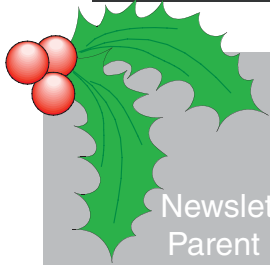




**Programs for Parents, Inc.**  
 Comprehensive Services for Families & Children



Newsletter 109  
 Parent Edition  
 December 2007

*This Month's Theme:*  
**'Tis The Season**

*It's the season to spread joy and holiday cheer with all those you love. Tune out your worries and let the children show you how to let your inner child celebrate.*

What's inside?

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Next Month

**Child Development:**  
**3 - 4 years**

# Childcare Matters

## Child Development Age 2 - 3 Language and Articulation

In these first three years of life, your child's ability to express himself and understand the expression of others has grown dramatically. There are two components to this development: language, the body of words or symbols used by a group of people to communicate; and articulation, the movements of the vocal cords, tongue, mouth and lips to form sounds. Usually these develop at approximately the same pace, with the language the child understands slightly outpacing what he can say. As a child hears and understands new words, he learns to move his muscles so he can articulate those words when he wants to use them.

At age two most children are putting together simple sentences. The next year will bring a huge increase in vocabulary available to form those sentences. However, there is great variation in children's ability to communicate effectively. Your child's personality, her ability to articulate sounds and her mastery of language all affect her ability to communicate with those around her.

### **Language and Personality**

Personality can affect the way in which language is used. One

child may use few words to express a thought, while another expresses every thought that enters her mind. The quieter child's language development is not delayed. She simply uses fewer words to express her needs. If your child can communi-



cate her needs to the people closest to her and they all understand what she says, then language is progressing in a healthful way. Sometimes your child will share her thoughts with family and friends, but will not even whisper a "Hello" to a new face. She is most likely shy and will outgrow her discomfort. However, if she has difficulty speaking to you, her siblings or friends and appears to be using other means of communication, such as excessive hand signaling, you may want to consult your pediatrician and have her screened. It may be nothing, but if your child is having a significant problem developing speech,

it's best to intervene now, while the window of opportunity to develop language is at its peak.

### Articulation Delays

Some children may develop language skills right on target, but the articulation lags behind. These children appear very bright, understand everything you say and even sometimes appear to be using the correct rhythms and intonations of whatever it is they are trying to say. They almost seem to be speaking a language you don't understand. That's because the language skills are developing at an age appropriate pace, but the ability to form the words is not yet in place. This can happen for any number of reasons: the child cannot hear the sounds he is supposed to be forming, the child can hear the sounds, but can't control his muscles enough to form them or this is simply the pattern of her development. In some cases you may understand your child perfectly because you have successfully decoded her speech patterns. If by age three you are the only person who can understand your child, involve a professional who can observe the child without bias. If your child can be somewhat understood, but misarticulates the sounds, l, r, s, sh, ch, y, r, or z, there is no cause for alarm. These sounds can develop as late as age seven in perfectly healthy children.

### Language Delays

Language delays are more complicated to pick up in young children because they may be communicating their thoughts clearly, but the structures and vocabulary development are not keeping pace with their peers. By age three a child should have mastered the following:

- Identifying some colors
- Communicating simple descriptions such as "big ball"
- Laughing at something silly, such as a hat on a hippo
- Expressing feelings using simple words such as "happy" and "sad"
- Using verbs with "ing"
- Answering simple questions
- Repeating a short sentence

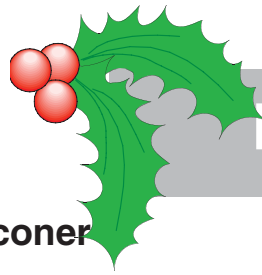
If your child hasn't even begun these developments, you may want to watch closely for a month to see if there is any change. If you suspect a language delay, but also hear multiple misarticulations, it will be almost impossible for you to figure out whether the problem is simply articulation or both language and articulation. You need to involve the pediatrician or speech pathologist to help you identify the issue. A trained specialist will diagnose the problem and come up with an educational plan to help jump start your child's development.

These differences in growth patterns, like most characteristics, are partially inherited and partially environmental. One twin study found a direct relationship between the misarticulations in sets of twins. (*The Development of Intelligence*, Mike Anderson, 2000) Both twins developed the same misarticulations. This could explain why some twins appear to have a secret language unto themselves. They both develop the misarticulation, but in the presence of healthy language

skills they both begin to understand each other's creative sounds, in effect making up a new language. Another twin study finds that the overall time parents spent with each twin is half of what a single birth child will experience, resulting in language delays, which supports the presence of environmental impact on development. (*Are Twins Delayed in Language Development?* Jennifer Ganger, Twin Studies at Harvard) I'm sure both heredity and environment impact speech patterns. While your child may have been born with a plan for development, her experience with the world can impact that plan in both positive and negative ways.

If your child has been diagnosed as language delayed or has misarticulations, the best way to support her is to make a concentrated effort to speak and read to her, support the plan given to you by your child's therapist and make eye contact when conversing. Do not stop speaking because you feel she is not understanding, and do not constantly bring attention to misarticulations or language errors. This can inhibit your normally outgoing child from speaking, the very thing she needs to practice.

With early intervention, your child will most likely attend Kindergarten completely caught up to her peers, with the exception of a few misarticulations. Some speech patterns will miraculously clear up on their own, as if she came with a plan and had no interest in anyone veering her off her developmental path. All children need to have fun with words, sounds and language through great play experience, conversation and reading. Listen to all their little voices. A child's voice is a holiday gift for everyone.



## **Olivia Helps With Christmas by Ian Falconer**

This recently published Olivia adventure with its bright red cover and big gold letters is a present just waiting to be opened. Christmas Eve and the exciting day after are illustrated in black, white, green and red, with an occasional sparkle of gold. The anticipation of the night before the holiday is captured as Olivia's family prepares, decorating the tree and carolling. Olivia helps with enthusiasm and some minor mishaps. But all is forgiven as the family celebrates. This is a fun story that will be very familiar to preschoolers, especially those who wait impatiently at the window trying to catch a glimpse of Santa. (ages 2 - 7)

## **A Wish To Be A Christmas Tree by Colleen Monroe**

Every year a tall stately tree watches as those smaller than he are chosen to grace the homes of families celebrating Christmas. The disheartened tree has now grown too tall. He shares his disappointment with his friends who are surprised that the tree, who has provided shelter, food and nesting materials, does not realize his value. As a reminder the animals all work together to find the decorations that nature provides and adorn him for Christmas. The tree awakens to find himself bedecked in all the colors of the forest as he listens to his friends share their appreciation of all he has provided for them.. The illustrations combined with the four line, rhyming stanza convey the sensitive and emotional relationship between the animals and the tree. The message of appreciation applies to everyone regardless of the holiday they celebrate. (ages 3 - 8)

## **Together For Kwanzaa by Juwanda G. Ford**

Every year Kayla's family celebrates Kwanzaa together, but this year Kayla's brother, Khari, is away at college and the celebration will have to begin without him. Each day a candle is lit and the family celebrates the principle of the day. The text and illustrations show how Kayla interprets each principal so young children can make connections in their own lives. On the fifth day, Nia, the day of purpose, Kayla decides she should be the best little sister ever and makes Khari a scrapbook to share the Kwanzaa days he missed, and then finally on the last day he arrives to share the Karamu (feast) with the family. (ages 4 - 8)

## **The Miracle Of The Latkes by Malka Penn**

Tante Golda made the best potato pancakes in Russia, but this year potatoes were in very short supply due to drought. One evening a hungry beggar shows up at Tante Golda's door and she uses her last potato to make latkes for the two of them, always believing that God would somehow provide. The next day, the second day of Hanukkah, Tante Golda awakens to find two potatoes by the menorah. She assumes that her friends had dropped them off. The mystery continues the following days until, by the eighth day of Hanukkah, she finds eight potatoes, just enough to make latkes for a celebration. Mystified, she questions her guests who all deny leaving the potatoes, but then remembers how the beggar reassured her that God would always provide. The following day she awakens to find a whole barrel full of potatoes and without question, she simply thanks God for providing them. (ages 3 - 8)

## **Everyone's Special Day**

Are you still grappling with the issue of how to make sure your child is included in holiday celebrations regardless of your faith or traditions? Begin to think of your traditions as something you share with friends. Bring in a holiday dish or share a holiday story with your child's child care provider. Volunteer to help with the holiday festivities and share your family rituals. Young children aren't capable of understanding everyone's faith and culture and there's no need to try and teach them. However, they can connect with traditions on a personal level, such as the sharing of a traditional cookie or a holiday song. They will learn to be open by experiencing their friends' family traditions and then bringing those lessons to the larger world. Share your celebrations with friends and the next generation will grow to be more accepting of everyone's culture.

## **Old Books Are New Again**

After you've celebrated, take your holiday stories and put them away with the decorations. Take them out the following year, add a few new titles and the children will appreciate them all over again. Books on your coffee table will become a holiday tradition.

# Deck the Halls

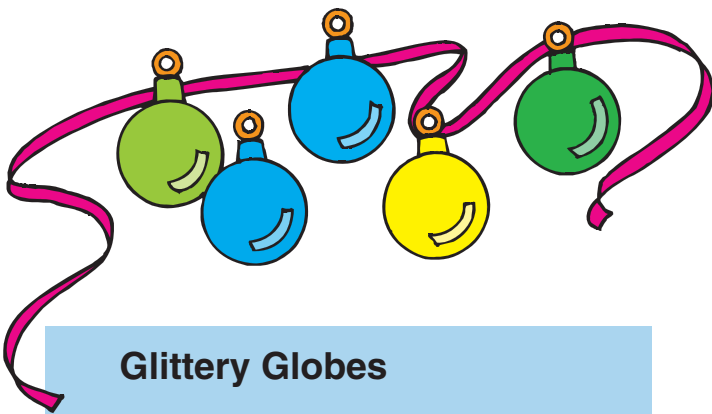


The following activities are appropriate for all holidays. Simply adjust your color scheme.

Christmas - Red, green, silver and gold

Chanukah - Blue, white, silver and gold

Kwanzaa - Black, red and green



## Glittery Globes

1 bag of styrofoam balls in assorted sizes  
Assorted glitter  
Elmer's glue

Mix the Elmer's glue with an equal amount of water and place it in a sturdy bowl. Place your glitter, separating the colors, in shallow bowls. Have your child dunk the balls in the glue and then roll them in the glitter one at a time. When they are done, have them hand you their ornament. Insert a decorative hook or a paper clip and hang the balls on a line to dry. This is an activity that needs close supervision and you will have lots of clean up to do, but toddlers love glitter. It's worth the extra effort for the holiday.

## Paper Chains

Slice colored construction paper into one inch lengths. Show your child how to paste one end of the paper and connect the other to make a ring. After the first ring is made have them place paste on the end of a second strip and then hold the first ring for them as you help them guide the second through the first, joining the ends to make a chain. Toddlers love really long chains, so you can work on this every day in December and let them watch their chain grow. Count your links every day. It seems the longer it gets, the longer they want it to grow. By late December it will be wrapped all over your house.

## Collage Box

The best and most age appropriate art work for toddlers continues to be the use of a collage box. This is simply a box that contains bits and pieces of gift wrap scraps, sewing or knitting scraps, paper scraps from other projects and anything else that can be pasted on a piece of paper. You can add some new interest by changing the colors in your box to reflect the holiday you are celebrating. If you want to add some sparkle, look for sparkly ribbon or yarn to cut up and put in the box. You can also change the medium of the base that your child is pasting on. Arts and craft stores have all kinds of paper that would make their collages special for the holidays. Let them paste away using their own creativity to blend colors and shapes. If you'd like, purchase inexpensive cardboard frames and have them wrap their treasured work as gifts for their friends and family.

## Five Little Bells

Five little bells hanging in a row  
The first one said, "Ring me slow."  
The second one said, "Ring me like a chime."  
The third one said, "Ring me all the time."  
The fourth one said, "Ring me fast."  
The fifth one said, "Ring me last."

## Chanukah, Oh Chanukah

This song also has an even rhythm that toddlers can easily follow. You can substitute blocks for the bells for variety. You can find the music at [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com) under the holidays menu.

Chanukah, Oh Chanukah, come light the Menorah  
Let's have a party, we'll all dance the hora.  
Gather round the table, we'll all have a treat  
Sivivon to play with, and latkes to eat.

And while we are playing, the candles burn bright  
One for each night, they shed a sweet light  
To remind us of days long ago.  
One for each night, they shed a sweet light.

## Kwanzaa Candles

Seven little candles all in a line,  
Waiting to be lit at Kwanzaa time.  
Come let's count them - one, two, three,  
four, five, six, seven, candles to see!

by Elizabeth McKinnon

Have your child ring his bells as they count.

## Over the River and Through the Woods

This song was originally written for Thanksgiving, but you can replace the holiday with any of your choosing. The even rhythm is easy for toddlers to pick up. You can listen to the tune at: [www.wilstar.com/holidays/overriv.htm](http://www.wilstar.com/holidays/overriv.htm)

Over the river and thru the woods,  
To grandfather's house we go.  
The horse knows the way  
to carry the sleigh,  
Thru the white and drifted snow, oh!  
Over the river and thru the woods,  
Oh, how the wind does blow!  
It stings the toes, and bites the nose,  
As over the ground we go.

Over the river and thru the woods,  
To have a first-rate play;  
Oh hear the bell ring,  
"Ting-a-ling-ling!"  
Hurrah for Christmas Day!  
Over the river and thru the woods,  
Trot fast my dapple gray!  
Spring over the ground,  
Like a hunting hound,  
For this Kwanza Day.

by Lydia Maria Child

*Happy Holidays*



# Festive Recipes

Sugar cookies are a favorite during the holidays, but sometimes toddlers have a hard time cutting nice shapes successfully. The following recipes are simply rolled into balls and baked. The result is still festive and delicious. If you need a nut-free recipe, make the chocolate crinkles and replace the pecans with the same amount of chocolate chips

## Pecan Sandies

- ¾ cup of pecans
- 1 stick unsalted butter (softened)
- 6 Tablespoons confectioners sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup granulated sugar **or** colored decorating sugar **or** confectioner's sugar contained in a small shallow bowl



Grind the nuts in a food processor or a coffee grinder and place them in a small bowl. Using a mixer, cream the butter, confectioners sugar and vanilla until light and fluffy. Place the bowl on the table and allow your child to add the premeasured flour and nuts, mixing with a large spoon. When all the ingredients are combined, pinch off pieces about the size of a mounded tablespoon. Give your child each piece to roll into a ball, roll in the sugar and place on the cookie sheet. Bake for 20 minutes in a 350 degree oven. Cool completely. These are sturdy cookies that can be packaged for gifts or enjoyed at snacktime.

## Chocolate Crinkles

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 Tablespoons of butter, melted | ½ teaspoon baking powder |
| ½ cup sugar                     | ⅛ teaspoon of salt       |
| 1 large egg                     | ¼ cup ground pecans      |
| ½ teaspoon vanilla extract      | ¼ cup chocolate chips    |
| 3 Tablespoons of cocoa          | confectioner's sugar     |
| ½ cup all-purpose flour         |                          |

Using a mixer, beat the butter, sugar, egg and vanilla until combined. Place the bowl on the table and have your child add the rest of the ingredients and mix until combined. Chill for about one hour. Pinch off pieces of dough the size of a mounded tablespoon and give them to your child to roll into balls and then in the confectioners sugar. Place them on a cookie sheet and bake for 12 minutes at 350 degrees. They will flatten out and be slightly soft in the center. Cool completely.

# WARMLINE

Providing you with practical, accurate information on health, behavior issues and regulatory information relating to the children in your care.

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