

Let Children Be Children

Do you worry that your children are growing up too fast? Do you wonder what to say when they talk about “going on a date”? Are you frustrated when they beg to watch television shows or movies with characters and activities that are just too old for preschoolers?

We worry too. Let’s work together to protect children and let them enjoy being preschoolers. Here are five ideas that may work for your family.

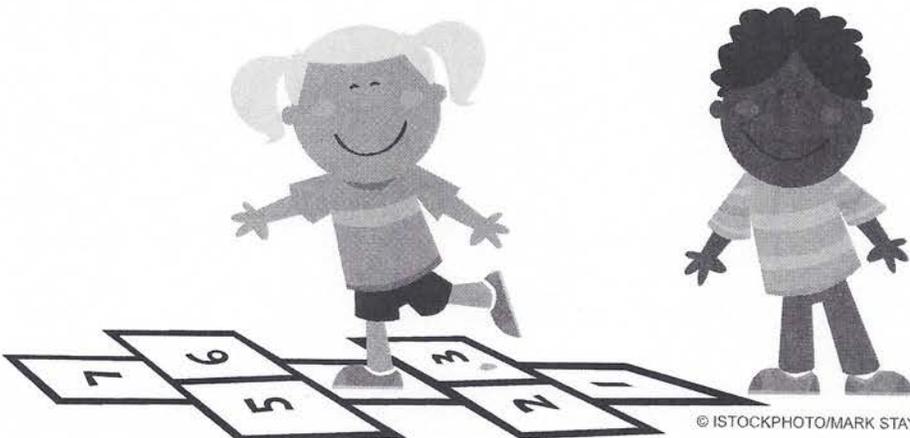
● **Limit the time your child spends in front of a screen—television, computer, video game, and so on.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting total screen time to no more than 1 to 2 hours a day for children older than 2 years.

● **Make a list of things to do instead of watching a screen.** Ask your child to think of activities he or she enjoys—reading, doing a puzzle, tossing a ball to the dog, or helping to cook dinner. Use photographs or drawings to illustrate each item on the list. Include some activities you can do together. Use the list to help your child choose something to do instead of screen time.

● **Schedule a weekly family night.** Include your child in planning what to make for dinner and what to do afterward. You might go for a walk around the block, play a board game, tell stories, organize family photos, or do any other activity your family enjoys.

● **Help your child become a unique individual with varied interests and abilities.** One way to do this is by reading and talking about books in which both male and female characters are strong, confident, thoughtful, and sensitive. And you and the other important adults in your child’s life can do this by being role models—men and women who work, enjoy hobbies, take care of the home, and spend lots of loving time with their children.

● **Work with other people who want to preserve childhood.** Talk with friends, neighbors, family members, and the parents of your children’s friends and classmates. Agree to hold birthday parties focused on fun rather than TV or movie characters; to dress your children like preschoolers, not teenagers; and to resist (rather than giving in) when children ask you to buy things you know are not good for them.



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A message from your child’s teacher _____