



# Information for Families and Staff

## Moral Development: Raising Caring Kids

When she was six years old, Alice loved her "Magic Slate." Her friend Amy didn't have one and really liked Alice's Magic Slate. So Alice gave it to her. What made Alice willing to give away her much-loved toy? How did Alice learn to be generous and to care about Amy's feelings?

Alice's action showed that she was developing a sense of right and wrong and an ability to care about others, which we all hope will happen with our children. We want them to grow up to be compassionate, kind, generous, and to know the difference between right and wrong. But how soon can we reasonably expect them to understand and care about how their behavior affects other people, and how can we help them begin to develop knowledge about right and wrong when they're very young?

### How children develop the ability to care about others

*0-12 months:* begins to respond to parents' emotions (e.g., babies pay more attention to adults who are enthusiastic and happy); begins to understand reciprocity (when he smiles and laughs, mom and dad smile and laugh; when she cries, mom and dad try to make her feel better)

*12-24 months:* wants independence, but also shows concern when caregiver is in distress; begins to learn to share

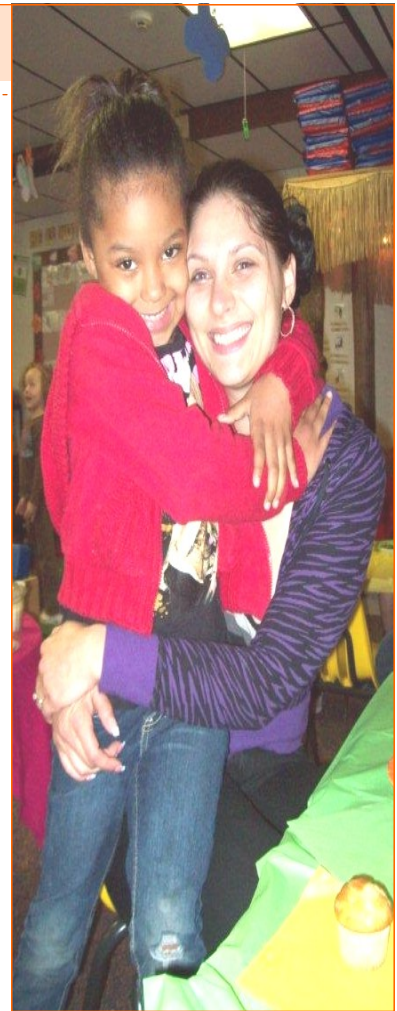
*24-36 months:* becomes aware that hurting someone is wrong, and might begin to feel remorse

*3-4 years:* is able to share more consistently; can think about a moral dilemma (what would you do if...)

*4-6 years:* may begin to want to share with people who don't have much; understands fairness

### Resources

- "Early Childhood Moral Development," by Angela Oswald; <http://tinyurl.com/3r3oybs>
- "Encouraging Self-Regulation, Morality, and Conscience," in Sarah Landry, Pathways to Competence, Brookes Publishing, 2009, pp. 384-389
- "Helping Children Build a Conscience," by Barbara Frazier; <http://tinyurl.com/3scb7t7>



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3rd page is  
designed as a  
handout for  
Parents.

[Link to article:](#) **Teaching Your Child to: Become Independent with Daily Routines**



# Infant Toddler Tidbits


## SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENTS ~ Interest areas should


allow for choices  Children's interests should be considered when preparing


the environment  Shelving units should be low enough to allow caregivers

to supervise the children  Children should have a place for personal

belongings  Materials should be stored where they are used  Materials

should be sufficient in number for the number of children enrolled  Messy



activities should be placed near a water source  Quiet and active activities


should be separate  Activity areas that can extend play should be close

together such as blocks and dramatic play  Arrange interest areas in U or

L shapes to define boundaries  Interest areas should be large enough for


the type of play that is set up there  Arrange space to help with traffic

flow  Arrange space so there is a space for a child to be alone 

Children should help to care for the classroom and materials  Accept the

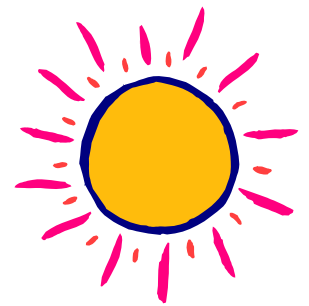
child's efforts  Communicate expectations  Ensure consistency

regarding each caregiver's expectations  Consider the developmental level

of each child  Provide ample toys and materials for activities and play

 Let children help each other and play together  Limit wide-open

spaces



## EMOTIONAL FLOODING

### How Emotions Are Processed

Adults manage emotions through the “thinking brain”—cerebral cortex. Children get emotionally flooded because they process experiences through their “emotional brain”—limbic system.

### Empathy as a Teaching Strategy

How do we as adults manage our strong emotions? It is easier when we have someone to empathize with how we are feeling; someone to understand how we are feeling right at that exact moment in time.

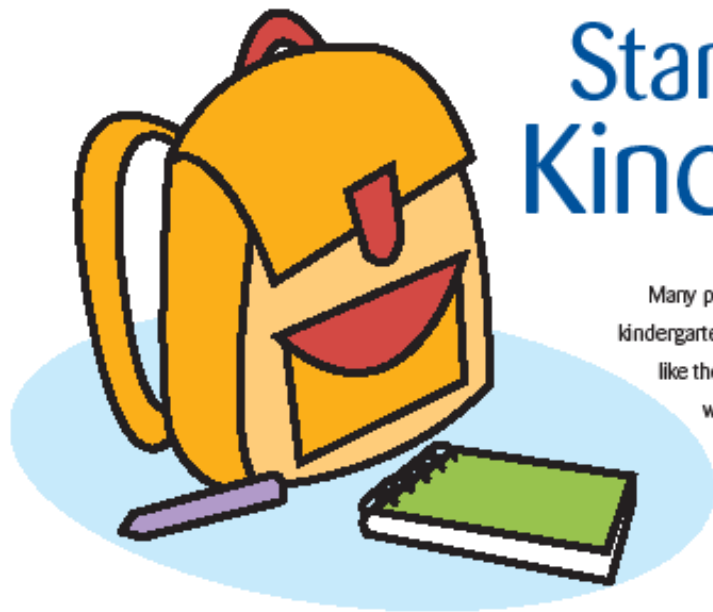
### Putting Empathy into Practice

Match our responses to the responses of the young child who often has intense emotions and limited language as an infant or toddler. Toddlers need an adult to understand their feelings and the message they are trying to communicate.

You can respond to a toddler screaming, “No, No, No,” by saying, “No, No, No...I hear you. You don't want me to change your diaper. You want to play.”

Another response would be to get close to the child and whisper your understanding of their feelings. Calmness leads to calmness. Chaos leads to chaos.





# Starting Kindergarten

Many preschoolers feel anxious about moving on to kindergarten. They worry that they won't have friends, won't like the teacher, will get lost, won't be able to do the work, and so on. Here are some tips for guiding your child through the move from preschool to kindergarten.

## To help your child handle end-of-the-year feelings

- Place a sticker or make a mark on a calendar as each day of the last month of school goes by.
- Write down or tape-record a memory each day.
- Draw a picture and/or dictate a good-bye message for a friend or teacher.
- Revisit the events of the past year with your child by looking at drawings, paintings, photos, and writing.
- Provide stress-reducing activities at home such as water play, puppets, or playdough.
- Help the class plan an end-of-the-year family potluck.
- Plan ways to keep in touch with classmates or organize a regular play group.
- Encourage children to talk about their feelings; talk about your feelings too.

## To ease the move to kindergarten

- Visit the new school before your child's first day. Point out ways the room is similar to his or her preschool room, but also discuss how it holds new materials to explore.
- Read books about starting school, such as *Look out, Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson; *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen, illustrated by Ronald Himler; and *If You Take a Mouse to School*, by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Felicia Bond.
- Describe the daily routines, including arrival, breakfast, snack, lunch, and bathroom practices.
- Plan playdates with new classmates.
- Plan a visit to preschool or a playdate with old friends once your child is well settled in kindergarten.

A message from your child's teacher \_\_\_\_\_