pine cone with bacon fat or peanut butter smeared into its crevices.

At first the birds will just be little shapes to your child, moving almost too fast for him to follow.

Gradually he'll notice their colors and the sounds they make. He'll begin to recognize the same colors, sounds, shapes, and sizes as they keep returning.

Keep a simple bird book handy, one with clear, colorful pictures.

Help your child rediscover the birds he sees among the pictures in the bird book and learn their names: the cardinal, the pigeon, and the bluejay are common and easy to identify.

There will be some that you see each day that are native to your area.

After a while, he will have his own favorite birds. He will know where to find their pictures in the bird book. And he will also be able to identify them outdoors.

You will thus enrich your child's enjoyment and appreciation of nature.■

Observing, Thinking, and Speaking

Here are some specific suggestions for activities to help a young child learn to observe more accurately, to think more clearly, and to speak more effectively.

(1) Activities which encourage accuracy in observation. “What will happen if we drop this ball on the floor?” “What will happen if we set the little truck on the top of this slope?”

(2) Activities which require organization. “How many things can you name that fly? Things that walk? Things that are green?”

(3) Activities which encourage sensitivity to the environment. “Can you make yourself act like one of these—a dog? A bunny? A lion?” “Pretend you’re a bus driver (doctor, farmer, teacher or painter). What should you be doing?”

(4) Activities which demand the making of theories. “What would happen if we mixed this green paint with this yellow paint?” “If we let all the water out of this bathtub, where would this little sailboat go?”

(5) Activities which provoke creative

imagination. Begin a story and invite Youngster to make up an ending. Or ask: “What are some of the things we could make with this ball of clay?”

(6) Activities to promote flexibility. Give Youngster some shapes (triangles, rectangles, semicircles, etc.) that you have cut out in paper and ask her to make as many things as she can out of them.

Give her some wooden blocks to make a road, a tower, or a bridge. Help her cut up different pictures from magazines and paste them into designs.■

Your Child’s Nutritional Needs

Although, as a nation, we appear to know more about health-related issues than any previous generation, the United States is often described as a nation with poor health habits.

Many children are being raised today on fast-food diets that are too high in fat, protein, and sugar.

The development of good eating habits in children is particularly important during the preschool years.

Their energy needs greatly increase as they move through the early childhood period.

The food children eat affects not only their energy level but also their physical growth and general health, including their immunity to diseases.

Unfortunately it is not possible to prescribe a simple nutritional formula that would apply equally to all children of the same age, size, and sex.

This is because the rate of physical growth, energy level, and basal metabolism will differ from one child to another.

In spite of individual differences, all preschool children need a well-balanced



proportion of fats, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals in their everyday diet.

In response to rising obesity rates, the United States Department of Agriculture introduced in 2005 a revised food guide pyramid called “MyPyramid.”

The new guide encourages consumers to choose foods geared to their specific calorie needs and adds a new category: regular exercise.

The primary food groups are: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk products and meat

and beans.

Other categories discussed include information about extras (solid fats and added sugars), salt, oils, snacks and beverages.

Unlike the previous pyramid which presented its recommendations in servings, the new guide uses terms such as cups and ounces.

Recommendations for specific audiences are also available, including preschoolers.

Here is an example from the comments for preschoolers in the Milk Group:

“Milk and milk products provide health benefits—like building and maintaining strong, dense bones.

“They are important parts of your child’s food intake. Include low-fat and fat-free milk products in meals and snacks for your child every day. If you think your preschooler may be lactose intolerant or allergic to milk, check with your doctor to be sure.”

For more information about the food groups, go to: www.mypyramid.gov

Source: United States Department of Agriculture.

Order and Structure: Youngster's Room

Last month we talked about how important it is for your child to feel that he is a real part of what happens every day in his family.

Now we want to deal with some specific ways that you can help to make this happen.

Let's begin with his room. There should be a certain time of day when (with a little help from mother and father) he gets his room in order.

What particular time of day is not all that important. The specific time will depend upon your family's routine and schedule.

What is important is that the time for ordering his room be the same each day. For most families the few minutes before bedtime works best for these activities.

What do we mean when we say he should

“get his room in order?”

In general we mean that there should be a particular place for each of his possessions (toys, clothing, books, and prized collections, for example) and that he should learn the place where each object belongs.

Each toy should have its particular place, and he should learn where the place is for that toy.

The teddy bear goes here, the doll goes there, the ball goes over there, and so on.

As he learns about individual objects and the place where each object goes, he is learning basic lessons about space and how objects are organized in space.

Later in school he will have to learn spelling (which involves the sequential order of letters in a word) and reading

(which involves the sequential order of words in a sentence).

Another way of teaching him about space is to have him help you put away his own clothing from the laundry.

“The socks go in this drawer, the underwear goes in that drawer, the shirts go here, and the trousers go there.”

Let him put clothing items in their proper places to the extent that he is able to cooperate. As he solves these problems he is solving problems in space.

Our message at this point should be quite clear—we are suggesting that you help your child get his room organized.

This should help him cope with the organization of space, a skill that will be required later for school learning.

It is as simple and as profound as that.■

Scratches and Cuts

Scratches are an almost everyday occurrence with young children.

Although it is often painful, a minor scratch can generally be taken care of by washing with soap and water and by applying an antibiotic cream.

Cuts or deep scratches usually go through the first layer of skin. They are sometimes deep enough to require some type of procedure such as a suture to bring the skin edges together.

This is necessary to prevent infection and excessive scarring. Not all cuts need to be sutured, however.

A minor scratch can generally be taken care of by washing with soap and water and by applying an antibiotic cream.

If the cut is clean and one inch or less in length with the skin edges only 1/8" or less apart, a butterfly closure can be used to close the wound.

These closures are available at the drug store and look like this:



This is what you do:

- (1) Cleanse the injury and apply one end of the butterfly.
- (2) Pull the skin edges together and apply the other end of the butterfly.

Sometimes two or three butterflies are necessary.

The butterflies must be left on for at least

five days. They should be covered with an adhesive bandage or other sterile bandage.

The cut should be checked daily for signs of infection (redness, swelling, drainage or drainage).

Call your doctor if these occur or if you cannot maintain the closure of the wound following the instructions given previously.

Your child's tetanus immunization status also should be checked in case a tetanus booster is needed.

As a general rule, if a child has had the basic baby immunizations (DTP) and the wound is not unusually dirty, no booster is needed.

In the case of an older child, if the wound is dirty and/or more than five years has elapsed since the last tetanus booster, a physician should be contacted for advice.■

In Case of Emergency

When older children participate in school sports, scout camp, or other sponsored activities, it is customary for parents to be asked to sign a Prior Consent Form.

Prior consent may be needed in case an accident occurs and the parent cannot be reached immediately.

It authorizes a physician or other medical personnel to provide medical treatment for the child, such as anesthesia, surgery, or even hospitalization.

Now that many three-year-olds participate in childcare, nursery or preschool programs, it is important to consider giving prior consent for medical treatment for your child.

What would happen if your child needed immediate medical treatment while being cared for by a babysitter, friend, or relative?

If you could not be reached, would the physician or hospital have the authority to treat your child?

Who would have authority in your absence to decide what medical treatment should be provided?

Some hospitals have a Prior Consent Form for medical treatment which, when signed, is kept on file to be used in case of emergency.

These forms are usually available at the hospital's Emergency Room.

Be aware, however, that the Prior Consent Form that is available at some hospitals may only provide for treatment by the staff of that particular hospital.

Some physicians and hospitals may have more specific requirements for prior consent for medical treatment which are usually related to the terms of their insurance policies.

Some hospitals and medical providers also require that the consent be notarized.

Here is an example of a very simple Prior Consent Form.

Prior Consent Form

I hereby give my permission for (Adult's Name) to follow whatever procedures are deemed suitable to secure medical attention for my child (Child's Name) should he/she become ill or sustain an injury. My permission is also granted to transport my child (Child's Name) to the doctor or hospital in order to receive whatever medical treatment is deemed necessary. I assume responsibility for whatever expenses will be involved. Signed by:

Parent/Guardian _____

Date _____

For the sake of your child's health and for your own peace of mind, we recommend that you provide written authorization for a responsible adult to approve emergency medical treatment for your child whenever it may be difficult or impossible to reach you.

It is wise to discuss these matters with an attorney who is familiar with the federal, state, and local laws for emergency medical treatment of minor children which apply in your area.■

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Baby #2

Holly and Todd went to visit their Aunt and Uncle. For Holly, it was a bad trip.

Holly was almost three. Her brother, Todd was just four months.

Holly was very excited about seeing her aunt and uncle again because they made such a nice fuss over her the last time the family visited.

But, when they got there this time, you'd think that Holly was a total stranger.

First, her aunt grabbed her brother and gave him a big hug and said how healthy he looked.

Then her uncle took her brother and hoisted him way up high.

And then, both her aunt and uncle talked about who her brother looked like, what a great smile he had, and does he have a tooth yet?

And are you still nursing him, and does he still sleep through the night? And is he still taking solid foods and all that stuff?

Finally, somebody said, how does Holly get along with him?

That's when Holly's mother looked around and saw the storm raging on Holly's face.

So she scooped Holly up and hugged her and brought her close to Holly's aunt and uncle.

And then she said, "This is probably the best big sister in North America!"

Well, of course, the aunt and the uncle took the hint and they made a big fuss over Holly—just a little late.

Suddenly, a nose was no longer out of joint. A smart bit of motherhood had been executed just in the nick of time.

One of the most difficult lessons a child has to learn is to share her favorite people with a younger brother or sister.

Holly's mother had just helped Holly over a great big major bump.■