

# Raising Great Kids



DECEMBER

## Children's Dreams and Fantasies

You or someone you know will at some point ask your child, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" This is a serious question which can allow a child to share his dreams, ambitions and longings.

Young children go on and on about what they want to be when they grow up. The way you listen, as well as your response, will let your child know whether or not you accept what he has to say. If you dismiss or discourage his dream, you run the risk of injuring his creative spirit. Here are a few things you can do to accept and encourage your child's dreams and fantasies.



- ★ **Listen respectfully.** Give him your attention. Look him in the eye. Resist the temptation to interrupt, judge what he's saying, or tell him what you think he should do. If your child wants to talk at a time when you're not free to give him your attention, say something like, "I want to hear what you have to say. I'll be able to listen better as soon as I'm finished what I'm doing, when the big hand of the clock is on the seven."
- ★ **Treasure the trust your child shows in you.** Take him seriously, even though his dreams may seem silly and his goals may be farfetched. Accept the importance of the moment. He may not have the same dreams in the next ten minutes. Never use what he has told you to criticize or embarrass him when he disappoints you in the future.
- ★ **Respect your child's version of reality.** Different people can have a different impression of the same event. Sometimes your child's version of an event will be different from yours. Show him you respect his right to see and experience things in his own way. Encourage him to trust his instincts. This will help him develop trust and confidence in himself.

### Safety Scoop

-  Young children must be closely monitored at all times around water ~ bathtubs, toilets, wading pools, cleaning pails, ponds, swimming pools.
-  Check toys, play equipment, and furniture for sharp edges or broken parts.
-  Keep drapery cords and window blind cords secured out of children's reach.
-  Keep electrical cords and wires out of children's reach as much as possible. **Z**

- ★ **Never discourage a dream.** At times, there will be the temptation to want to protect a child from what seems like an unrealistic dream. In reality, we don't know which possibilities are available down the road. Statements like, "That won't work," or "Oh, you won't like that," can be discouraging and disabling. Unless your child's efforts will put him in physical danger, let him explore and find out for himself.
- ★ **Allow kids to be kids.** Encourage your child's creativity and imagination. Allow him to be silly. Give him enough time to work and play. Part of dreaming big is having enough unstructured time to dream big. **Z**

Source: *Family Information Services*, March, 1999.

# Did You Know?

*Did you know that Identity Theft (someone steals your identity) can ruin your good name? If your wallet is lost or stolen:*

- ★ File a report with the police immediately. Get a copy of the report in case your bank, credit card company or insurance company needs it.
- ★ Cancel each credit and charge card. Get new cards with new numbers.
- ★ Report missing cards to the major credit reporting agencies. Ask them to flag your account and add a "victim's statement" to your file.

**Equifax 800-685-1111**  
**TransUnion 800-916-8800**  
**Experian 800-397-3742**

- ★ Report the loss to your bank. Stop payments on outstanding checks.
- ★ Call your utilities, including phone company. Tell them someone may try to get a new service using your identification.
- ★ Report your missing driver's license to the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- ★ Change the locks on your home and vehicle if your keys were stolen. **Z**

Source: Family Time, Word Time: A Balancing Act, Penn State Cooperative Extension.

## **I would like to encourage my preschooler to want to learn. Is it too early to do this? Are there any tips I can use?**

It's never too early to encourage children to want to learn. Here are some things you can do.

- ★ Answer your child's questions simply instead of ignoring them.
- ★ Encourage his curiosity about things by asking him questions.
- ★ Notice and appreciate his ideas.
- ★ Take time to discover and discuss new things with him.
- ★ Show your interest in enjoying and learning new things.
- ★ Keep his drawings and other projects in a scrapbook, mounted on the wall, or some other special place. **Z**

Source: Getting Young Children Ready to Learn, Alabama Cooperative Extension.



### **Peanut Butter Reindeer**

- peanut butter
- raisins
- candied cherries, sliced in half
- pretzels, one for each reindeer
- white or whole wheat bread

Cut slices of bread in half, diagonally. Spread each diagonal piece with peanut butter. Break each pretzel in half carefully, so that the pieces resemble antlers. With diagonal cut as the top of the reindeer's head, put the pretzel "antlers" in place. Add raisin eyes and place a candied cherry rounded side up as a nose. **Z**

### **Kids Can Help**

Children can bring ingredients and cut bread. They can place raisins and cherry and pretzels.



**All children must be supervised when they are in the kitchen.**



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