

A Primer For Parents (for kids 3-6 yrs)

Things to do:

Provide your children with maximum opportunity for exploration and investigation by making your home & yard as safe and accessible as possible.

Remove fragile and dangerous items from low shelves and cabinets, and replace them with old magazines, pots and pans, plastic-ware and other suitable playthings.

Be available to act as your children's personal consultant during the majority of their working hours. You shouldn't hover, just be nearby to provide attention and support as needed.

Respond to your children promptly and favorably as often as you can, providing appropriate enthusiasm and encouragement.

Set limits – do not give in to unreasonable requests/demands or permit unacceptable behavior to continue.

Talk to your children often. Make an effort to understand what they are trying to do and concentrate on what they see as important.

Use words they understand but also add new words and related ideas. For example, if your child gives you a red ball, say, "This ball is red, just like my shirt. Your shirt is blue and it matches your pants>"

Provide new learning opportunities. Having children accompany you to the store or allowing them to help you cook will be more enriching than sitting them down and conducting a flashcard session.

Give your children a chance to direct your shared activities.

Try to help your children be as spontaneous emotionally as your own behavior will allow. And encourage your children's pretend activities.

Things to avoid:

Don't confine your children regularly for long periods.

Don't let them concentrate their energies on you so much that independent exploration and investigations are excluded.

Don't ignore attention-getting devices to the point where children have to throw a tantrum to gain your interest.

Don't worry that your children won't love you if you say "no" on occasion.

Don't try to win all the arguments, particularly during the second half of their second year, when most children are passing through a normal period of negativism.

Don't try to prevent your children from cluttering the house – it's a sure sign of a healthy and curious baby.

Don't be overprotective.

Don't bore your child if you can avoid it.

Don't worry about when children learn to count or say the alphabet. Don't worry if they're slow to talk, as long as they seem to understand more and more language as time goes by.

Don't force toilet training. It will be easier by the time they are age 2.

Don't spoil children, giving them the notion that the world was just made for them – have them see others play, and share space/attention as soon as you can.