

## Going Nowhere Fast: The Waiting Game

**W**hat parents haven't found themselves at the mercy of a long grocery line, a traffic jam, or a doctor who's running behind schedule? It's the wise parent who can turn these tedious, going-nowhere- fast times into bits of fun.

While parents get frustrated, kids can get downright angry. Their concept of time is still developing—a few minutes are like an eternity. Riley, age two, will utter his objections by squirming, crying, and maybe having a complete meltdown if he's expected to sit quietly and entertain himself. Jenny, four, and brother Adam, six, may fare a little better, but you know something is brewing when they start fidgeting and teasing each other relentlessly. Now's the time for parents to reach into their bag of tricks (an essential skill) and come up with a plan before tempers flare.

### A moment in time

It's a drag when you feel like time's a wastin', but in many cases the types of activities you would do at home can be done while waiting at the doctor's office or waiting to board a plane. It may be the perfect time to let your toddler practice the new skill of walking. Or it may



be the perfect time to listen to your child's arsenal of knock-knock jokes--the ones that don't quite make sense. Maybe you've wanted to share a couple riddles or silly sentences of your own.

### Pack a pocketful of boredom busters

**E**mpptying sugar packets and sprinkling pepper on tabletops may be frowned on while you wait for food at a restaurant, but perhaps you have a bag of trail mix you can sort into piles, sort again, and then snack on while you wait. Amusements for older kids are more advanced, but if you have the tools—a pen or crayon, paper, a book of activities, even a small batch of play dough—waiting will be easier. If (heaven forbid) you have not packed a book in your bag, look at words on everything else. A menu in a restaurant may provide a great opportunity to find the “hidden” letter or word. In a plane, take a look at the maps and stuff for sale in the flight magazine.

**Y**ou can always find things to hide and seek. Where can a straw or sugar packet hide? What about a quarter? Coins, in fact, can be counted, sorted, and categorized. Which are bigger, thicker, and thinner? What do the pictures mean? Coins can be traced around. Try the old standby game of guessing which hand the money is in. Or toss a coin into the air and chime “Heads or tails?”

**W**hat you bring along for the inevitable waiting game depends on the age of your child. A snack is always a good thing. Books rank right up there as essential. Stickers and a roll of tape (they like to tape things together) can keep kids busy for long periods. In the end, it's your imagination and your undivided attention that will, quite literally, save the day.

# PERSONAL PARENTING



## Lighten Up

*"You will always be your child's favorite plaything." Vicki Lansky*

*"Now the thing about having a baby—and I can't be the first person to have noticed this—is that thereafter you have it." Jean Kerr*

## The Library Connection

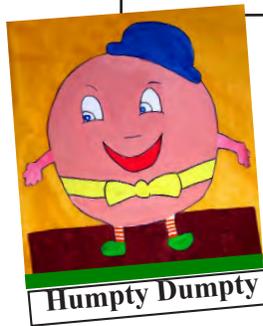
In these days of TV and computers, we sometimes forget the simple pleasure of going to the library.

- Take your child to a scheduled story hour. It's a good time for you to get a break, and a great time for little ones to socialize and learn to settle down within a group.

- Let your child roam around and select some books to take home.

This is an opportunity for you to see what types of books your child enjoys looking at and reading.

- **Get a library card.** Having a card is an excellent responsibility for children to have. Find a special place for it, and help children keep track of due dates.



Humpty Dumpty

## PUMPKIN SEED GRANOLA

### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ¾ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup slivered almonds
- ½ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- ⅓ cup shredded raw coconut

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees.

- Mix the brown sugar, maple syrup, vegetable oil, salt, cinnamon, and vanilla extract in a large mixing bowl. Whisk until well blended. Add the rest of the ingredients, and stir thoroughly until everything is completely coated with the sugar-syrup mixture.
- Spread the mixture evenly on a nonstick cookie sheet. Place in the oven. Stir the mixture every 15 minutes for about 1 hour, or until golden brown. Cool completely before storing in an airtight container. Makes about 3 cups of granola.

## Muscles Have Memory

Going to the park so kids can climb, jump, and race around may seem like just a fun experience, but there is a lot more to it. Repeated physical actions such as skipping or throwing a ball build powerful muscle memories. There is a mind-body connection, so when your child is exercising his body, he's exercising his mental muscles as well.

## PUMPKIN SEEDS

One day I found two pumpkin seeds.  
I planted one and pulled the weeds.  
It sprouted roots and a big, long vine.  
A pumpkin grew; I called it mine.  
The pumpkin was quite round and fat.  
(I really am quite proud of that.)  
But there is something I'll admit,  
That has me worried just a bit.  
I ate the other seed, you see.  
Now will it grow inside of me?

(I'm so relieved since I have found,  
That pumpkins only grow in the  
ground!)



## Potatoes, Please

### Pass the Potatoes, Please

A great way to prepare potatoes is to roast them or microwave them with the skin on. That's because potatoes cooked with their skin on retain almost all of their nutrients.

# Healthy Habits for a Lifetime

**O**besity in children is a national problem. Unfortunately, the number of overweight children in the United States has doubled in the last 10 years, and one out of four children is either overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. Children who are overweight at age six are more likely to be overweight as adults. Understanding proper nutritional requirements as well as healthy eating and fitness practices is becoming more of a focus with parents of young children.

**Research shows that both genetics and the child's environment play a role in determining an individual's weight.**

In addition to genetics, the National Center for Health Statistics tells us that childhood obesity is related to:

- lack of physical activity
- poor eating habits
- lack of knowledge about how to make healthy food choices
- lack of adult models who lead active lifestyles and have good eating habits
- increased in amounts of time spent watching television

*Children develop lifelong eating habits through early eating experiences.*

## Here's what you can do:

- Introduce a variety of nutritious foods, and encourage children to taste new foods, but do not force them to eat them.
- Try preparing the new food in different ways, for example, instead of slicing apples, cook them to make applesauce.
- Introduce a new food in a fun shape. Tuna salad can be rolled in a tortilla or served on bread that is cut with a fish cookie cutter.
- Introduce foods that are different colors and contain different nutrients. For example: there are dark green vegetables that are rich in vitamin A and calcium. Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables have potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C.

Believe it or not, snacks are an important part of a well-balanced diet. They are especially important for young children, because they usually can't eat enough in three meals to meet their energy requirements. Avoid offering candy, ice cream, and other high-fat or high-sugar foods for snacks. Instead, offer healthy snacks that also taste good, such as rice cakes, bread sticks, pretzels, graham crackers or whole grain crackers, fresh fruit, low-fat pudding or yogurt, and fresh vegetables with low-fat dressing.



**P**hysical activity is also an essential part of the development of young children. During their first six years of life, children are learning fundamental gross motor skills and will need many opportunities to practice these skills. In addition, physical activity is important to maintaining a healthy body weight. There are simple fitness strategies that are preventive, effective, and can even be fun. In the parenting book *Your Active Child*, author Rae Pica identifies five fitness factors that affect anyone's health, child or adult. They are:

- cardiovascular endurance
- muscular strength
- muscular endurance
- flexibility
- body composition (percentage of lean body tissue to fat)

**T**he National Health and Performance Standards outline the active opportunities for physical activity, which also address the five fitness factors that Rae Pica identifies. They recommend that you promote children's active play every day and provide opportunities for vigorous activities such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping. In addition, all children birth to six years, should participate daily in:

- two to three occasions of active play outdoors, weather permitting
- two or more structured activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day, indoor and outdoor
- continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills