

MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Early Childhood Times

JUDE LOBDELL, EDITOR

January 2023

Dates to Remember January

9th. 1st. Day of
playgroup

16th. Martin Luther
King Day. School closed



Now that winter is here, please remember to check the milforded.org website or local radio and television stations for school closings and delayed openings.

**FYI: Milford Co-Op
Open House is
Jan. 15th 2-2:30**



For further information about the Ready to Learn program, visit:
<https://milforded.org/article/947098>

**The Milford Family
Resource Center
@Pumpkin Delight
School
24 Art Street
and
Calf Pen Meadow
School
395 Welch's Point Rd.
Milford, CT 0640
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Ten Tips for Raising a More Compassionate Infant/Toddler



By: Julia Luckenbill

Recent research shows that infants and toddlers are far more empathetic than we once thought. While they have short fuses, and don't cope well with sharing, they are capable of being compassionate. With this in mind, here are ten tips to help infants and toddlers become pro-social.

1. Be respectful, patient, and loving to your infants and toddlers and everyone else. Infants imitate what they see. Model saying "please" and "thank you", touching gently, using your words, using a calm voice, cleaning up your messes, helping others, and sharing your things:

"Thank you for the Cheerio, would you like some of my raisins?"

2. Media is powerful! Read books about feelings with positive social interactions and discuss them. If your child watches television, watch too, and talk about the situations and emotions that happen in the shows, especially if the actions are antisocial.

"Caillou said that Philip could not use his ball – how did that make Philip feel? Do you think taking turns might make Philip feel better?"

3. When things are upsetting your toddler, you can engage your inner child. Doll or puppet play can help your child explore feelings and perspectives.

Puppet, "I don't want to take a bath!" You to puppet, "You sound mad – you don't like baths! I wonder what things could make bath-time fun?"

4. When people are upset, model compassion – talk about the problem and offer help.

"That boy fell off the climber, let's go see if he's ok! His daddy picked him up and the boy stopped crying. Let's see if they need a Band-aid..."

5. Model touching gently on pets and guide toddlers who are rough to touch everyone gently, leave toys in others' hands and to walk around people rather than pushing.

"Stop! The puppy is crying because you pulled his fur – touch him like this, that's gentle. Let me show you how. Yes! That's gentle! He likes that better"

6. Point out when harm has been done and suggest ways to make things better. Point out the facial cues that let you know what is happening.

"You were mad, but when you bit him, it hurt. He's sad. See his tears? Let's help him get some ice. Next time if he grabs your toy, say, "That's mine.""

7. When conflict breaks out, stay calm and support your child's feelings. Offer solutions and stay close. It helps to use the same solutions each time, for example, if the conflict involves one child grabbing another child's toy, get close and hold the toy in question, state the problem, comment on the children's emotions, offer solutions, find one that is mutually acceptable, and restate the solution.

8. Point out kindness to others, *"He liked it when you gave him the flower, see his smile?" That was kind of him to hand you the ball."* Point out social mistakes, *"He just pushed you out of the way. I think he doesn't have the words yet to tell you that he wants to play over by the balls. He should have walked around you."* Point out your own mistakes, too, *"I made a mistake, I bumped her with your stroller – I'm sorry!"*

9. Involve your child in home tasks like cooking and re-gifting. Talk about the teamwork involved in helping the house run smoothly or the way others will feel when they get the gift.

"This salad will taste so good, thank you for tearing up the lettuce!" "I bet the new baby will like that bunny – it's so nice of you to give away the toys you are too big to use."

10. Stay close and guide your child as she navigates the complex world of feelings. Babies and toddlers will have strong feelings, make mistakes, feel possessive, seek autonomy, and struggle to control their impulses. Expect them to try and to make mistakes. Respect that all people may need time to get calm and composed before they are willing to talk about upsetting things.

"You got so mad you threw the cup. Next time you can hand it to me."

"As a parting thought", The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning suggests that when a child can't dance, swim, etc. we teach them, but when a child can't behave, we punish.

Committing to teaching social skills to children that don't "get it," creates a better community for everyone. (from the NAEYC for Families website)



9 Things to do This Winter to Boost Your Child's Development

Winter is a great time to support your child's development! These activities can help you to boost and support your child's development during the winter months!

Make a paper chain

This classic, fine-motor-skill-boosting activity isn't just for the holidays; it's also an excellent way to count down to a birthday, an upcoming family trip, or another special event. Cut paper into strips about 1 inch by 5 inches, one strip for each day you want to count down. Show your child how to make paper chains by looping the paper strips around each other and gluing or taping the ends of each strip together. Hang the chain up in your home and use it to count down to an important event by removing the links, one day at a time.



Bundle up and enjoy the outdoors

When the weather is cold, it can be tempting to pull on your comfiest socks and stay inside. But whenever you can, make time for outdoor activities that give your child's motor skills a pick-me-up. Choose activities that involve both gross motor skills (throwing snowballs, sledding, climbing a snowy hill) and fine motor skills (putting a face on a snowman, collecting and sorting objects).



Create a winter-themed sculpture

Not only are art projects a wonderful parent-child bonding experience, they also challenge young children to expand their problem-solving and motor skills. On a blustery day when it's too cold to play outside, give your child a box of materials they can use as art supplies. You might include plastic bottles and containers, newspaper, pinecones, twigs, jar lids, cotton balls, paper plates, play dough, Popsicle sticks, colored paper, bits of ribbon and fabric, strong tape, paint, glitter, and glue. Work together to create a winter-themed sculpture, such as an "indoor snowman," a penguin in a colorful scarf, or a tree covered with snow.



Make a map

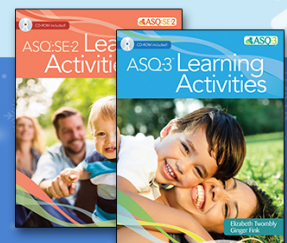
Kids love maps—and making one together is a great way to sharpen their skills! Partner up with your child to make a map of your neighborhood. Zip up your coats for a walk, take down notes, snap pictures of where streets, buildings, parks, and other landmarks are, and then make the map using paper, scissors, labels, photos, and any other creative materials you have on hand.



Adapted from the *ASQ-3 Learning Activities* by Elizabeth Twombly, M.S., & Ginger Fink, M.A. and the *ASQ:SE-2 Learning Activities and More* by Elizabeth Twombly, M.S., Leslie J. Munson, Ph.D., & Lois M. Pribble, Ph.D. © 2019 Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved.

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Play a game with new toys

Did your child receive some fun new toys as holiday gifts? Help them hone their problem-solving skills by playing games with their favorite treasures. Set five small toys in a "lineup" and give your child time to look at the group. Then hide one of the toys and ask, "Which one is miss-ing?" (You may have to give a few clues or hints at first.) Once your child guesses correctly, hide a different toy. Then give the child a turn to hide a toy and try to trick you!

Toss some indoor snowballs

Here's a fun indoor winter activity that gives kids good practice with gross motor skills. Cut a few 8- to 9-inch holes in a big piece of cardboard and decorate the cardboard to look like a tree or a snowman. Give your child some "indoor snowballs" (beanbags or soft foam balls) and encourage your child to throw the snowballs through the holes on the target. Have your child start very close to the target and then move back a few feet to make it a little more challenging.



Carve out time for chats

Make time at the end of the day to connect with your child. Talk about your day and what will happen tomorrow. Ask them simple questions about how their day went: "What was the best part?" "Were there any hard parts?" "How did you feel?" (You may need to give some gentle prompts to help them get started with the conversation.) Listen carefully to what your child says so they know their thoughts and emotions are important to you. Even if your child can't answer all your questions yet, they're listening and learning critical social-emotional skills.

Read together every night

On cold winter nights, snuggle up for some shared reading, one of the single most important activities you can do with a child. Choose some winter-themed books and engage your child while you read: ask them what happened at the beginning, middle, and end of the story, or have the child act out the story with you and pretend to be different characters.



Write a winter storybook together

Invite your child to make their own book about a favorite winter activity or memory. Fasten a few pieces of paper together with staples or yarn. Ask your child to draw pictures or paste magazine photos to illustrate a story. Encourage your child to tell you in their own words about the event they remember or enjoy, and help them write the words on each page.

*Friendly reminder: **Don't** forget that activities should be supervised by an adult. Any material, food, or toy given to a young child should be reviewed for safety!*



Milford Regional Chamber of Commerce
and Senior Insurance Consultants:
New Year's Resolutions



Health & Wellness Fair

Saturday, January 21, 11 AM-4 PM
CT Post Mall, Center Court
1201 Boston Post Rd. Milford
Free Admission



Health
is wealth



Make Window Decals to Help Migrating Birds

About a 30 minute creative activity that helps protect birds by keeping them from flying into windows and showing children that they can make a difference in their environment!

Here's how:

Materials needed

White glue
Liquid dish detergent
Food coloring
Paint brush
Paper plates or other small containers
Plastic page protector
Cookie cutters (optional)

1. Pour 2 tablespoons of glue and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon liquid dish soap into a container for each color decal you'd like to make.
2. Add a few drops of food coloring into each container to create different colors. Stir each container until the color is mixed in completely.
3. Use your paintbrush to paint designs with the colored glue mixture on your plastic sheet. Keep the designs thick enough that they won't break when you peel them off. They might spread out a little as they dry so leave space in between your decals.
4. If you have cookie cutters, you can also pour the colored glue mixture into the cookie cutters to create specific shapes.
5. Allow the decals to dry overnight.
6. Slowly peel the decals off the plastic and press them on to the inside of your window. They can be peeled off when you are finished with them.
7. To help migrating birds, keep decals a few inches apart across wide window spaces so that birds don't accidentally fly into the clean glass.



You can visit the PBS website for more details (and bigger pictures) and a host of other activities and ideas at:
<https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/make-window-decals-to-help-migrating-birds>



There are still openings in our caregiver and me playgroups for certain days this semester. If you are a Milford resident with child(ren) ages 4 months - 3 years old, and would like further information about our playgroups and other services, you can reach us at mfrf@milforded.org or 203 783-3626