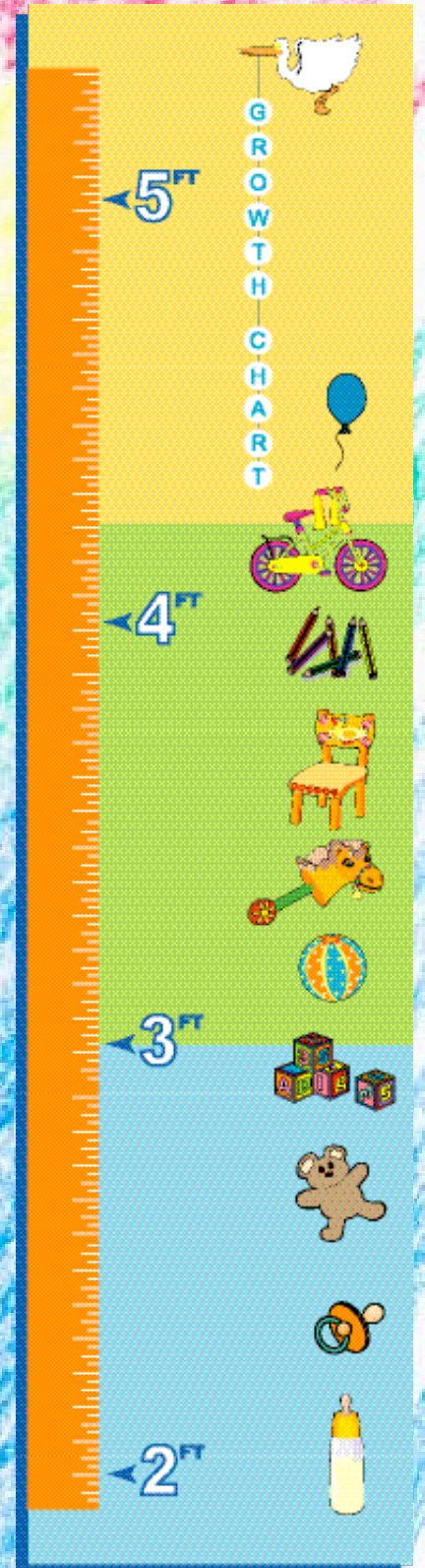


A Kid Is
So Special
(KISS)

GROWING TOGETHER Handbook



Ages And Stages: Three To Six Years

Important Things For The Child At AGE THREE

- ✿ Skips and hops on one foot
- ✿ Questions everything
- ✿ Can be impatient and selfish
- ✿ Understands time better
- ✿ Understands 1,500 words
- ✿ Knows simple songs
- ✿ Boasts and tells tall tales

Ways Parents Can Help The Child Grow And Learn

- ✿ If possible, enroll your child in a preschool program.
- ✿ Be clear and consistent in enforcing the rules.
- ✿ Teach your child about numbers by counting common objects.

Things To Remember

- ✿ Your child does not know why a certain thing is right or wrong. Teaching him values is very important at this age.
- ✿ Children who witness violence in the home may be “behind” in some tasks at their age but you and feeling safe can help them “catch up.”

Important Things For The Child At AGE FIVE

- ✿ May get permanent teeth
- ✿ Ties shoes, prints letters
- ✿ Names colors, days, coins
- ✿ Catches and throws ball
- ✿ Understands 2,000 words
- ✿ Asks meanings of words

Ways Parents Can Help The Child Grow And Learn

- ✿ Play games with your child; they love to learn rules, even when they cheat!
- ✿ Help your child learn about the outside world and how things work.
- ✿ Simple chores help your child feel important – give small tasks to do.

Things To Remember

- ✿ Boys identify with fathers and girls with mothers at this age. Give your child a chance to get to know adults of the opposite-sex if you are a single parent.

Important Things For The Child At AGE SIX

- ✿ Begins school
- ✿ Learns to read and count
- ✿ Often plays very roughly
- ✿ Takes bath without supervision
- ✿ Uses hands as tool more often
- ✿ Can use knife, fork and spoon
- ✿ Obeys more difficult commands

Ways Parents Can Help The Child Grow And Learn

- ✿ Give your child lots of chances to draw, color and make things.
- ✿ Spend some special time with your child after being away from him all day.
- ✿ Show your child you are proud of how he is learning in school.
- ✿ Keep adult problems away from children; don't argue when kids are near.

Things To Remember

- ✿ Independence is important to your child at this age. Your child may be jealous of younger brothers or sisters. Children will imitate everything adults do; make sure they see what you want them to do!

What It's Like To Be 6 To 10 Years Old...

- ✿ I can think and talk about my emotions and how I feel.
- ✿ I want everyone and everything to be fair.
- ✿ Everything is a contest to me. I want to be better than my friends at sports and school.
- ✿ Being popular with my friends is important to me.
- ✿ Doing well in school is important to me and I can be very hard on myself when I don't do well.

What It's Like To Be 9 To 12 Years Old...

- ✿ I use "all or nothing" logic. Everything is black and white to me.
- ✿ I don't always like to talk and I might express myself better with actions.
- ✿ My friends are very important to me and I am influenced by my peers.
- ✿ As a boy, it's normal for me to be rowdy and aggressive.
- ✿ As a girl it's normal for me to want to read and talk to my friends.
- ✿ Even though I tell you I don't want you to be around me, I really do need your guidance and for you to be involved with my life.
- ✿ I like when you keep the rules consistent.
- ✿ If I am not doing well in school, don't assume I am not trying or am stupid. I may not be getting along with the teacher or my classmates.
- ✿ It's hard for me to do large chores. I get distracted easily. Break things down into smaller parts for me.
- ✿ I have an unpredictable appetite and can eat a lot one day and hardly anything the next day.

**Even though I tell you
I don't want you to
be around me, I
really do need your
guidance and for you
to be involved with
my life.**



“Somebody” Said...

- ✿ “Somebody” said that a child is carried in its mother’s womb for nine months.
- ✿ “Somebody” does not know that a child is carried in its mother’s heart forever.
- ✿ “Somebody” said it takes six weeks to get back to normal after you’ve had a baby.
- ✿ “Somebody” doesn’t know that once you’re a mother, normal is history.
- ✿ “Somebody” said you learn how to be a mother by instinct.
- ✿ “Somebody” never took a three-year-old shopping.
- ✿ “Somebody” said being a mother is boring.
- ✿ “Somebody” never rode in a car driven by a teenager with a driver’s permit.
- ✿ “Somebody” said if you’re a “good” mother, your child will “turn out good.”
- ✿ “Somebody” thinks a child comes with directions and a guarantee.
- ✿ “Somebody” said you don’t need an education to be a mother.
- ✿ “Somebody” never helped a fourth grader with math homework.
- ✿ “Somebody” said you can’t love a fifth child as much as you love the first.
- ✿ “Somebody” never had five children.
- ✿ “Somebody” said the hardest part of being a mother is labor and delivery.
- ✿ “Somebody” never watched her “baby” get on the bus for the first day of kindergarten.
- ✿ “Somebody” said a mother’s job is done when her last child leaves home.
- ✿ “Somebody” never had grandchildren.

When There Is Hurting At Home

Children often pick up clues about how to act and how to treat you as a mother from what they see happening between their parents. Here are some things that you may see happening to your children because of domestic violence:

- ✿ They get confused about what the rules really are.
- ✿ They don’t listen to you because they have been taught not to respect you.
- ✿ They want to live with their father because he spoils them or lets them do whatever they want.
- ✿ They think girls are not as good as boys.
- ✿ They have to handle things that children should not have to do.

Here are some ways you can help your child:

- ✿ Keep your rules consistent, fair, and appropriate for the age of your child.
- ✿ Show respect for yourself and your values and your child will respect you, too.
- ✿ Remind your children that everyone has rules to follow and that being allowed to do whatever they want is not really a good thing (even though they may not believe you!).
- ✿ Point out ways that women are capable and strong. Nurture your own strength and model positive qualities to your children.
- ✿ Keep your expectations of your children in line with their age and what they are able to do for themselves.

Talking With Your Child About Sex

Talking with your child about sex is one of the most important things a parent can do, but many of us are uncomfortable with it and avoid talking about it. Studies show that only half of mothers give their daughters any information about sex, and fathers discuss it even less. Even if you don't talk to your child, he or she will learn about sex – but may not get the correct information and won't know what your opinions and values are. So – take a deep breath and start talking.

Before you begin, get as much information as you can. Your child's doctor, your own doctor, libraries and even your child's school will have books and pamphlets to help you decide what is appropriate to tell your child and how to answer your child's questions. Look through this information so you feel confident. You can even practice what you will say with another adult.

Answer your child's questions with clear, short explanations. Check back to make sure you have answered the question. Don't give your child more information than they ask for – this can be overwhelming for them. Young children are usually interested in knowing “where babies come from” and about why boys and girls look different. As they get older, kids want to know how body parts related to sexuality work, and how babies are conceived. They want to understand the changes they are going through in puberty and what is “normal.” Both boys and girls should know about menstruation, birth control and abstinence. Most children ask about masturbation and have heard many myths about this part of their sexuality; they also may have questions about homosexuality. And, don't forget to discuss the ethical and moral questions about sex that your child may have – what you think is right or wrong, OK or not acceptable.

Remember that your child is not curious about sex because he or she wants to have sex, and that talking about sex will not encourage your child to have sex at an early age. Research shows that the opposite is true; teenagers who are well informed about sex tend to wait longer to have sex. Wanting to know about this important aspect of growing up is natural for your child, and providing information and guidance is one of your biggest responsibilities as a parent.

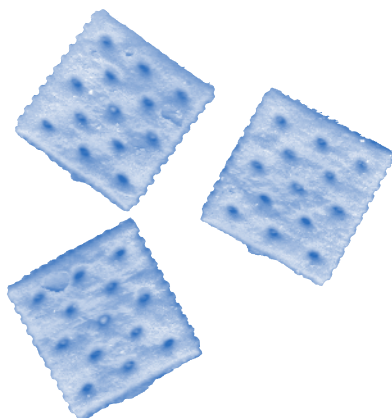
Ten Things To Remember About Being A Parent

- ✿ Be the best role model you can be. “Do as I say, not as I do” doesn't work.
- ✿ Make time to be together. Put aside the phone, TV and computer and make time to talk.
- ✿ Keep your promises. If you can't, apologize and make it up to them. Better yet, don't make promises you know you may not be able to keep.
- ✿ Listen. Give your children your complete attention so they feel valued and important.
- ✿ Avoid “put-downs,” even as jokes. Children may laugh with you, but they really believe the put-down.
- ✿ Recognize good decisions. When your children make a good choice, point it out with a smile, a hug, and a compliment.
- ✿ Remind your children that using mean words can hurt others and make conflicts harder to solve.
- ✿ Take good physical and emotional care of yourself so that you can “be there” for your children.
- ✿ Admit your mistakes. Everyone makes them. Help your children learn from your own mistakes by talking about them together.
- ✿ Be respectful, even when disciplining, and always focus on the behavior, not the child.

How To Survive Shopping With Your Children

- ✿ **Do an attitude check before leaving your house.** Is your child – or are you – hungry or tired? If so, you may want to wait for the shopping or ask a friend or family member to go with you.
- ✿ **Agree on rules.** Before you enter the store, tell your child what you expect. For example, “Stay close to the cart” or “We are only buying food today – no toys, balloons or other stuff.”
- ✿ **Offer rewards and praise for good behavior.** This doesn’t have to mean money or items. Keep it simple – a stop at the park on the way home, your child gets to pick what to watch on TV or what snack to have after the trip is done.
- ✿ **Make a game of it.** Ask your child to find the potatoes, a red box, the soap... older children can be taught how to compare prices and ingredients when they learn to read.
- ✿ **Bring along a treat:** It’s a good idea to have a snack, drink, favorite quiet toy or book for your child to look at while in a shopping cart.
- ✿ **Keep your cool.** All children act up in stores from time to time – it’s not the end of the world. Try to keep your perspective and realize that hitting or yelling at your child will not help.
- ✿ **What has worked for you?** _____

**“We are only
buying food today
– no toys,
balloons or other
stuff.”**



Mommy And Me

Free And Easy Ways To Have Fun (And Teach) Your Kids

- ✿ Go ice skating or roller skating.
- ✿ Paint a picture or a room.
- ✿ Plant some flowers.
- ✿ Learn sign language.
- ✿ Go swimming.
- ✿ Go bird watching.
- ✿ Walk the dog. (A neighbor's dog if you don't have one!)
- ✿ Pick berries/fruit together.
- ✿ Bake cookies or bread.
- ✿ Plant a garden.

Look At Me!

Your child is developing ideas about who she is and how she is changing. This activity gives you a chance to talk to your child about these changes.

The only thing you need for this is a sheet of paper as big as your child. You can get paper at a craft store, or from a butcher shop or farmer's market. You can also take several paper grocery bags and cut them open, then tape them together to make one long sheet of paper.

Lay the paper on the floor and ask your child to lie down on it. Use a crayon or a marker to draw all around her from head to toe – get as much detail as you can, even between her fingers and around her ears. When you are done with the outline, you and your child can color it in.

While you color, name the body parts and parts of clothing. Let your child look in a mirror and then draw her eyes, mouth, and nose into the picture. Be creative – green hair is OK!

When you are finished, hang the picture up so everyone can admire it. Repeat this activity every few months, or on a birthday, so you and your child can see how she is growing. Talk about the changes with your child.

Family Time: Stories

Bedtime stories are a great tradition. Often children like to be read the same story over and over. But you can keep things interesting by making up your own stories with your children. If you have several people in the family, you can sit in a circle and have one person start the story. As you go around the circle, each person adds details to the story. (If your kids are little, you'll have to do most of the story, but they can add some details.) If you have a tape recorder you can tape the stories and write them down later, to read as if they were your bedtime story.

You can also write stories with your kids. Get a notebook and some pens and let them lay around where your kids can find them. Start a story on the first page and ask your kids to add to it whenever they want. After you have a few paragraphs, finish the story yourself and read it together.

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A Family Museum

What if your family was so famous that you decided to make a museum about your life together? What are some of the things that would be exhibited? Draw them, or write them, here.

