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\*Birthdays at school, snacks, field trips, what to bring, breakfast and rest.



## Welcome to Rainy Dayz Preschool!

The Rainy Dayz program has been designed using both Montessori and traditional teaching philosophies to challenge and inspire every preschool child and to ensure a smooth transition into kindergarten and beyond. Our unique environment is characterized primarily by an emphasis on child-directed activities and tasks. However, every child is expected to engage in a teacher led circle time and a gross motor activity or game as a class each day.

Our curriculum and environment encompasses all areas of development including social, emotional, cognitive and physical. We recognize that each child learns at a different level and pace and take pride in our ability to individualize our program to meet your child's needs. We have especially focused on the incoming requirements for the Peninsula School District kindergarten program. We understand the need for children to be ready academically as well as respect and prepare your child for the emotional and social expectations of the elementary school environment.

Our curriculum is structured around many areas of learning development:

Area	Development
Classroom	Math and Language
Enrichment (in classroom)	Pretend Play, ADL's, Sensory & Fine Motor
Science Center (in classroom)	Exploring and experimenting!
Literacy Center (in classroom)	Books for reading and listening, writing work station
Art (in classroom)	Explore Various Mediums
Gross Motor Floor	Physical Development

We are pleased and honored that you have chosen Rainy Dayz for your child's early childhood education! We look forward to a fun and successful school year!

Sincerely,

Kiersten Shaffer  
Owner/Director

## Our Programs

We have scheduled classes that allow you to choose from 2, 3, 4 or 5-days per week, depending on age. No class requires any child to be potty trained.

Our sufficient staffing allows for a classroom ratio of only 1 to 8 (1 to 7 for 2 year olds). This ensures more one-on-one teaching time with your child.

Children should be of age for their desired class by August 31st of the current school year; however, enrollment in each class is at the discretion of the director.

2-year olds	Tuesdays & Thursdays Or Wednesdays & Fridays
3-year olds	Mon/Wed/Fri Or Tuesday & Thursday AM or PM available
4-year olds	Monday through Thursday AM or PM available
Pre-K	Monday through Friday AM or PM available

## Rainy Day Recess

### *(Extended Day Program)*

We understand how hectic your schedules can be and have created a program to meet your needs! We now offer early drop-off and late pick-up. Breakfast or lunch is available for those interested.

Early Drop-Off begins at 8:00am\* (**A reservation at least 24 hours in advance is required.** Staff will not be available if no reservations have been scheduled).

Late Pick-UP until 1:00pm\* (There is no extended day option for afternoon classes)

\*Combination of extended day and preschool cannot exceed 4 hours.

Extended day charges will be added to your regular tuition invoice.

## **\*Required Forms on File at School:**

You will be required to complete and return the following forms to the school as soon as possible:

### **1. Enrollment Form**

-This form should have been completed upon enrollment. (Please get one from the office if you have yet to complete).

### **2. Consent for Pick-Up**

-All people who have your permission to pick up your child from Rainy Dayz Preschool should be on this form. No one will be allowed to pick up your child that is not on the list. All persons with authorization will need to show picture id prior to us releasing your child. There will be no exceptions to this. This is strictly for the safety of your child.

### **3. Medical Release**

-This form gives Rainy Dayz Preschool to seek medical attention for your child in the event of a serious illness or injury. It also lists any medications or allergies that we should be advised of.

### **4. Certificate of Immunization Status**

-Washington State Law (RCW 28A.210.160) requires that all children have a completed Certificate of Immunization Status on file at their school, preschool or a child care facility that they attend. \*The form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian. A photo copy from the doctor's office immunization schedule is not accepted in lieu of this form.

### **5. Media/Picture release form for Rainy Dayz Preschool**

-The form gives us permission (or denies permission) for any photos or videos taken to be used for the purpose of promotional materials such as but not limited to; website publication, brochures and/or in center decorations. No pictures or videos will ever be sold.

### **6. Child Information Forms**

-These forms help staff learn more about your child in regards to their personalities as well as developmental areas. These are crucial in helping us create a program tailored to the needs of your child. All information on these forms is considered confidential and will only be shared with the staff members directly in the care of your child.

\*All forms must be redone at the beginning of every school year for returning students.

## **Communication**

Rainy Dayz Preschool views parent communication as the most effective way to ensure that your child is receiving the best possible preschool experience. There will be 2 opportunities each school year (November and March) for a parent/teacher conference. While they are not mandatory, we highly encourage you to schedule this time with your child's teacher. Each conference will provide great insight into your child's development as well as allow you and your child's teacher to partner to create an optimum learning environment. You are welcome to ask for a conference at anytime during your child's school year.

While we do not require any volunteer hours each year, we do encourage parents to visit and/or volunteer. Each teacher will have a volunteer need; varying depending on class age and program. Please see your child's teacher for all opportunities available.

All teachers are required to send home a monthly newsletter. This will contain information regarding class curriculum, show and tell schedule, snack schedule and other classroom news and events.

Teachers will also communicate via email and phone. Phone calls made to the school will be returned by a teacher after class time.

## **School Calendar**

A school calendar has been provided for your convenience. You can also find it online at our website; [www.rainydayzpreschool.com](http://www.rainydayzpreschool.com).

This calendar contains information regarding 1<sup>st</sup> and last day of school, school closure days and holiday breaks. It also contains the conference schedule and picture days. Specific classroom events such as field trips or class parties will be given to you by your child's teacher.

## **Curriculum areas in the classroom**

Circle Time (calendar, ABC's, weather, music, stories, etc)

Work Time (math, language)

Snack Time

Socio-Dramatic Play\*

Sensory\*

Science center \*

Art center \*

Literacy center\*

Tech center (Pre-K classroom only)\*

Gross Motor and bubble time (main play floor)

Coats/Shoes/Backpacks (line up for pickup)

\*These areas are open for the children to choose on their own. They are not required to spend time in each center every day. Their own personal "sensitive periods" will dictate to them which area they are interested in at any given time.

## **Diapering/Toilet use policy**

### Diapers/Pull-ups:

Rainy Dayz believes that potty training should not be required for a child to attend school at the chance of missing that social, emotional and cognitive development. No child will be denied enrollment because they are not potty trained.

You will be required to bring a supply of diapers and wipes to be stored at school. Your child will have a container with their name on a shelf unit outside the restroom area. We will advise you when your supply is low.

### Toilet Use:

No child will be allowed to go to the restroom unattended. Only a Rainy Dayz staff member will be permitted to take a child to the restroom. (Parent volunteers will not escort a child). All restroom doors will be propped open during the school day. Children requesting privacy will be allowed to close the stall door or if using the child size toilet or the urinal, the staff member will turn their back. This is to ensure the safety of all children at Rainy Dayz.

Rainy Dayz has 2 restrooms available for the children. One contains a urinal for the boys. The other contains a child size toilet. There are also steps up to each sink for hand washing. Please advise your child's teacher if you are in the process of toilet training. It is best if your child is in a pull up during this time until they can go 3 hours or more with dry underwear. While we do have regular bathroom breaks, it is not possible to remind or take a child every 30 minutes to the bathroom to ensure no accidents will happen.

## **Closures/Inclement Weather/Emergencies**

### Closures/Inclement Weather:

Rainy Dayz Preschool follows the Peninsula School District's decision for all school closures. A decision is generally made by 5:30am if the district will close school for the day. Rainy Dayz will advise via website, email and a message will be left on the school answering machine. Information can also be obtained by watching morning local news programs or listening to local radio stations. \*We will open on time if the district announces a late start for the day.

Gig Harbor is a very unique environment for weather. Some areas can be worse than others. Please make a decision about whether to come to school based on your area and what is safest for you and your child.

### Emergencies:

Each child will be required to provide an emergency pack to the school. It should be no larger than a gallon size Ziploc bag. Please include food items that have a long shelf life and don't require refrigeration, water or heat for preparation. It should also contain a family picture, a small toy and a note from you stating that you are safe and will be coming for them soon. Local grocery stores sell these for around \$5 but you will need to add the personal items. We have one at school for an example if you have any questions. If your child takes regular medication, the school should have a 3 day supply on hand in the office. (Consent to give medicine form must be included).

Emergency drills (fire and earthquake) will be performed throughout the year. Our goal during an emergency is to leave the building as quickly as possible in an orderly and safe fashion. We will be practicing immediately upon the start of the school year, as we are required to test with the Gig Harbor Fire Department each October. Please have regular conversations with your child about emergency preparedness. We don't want any child to experience any anxiety or fear over this.

## Exclusive Benefits (for enrolled preschool families only)

### Private Play Sessions:

Looking for something to do on a rainy afternoon? We have the perfect solution for you! Plan your next play date at Rainy Dayz! Our fabulous indoor play floor and center areas are at your disposal and can accommodate up to 15 children.

1 - 5 Children	\$15/hour
6 - 10 Children	\$25/hour
10 - 15 Children	\$35/hour

We have times available starting at 1:00pm M-F. Please call to reserve the day and time that works for you.

### Date Night:

Longing for a night out with your significant other but can't find a babysitter? Bring your walking to age 5 children to Rainy Dayz! We offer this incredible service one Saturday every month exclusively to our preschool families.

Drop off your child (walking to age 5) for 3 evening hours! Bring a pair of pajamas and a special blanket for movie time! Only \$25 per child (\$5 sibling discount available).

### Birthday Parties:

Pricing for a party is **only \$175** for 90 minutes for up to 15 children!

Your Rainy Dayz Party includes:

- Cupcakes
- Juice
- Personalized Rainy Dayz umbrella for each child
- Rainy Dayz invitations to mail to your guests
- Staff member to coordinate and facilitate your party
- All set up and clean up

### **Additional Items for purchase:**

Chicken nuggets and Fruit	<b>\$3.00</b> per child
Balloons	<b>\$15.00</b> for 12

***Party times available after 1:30pm M-F please call to reserve today!***

**\*Play equipment is designed for children 5 and under. While older children are welcome, for safety reasons, they are not allowed on the equipment.**

## **Sick Policy**

Keeping everyone healthy is one of our major goals at Rainy Dayz Preschool. All children will be required to use hand sanitizer upon entering their classroom. (If your child has an allergy or you do not want them to use hand sanitizer, we will request that you wash your child's hands in the restroom prior to entering the classroom). All children will hand sanitize/wash their hands before and after snack, after putting on their shoes, after using the toilet and blowing or picking their nose. Children who have been exposed to a communicable diseased should not attend school until a doctor permits them to.

Children should remain home or will be sent home with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of at least 100° F (must be fever free for 24 hours before returning)
- Vomiting two or more times within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea/bloody stool two or more times within the past 24 hours
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment
- Open sores must be covered properly or child will be sent home
- Lice – return after no nits are visible and treatment has begun

If your child isn't exhibiting any of the symptoms above, but shows signs of general malaise or just doesn't seem like they are themselves, please leave them at home. Nothing will be gained from an academic stand point if your child is forced to be at school when they just don't feel well.

If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called for an immediate pick up. Please ensure that all phone and emergency contact information is up to date. Please follow the guidelines above for returning to school if your child has been sent home.

Each and every day the school is thoroughly sanitized. All products used have been cleared through a local pediatrician to ensure the safety of your child. Most areas are cleaned with a water and bleach solution. The gross motor room is cleaned with an antibacterial soap and water solution. The restrooms are also cleaned and sanitized daily. The school is sprayed with Lysol 3-5 times a week depending on the intensity of the cold and flu season. Lysol is also the definitive treatment for the MRSA bacteria. Cleaning will also take place during the school day as necessary.

## **Giving Medicine at School**

Medicine (prescribed or over the counter) will only be given to a child at school provided it is in its original container and a consent to give medicine at school form has been completed by the parent or caregiver. Medicine should not be placed in your child's backpack. It must be handed directly to a Rainy Dayz staff member. All medicines will be kept under supervision of the director in a locked box. Cough drops, chap stick and sunscreen are considered medication and can not be administered without a consent form on file.

## H1N1 (swine flu)

As we approach the upcoming flu season, Rainy Dayz wants to assure all families that policy regarding the H1N1 flu virus has been designed following the CDC guidelines. Regular cleaning of the school will remain at the high level you have come to expect with Rainy Dayz. (Please see the previous page for our cleaning process). All students and staff will be required to hand/sanitize or wash hands frequently during the school day. Any student or staff member exhibiting any symptoms related to the H1N1 flu virus will be asked to remain home or sent home in the event that symptoms arise during the school day. Any student or staff member that has been diagnosed with the H1N1 flu virus will not be allowed to return to the school unless they are fever free for at least 24 hours after their fever has gone (this is without the aid of fever reducer medications). Any decisions made to close the school will be done by the director under the guidance of the CDC. We encourage you to talk regularly with your child about keeping their hands out of their mouths and noses and teaching them to cough or sneeze into their elbow.

### **What should I do if I get sick?**

If you live in areas where people have been identified with novel H1N1 flu and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. **CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)** Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. Staying at home means that you should not leave your home except to seek medical care. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed.

If you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

### **In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:**

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

For more information on H1N1 (swine flu) please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ga.htm>

## **Valet drop-off/Pick-up and Parking Lot Safety**

### Valet:

We will begin our valet drop-off and pick-up service after the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of school. (Exact date can be found on the school calendar). Staff will be available from 8:45am – 9:00am for drop off and then again for pick-up\* from 12:00pm-12:15pm for AM classes. Staff will be available from 12:15pm-12:30pm and 3:30pm – 3:45pm for PM classes. If you are arriving before or after these times, you will need to park and walk your child into the school. This process will take place at the bottom of the ramp leading to the school. Please enter the complex at the east end entrance and drive down to the last driveway (past the Aqua Spa and Pool business). Traffic does flow in one direction, so please ensure that you are going the right way and stay as close to the fence line as possible. Each family will have a colored placard to place on their dash board for pick-up. It is imperative that you show this until we are familiar with your car. If someone new is picking your child up, make sure that they are on your consent for pick-up list and that they will have picture ID for the staff member.

\*Staff members will not be allowed to load a child into a car without an appropriate booster or car seat. Parents or caregivers without the right child seat will need to park and load their own child. This is in compliance with the Washington State Booster Seat Law.

If you are NOT using the valet service, we ask that you do not walk your child up or down the ramp. This does interfere with our process. We also ask that you take great care when leaving the parking lot. Children will always be loaded on the right hand side but it is common for a staff member to be on the driver's side to determine which child is next in line for pick up. Safety is our number one priority and we need your cooperation to continue this program.

We also ask that you do not double park your car when dropping off or picking up your child. Failure to follow these guidelines and regular disruption to parking for other business could result in the loss of the valet system for the school.

### Parking Lot Safety:

The parking lot at this business complex can be very busy in the mornings. Unfortunately, there are many drivers that do not pay attention to their speed or to pedestrians in the area. I implore you to take great care when getting out of your car. Please park in a designated parking spot unless signage dictates that they are to be used for a specific business.

Our business park management does a great job of keeping the parking lot clear of ice and debris. It is necessary, however, to take great care in walking in the parking lot during inclement weather. If conditions in our parking lot are not satisfactory, please advise a staff member as soon as possible so that we may rectify the situation.

## Tuition Policies

June's tuition and a yearly supply fee are due at time of registration to confirm your child's space in a class. This reservation fee is non-refundable unless Rainy Dayz can fill your child's vacancy created. No refunds will be given 30 days prior to the first day of school.

School tuition is based on the entire school year running September through mid-June. The yearly cost will depend on your child's program. You may pay the entire year up front and receive a 5% discount or if you prefer, payments can be made monthly. Your monthly rate is the total year's tuition divided by 10.

You will receive an invoice monthly and all tuition is due by the 1<sup>st</sup>. A late fee of \$15 will be assessed if not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup>. If tuition is 20 days past due, your child will not be allowed to return to Rainy Dayz until tuition payments are brought current or a payment plan has been agreed upon by the Director.

Tuition credits will not be given for any absences or vacation breaks.

Siblings of registered students will be eligible for a 10% discount.

Tuition may be paid by check or credit card. Rainy Dayz accepts Visa, MasterCard and Discover. A \$25 fee will apply to all returned checks.

If you need to withdraw your child from Rainy Dayz during the school year, 30 days written notice must be given. Failure to give 30 days will result in payment of full month's tuition.

## Discipline and No Tolerance Policies

### Discipline Policy:

Our goal at Rainy Dayz is to provide a fun, clean, nurturing and safe environment for your child to learn. Hitting, spitting, kicking or any other type of violent behavior will not be accepted at Rainy Dayz. Appropriate language is also an expectation of all students. Disrespectful behavior or language will not be tolerated. If a child is deliberately harming himself/herself or other children, they will be removed from the classroom immediately and we will contact you for a possible pick up.

### No Tolerance Policy:

Rainy Dayz is a tobacco, drug and weapon free environment. We have a no tolerance policy and any student who brings any of the above mentioned to school, will be expelled immediately.

## Miscellaneous

### Birthdays at School:

Birthdays during school time are celebrated within the classroom. Feel free to bring in a special treat for your child. All items brought must be store bought and contain NO nut or nut products. Please check labels carefully.

If your child is having a birthday party or other social event, please use the class directory provided by your teacher to mail invitations. Rainy Dayz will not hand these out. This also includes any thank you notes after the event.

### Snacks:

Rainy Dayz will provide snack for the first few weeks of school. After that, your child's teacher will include a snack list with each newsletter. Please bring in your snack as soon as you are notified that it is your turn. Please be aware of any allergies that your class may have (this list will be provided by your teacher). Rainy Dayz is a nut free environment, so please check all labels to ensure that your snack does not contain any nuts. All snacks must also be store bought. Sorry, no homemade snacks allowed. No family is required to participate in bringing snack. Please advise your teacher if you would like to opt out.

### Field Trips:

Occasionally field trips will be scheduled to enhance your child's learning and development. Your teacher will advise of any upcoming field trips. Most scheduled field trips will take the place of a regular school day. Rainy Dayz staff members will not be permitted to drive any child to a field trip. Most trips that we take require that every child (family) have one parent or caregiver present.

### What to Bring:

Please send your child to school everyday with a backpack that contains a change of clothing, diapers/pull-ups and wipes (if necessary). A backpack is a great tool to excite your child daily about coming to school. It fosters independence and growth. Be sure to check your child's backpack every day for communication from the office or your teacher as well as for any works or projects your child has completed.

### Breakfast and Rest:

Food and rest are two major components for successful brain development. Please send your child to school everyday well rested and fed. A child under these conditions is ready to learn and grow!

## 7 qualities you need to be a great parent to a preschooler

By Julie Tilsner

What's it really take to parent a preschooler? It's pretty simple, once you realize what kids this age can and can't do (and what sets them off and what keeps them happy!). Here are seven qualities that make it much easier to manage all that, and why they're so crucial when you've got an independent-minded, boundary-testing picky eater on your hands.

### Resolve

We've all heard about the terrible twos. But nobody talks about the tantrum-throwing threes or the ferocious fours. So lots of parents are surprised when their preschooler hurls himself on the floor, screaming, after not getting a coloring book at the supermarket.

Preschoolers, like toddlers, can fall apart when they're tired, hungry, or overwhelmed. We assume that because they have stronger language and reasoning skills, they'll have better control over themselves. But sometimes, they have a harder time settling down (bedtime, for example) because they think they're missing out... on something. Fortunately, kids this age place great importance on figures of authority: teachers, doctors, and you. Use this to your advantage to set clear, firm rules, says Errika Lynch, a preschool teacher and mom of two in Groton, Massachusetts. Like any tough leader, you can't get too mired down in details. That means no negotiation over bedtime. Being steadfast and concise is key, so they know what's expected.

### Forethought

When he's 2 or so, your formerly voracious eater may become so picky you'll worry he's malnourished (who can live off PB&J alone?). Experts say you're dealing with a power struggle and a plea for independence, both playing out at the dinner table. Suddenly, kids realize they can exert total, maddening control by refusing to eat what's in front of them. So you need to think ahead in the kitchen - but that doesn't mean making multiple meals or giving in to their demands. It does mean having a few good choices for everyone, and leaving it at that. "Children will not willingly starve themselves," says Nori Hudson, a nutrition consultant based in Berkeley, California. [Parenting.com: How to be a great mom to a toddler](#)

If your child's not getting the entire nutritional food pyramid every day, don't worry. He'll probably have all his nutritional needs met over the course of a week. So watch what he eats and plan accordingly: If he goes for peas one day, offer him cheese or yogurt the next. Another tactic is to get your preschooler involved before dinnertime. Ask him to help you

mix the mac and cheese so he feels like he's in control. Or at the market, let him pick out a fruit that he finds interesting-looking. "It's never too early to let kids experience a variety of textures, tastes, and colors," says Hudson. "Eventually they'll grow out of the pickiness."

### **A sense of fantasy**

Actors have nothing on preschoolers -- or their moms. On any given day, your child will be a baby elephant, a monster alien, or a fairy ballerina. And you get to play along. "Imagination is critical for their development," says Claire Lerner, director of parenting resources at Zero to Three, a Washington, D.C.--based children's advocacy group. Preschoolers stretch their language skills as they describe complex story plots for you to follow. They hone their logic ("This happened, so this happened, and then this...") and develop social skills playing imaginatively with their peers -- describing how to build the fort, for example, and cooperating to make it happen. "Your role is to become a facilitator," says Lerner. "Be careful not to take over their story. The more they do, the better." Offer her ideas, like "Oh, no, there's an alligator! What are we going to do now?" Playing dress-up? Encourage her to make props out of ordinary stuff around the house (a bowl can make a very nice crown). Just remember you're the supporting actor in this play. Let her direct for now. [Parenting.com: Nurturing creativity](#)

### **Stoicism**

One of the hardest things to do as a parent is to let your child walk alone into the scary world of jungle gyms and new people. But preschool beckons, even for just a few hours a day. "I've hugged more crying parents than I have children on the first day of school," says Allyssa Lamb, a veteran preschool teacher in Berkeley. To quell your queasiness, make sure you feel good about the person you're leaving your child with, and focus on what your child will gain from school. It gives her rules for every task, which kids this age thrive on. It makes her feel proud and independent that she can eat her own snack and throw away her own garbage.

It enables her to be away from you for a while, trust her own decisions, and, hey, have some fun. Preschool can also accomplish a lot of the stuff you're still working on, like ridding your child of her pacifier or lovey. "I couldn't get my daughter to stop using her Binky, put her shoes on by herself, or sleep by herself," says Tressy Pelonis, a mom of 2 ½-year-old Allison, in Long Beach, California. "Since she started preschool, she's like a different kid!" If your child has a hard time adjusting to her new routine, comfort her but don't indulge her fears by letting her stay home or lingering at dropoff. Keep a stiff upper lip and remind her that she's a big kid. Remember, you can cry on your spouse's shoulder when she's not around.

## **Nonchalance**

Preschoolers know the power of words. From repeating "poop" in between uncontrollable fits of laughter to uttering the most chilling words in the English language -- "I hate you" -- your 3-year-old is beginning to understand that certain language elicits dramatic reactions. That's why it's important not to overreact to potty humor or take hurtful proclamations personally. "It's another form of testing, to see how far they can go," says Lynch. Now that kids have moved on from diapers and think about potty issues more, they sense that these topics are taboo. And taboo = hysterical. The best way to deal? Act like an English monarch, with a blasé, "I am not amused" face. The more you react -- positively or negatively -- the more you reinforce the behavior. Explain that while he can engage in a little bit of toilet humor at home, it's not OK at preschool, a friend's house, or anywhere else in public. Or divert him with a nice clean joke ("What did five say to six? Seven ate nine!").

When it comes to mean words, use the same approach. Kristy Hill's 3-year-old told her to leave the room because he didn't like her. The Keller, Texas, mom says it was hard not to feel upset, but she managed to keep calm and said, "Oh, that's sad because I love you very much." Overreacting will only let your child know that this is a good way to get your attention. As with potty humor, nonchalance is key -- but you do need to make it clear (later, when he's calmer) that language intended only to hurt people is never OK.

[Parenting.com: How to be a great mom to a baby](#)

## **Dexterity**

During preschool, kids' motor skills and hand-eye coordination really take off: Witness the one-foot hop and the buttoning of shirts. Your child learns by trying these things out - repeatedly - and it helps immeasurably to be able to see someone as skilled as yourself doing them, too. So crack your knuckles, stretch your calves, and get ready to hop, button, and more.

A slightly less tiring way to help your child's development is with crafts. Playing with clay or stringing beads is a great way to build up the small muscles in his hands and hone his hand-eye coordination. You can also ask him to do housework with you. He can stir cake mix, plant flowers, or sort laundry by color -- he'll be improving his coordination and having fun. When my son Jack was 3, I gave him a little squirt bottle filled with water and he would "clean" stuff around the house. "This age group lives to help, because they get attention and the praise makes them feel good," says Lynch. "They feel like they've accomplished something, like they're grown-ups."

## **Empathy**

It's not all about rules and schedules with preschoolers. As much as your child thrives on knowing what to expect, she's also just a little kid. It's hard growing up: There's potty training, a big-kid bed, maybe a new sibling. You try three (or more!) major life changes in one year. That's why it's important to show your child you feel her pain, too. It could mean a hug and a new do when she flips over her hair being braided "all wrong." Or it might mean just understanding that it's tiring to spend a long day at preschool, remembering the rules, getting along with other kids, and generally keeping herself together. Help her decompress with a snack and a chat, and don't rush into chores or errands. Your empathy will not only keep the both of you calmer, it's also a quality well worth modeling. And if you'd be proud to see your child mimic the things you do, then you can definitely call yourself a great mom.