



## Is Popularity Important?

Most parents want their children to be well liked or popular but struggle with knowing what to do when their child claims “no one likes me.”

The need for recognition, companionship, and acceptance is important to everyone. It can, however, be particularly important during developmental years.

Parents can help but should not do the work for the child.

In many of today’s neighborhoods, playgrounds are deserted. While this is an obvious lack of physical activity, the diminishing importance of play also diminishes a child’s opportunity to learn to give and take; test leadership and problem-solving skills; and practice learning how to get along with other people. Parents can help compensate for these missed opportunities by teaching their children social skills.

Encouraging children to invite a friend to stay for supper or to accompany the family on an outing can be helpful, but parents should try not to get upset if their children are struggling with friendships. Making home a more inviting place can help, too. When other children know they are welcome, they are more likely to come. Pushing them isn’t likely to help; neither is discounting inevitable ups and downs that are part of any relationship.

Parents are encouraged to be watchful (that’s not the same as nosy), particularly if they notice dramatic changes in their child’s behavior. A prolonged silence from a normally talkative child or a desire to spend more time alone than usual are examples of behaviors that may be cause for concern.

Be positive, yet realistic. Encourage positive behaviors – help the child build self-esteem by strengthening his or her interests and skills. If children can learn to be comfortable with who they are, they will have the foundation that can help them build successful relationships.

*Chuck Smith*

## Kitchens Double as Classrooms

Asking kids to help in the kitchen may speed dinner prep; it also may improve their report card. Encouraging children to learn about food and basic cooking skills can simplify family meals and snacks. It also can help children expand their vocabularies, learn math, and practice their people skills as they learn to enjoy cooking with others.

Learning to read a recipe can help children learn new words and actions such as pinch, roll, and slice. Measuring and following the steps in a recipe also can help children practice math skills, learn about science – why does the bread rise? – and logic.

A little effort in the kitchen may help children develop an appreciation for what it takes to put together a meal. Such togetherness often prompts relaxed conversation between parents and children, promotes independence, and helps build self-confidence.

Choosing age-appropriate activities is important:

- A 2-year old can wipe tabletops, snap green beans, scrub vegetables, or wash salad greens.
- A 3-year old usually can pour cereal; spread soft spreads, like jam; place things in the trash; mix some ingredients, like dry ingredients for a quick bread; and clear his or place at the table.
- A 4-year old may be ready for additional activities such as setting the table, peeling hard-cooked eggs, mashing bananas with a fork, or helping to unload the dishwasher.
- A 5- to 6-year old should be able to measure ingredients, break eggs into a bowl, cut with a blunt knife, or use an egg beater.

*Kathy Walsten*

**Children are apt to live up to what you believe of them.**

*Lady Bird Johnson*

## PARENTS CORNER

### Set a Good Example

Encouraging children to try new foods is not as difficult as it may seem. To children, all foods are new foods. Children usually are willing to try different foods, but they may mimic their parents' or older siblings' likes and dislikes. So, be careful to set a good example.

*Sandy Procter*

### Cut Your Water Usage and Utility Bills

In a typical household, bathing and showering account for 25 to 60 gallons of water per person each day. If a shower lasts longer than seven minutes, taking a bath will use less water. Newer shower heads are required to use 2.5 gallons of water per minute or less. Older models used five or more gallons per minute, so, replacing a shower head can pay for itself in two years or less.

Learning to take a "Navy" shower also can reduce water use. With limited water on shipboard, sailors were taught to get wet, turn off the water, lather, and then turn the water back on to rinse.

#### *Water-Saving Tips:*

- Install aerators on faucets to stretch water use and minimize splashing.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.
- Fill the bathtub half full. Close the drain before running water and adjust the temperature as needed.
- Run the dishwasher only when it's fully loaded. Dishwashers produced after 1994 use five to seven gallons of water per load. Water- and energy-saving models use less water than washing a similar load by hand. Newer dishwashers also do a better job, so less prerinsing is required.
- When washing dishes by hand, rinse all the dishes at one time rather than one piece at a time under running water.
- Chill drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting water run to cool before filling a glass.
- Adjust the water level in the washing machine to match the size of the load.

*Marilyn Bode*

### Is Our Food Unsafe?

Current public health studies show that the number of potentially harmful bacteria in our food supply is five times the level that it was in 1942. That doesn't necessarily mean that our food is unsafe.

To better understand the issue, it's important to look at factors that are affecting our food supply. For example, one significant difference is the fact that technology now allows us to detect more microorganisms. Also, in 1942 most of our food was grown within 100 miles or less of our homes. People had an opportunity to develop a natural immunity to microorganisms that may have been present in the environment.

Since that time, improvements in transportation, agricultural methods and food processing technology have allowed us to enjoy a greater number of foods produced during global – rather than local – growing seasons. The benefits of eating a variety of foods outweigh potential risks, but it can mean that potentially harmful bacteria may be on the plate, too.

Symptoms from foodborne illness can become apparent as soon as 20 minutes after food is eaten or up to six weeks later. Anyone can be susceptible, but those more vulnerable are children whose immune systems are not fully developed; pregnant women; people over the age of 65; and others whose immune systems may be compromised by chronic illness (like asthma or diabetes) or medical treatment (such as chemotherapy).

*Karen Penner*

**Your children will see what you're all about by what you live rather than what you say.**

*Wayne Dyer*

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