



PARENTS' GUIDE

By **Dorothy G. Singer, Ed.D.**

Senior Research Scientist with the Department of Psychology at Yale University.
Co-director of the Yale University Family Television Research and Consultation Center

Mango's Big Dog Parade will entertain your children and at the same time teach them about important social behaviors. As a parent or caregiver you can make this DVD more effective by taking an active role as a guide to the many teaching elements in the program.

LOOK, LISTEN, LEARN

As you watch the *The Wheels on the Bus* DVD with your child be aware of the different themes, early socialization skills and emotional elements that the program focuses on. You can then use the following activities and suggestions to further the educational experience for your child. Children will learn and have fun at the same time and you may be surprised at how pleasurable this interaction will be for you too.

Here are some of the concepts presented in the DVD and ways in which you can reinforce them for your child.

www.thewheelsonthebus.com

MANNERS

There are five magic phrases—please, may I, thank you, you are welcome, and excuse me. Listen to the characters in the program as they use these words and remind your child to use them too. You are a child's role model and whenever you use these words your child is listening and learning how to be polite.

GETTING ALONG

Learning how to get along with other children is sometimes difficult for the very young. If you hear your child quarrelling or having an argument with a sibling or with a friend, like Woof and Cat did when they first met, use this as an opportunity to talk about getting along. Teach them that it's a lot more fun to get along with someone, than to fight with them. Point out to your child that after Cat and Woof learned that singing together was fun they got along very well and became good friends.

You can play the "getting along game." Find playtime activities that require your children to get along with each other: They can build a fort or castle out of blocks, or make a picture together using finger paints. Especially fun is working together to make a camping tent. All they need to do is put a sheet over a small table and load the "tent" with supplies.... a flashlight, simple snack, and a pillow for a nap. You can pretend to be the big monster that growls outside the tent and then becomes their friend when they offer you a snack. Take turns being the monster!

The library has additional stories about getting along such as the *Grouchy Ladybug* by Eric Carle, or *Proud of Our Feelings* by Lindsey Leghorn. Read these with your child and then talk about the characters in the story and how they learned to get along with each other.

TAKING TURNS

As you watch the DVD with your child, point out to them all the times that the characters in the movie take turns. When Mango and Papaya fight over the use of the magnifying glass, the Zoo Director urges them to get along by taking turns. When the two children fight over a toy on the bus, Coco explains that taking turns means that the first person plays with a toy for a while, and then the second person can play with it. Later in the story, Papaya and Mango learn to take turns using the binoculars and the kids in the garage take turns washing their hands before they eat their snacks. Even the bus takes turns with other vehicles at the crossroads!

Play the "taking-turns game" with your child or children. Think of simple chores round the house where taking turns is possible – setting or clearing the dinner table, feeding the pet, or walking the dog. Be sure to praise your child or children for taking turns. You can keep a chart with tasks to do each week with the names of the children next to each task.

COOPERATION

Sometimes children play by themselves and that is fine, but in order to learn how to be more socialized, they need opportunities for play with others. As you watch *Mango's Big Dog Parade*, point out the team work and cooperation used in Joe's Garage where the children work together to "Tune up the Bus" and get it running again. Woof arrives at The Big Dog Parade on-time due to the help and cooperation of the bus, children, characters and fairies! He would not have made it alone. Explain to your child that when he or she cooperates with a friend, both children will enjoy the activity and they will have more fun than if they try doing everything on their own.

A fun game for children to play is the "restaurant game." This simple game not only involves cooperation, but also offers an opportunity for taking turns, sharing and getting along. First have the children make placemats out of paper, decorate them, and then set the table. Invite your child's friends or stuffed animals to be the customers. Give your child a pad for scribbling the orders of the customers. Pretend the waiter or waitress is now giving the cook (you, or another child) the food orders. Let your child wear an apron as she or he pretends to cook. Serve the pretend food to all. When everyone is finished "eating," be sure to give the "bill" to one of the customers. If there is no other child around, you and our child can take turns being the waiter, the cook, or the customer. Emphasize the use of the words "thank you," "please," and "may I?" while you and your child play.

GETTING READY ON TIME

Woof was late because he procrastinated. Be sure you explain this big word to your child just as Coco does in the story when Woof tells her he missed the parade because he was "goofing" around. Explain to your child that events start at a certain time and that it is important to be on time for outings such as classes, school, appointments and meeting friends. Using a timer can be one way of helping your child recognize that time is passing. If you have to keep a doctor's appointment, or get your child to school on time, set the timer for the bell to ring when you have 15 minutes left before you set out. This is like a warning signal to your child that there is only a little time left before you must go. Tell your child how many minutes are left. Reset the timer for the time now that you must actually leave. Try and see if your child can "beat the clock." That is, getting ready before the second bell rings. If so, reward your child with a point or sticker. Keep a record of

these points and if your child reaches a goal that you have set, then you can give them a reward. This reward can be reading more than one book before bedtime, a trip to a museum together, or something special that your child has asked for. Eventually, your child will not need the timer because he or she will have made it a habit to get ready on time.

BE AN EXPLORER

Go to the park with your child. Pretend your child is an entomologist (define the word and refer to the man they meet on the bus who studies bugs). Turn a large rock over. Look at all the bugs you see. If you have a magnifying glass with you, take turns looking at the bugs. Can you name them? You can even make up funny names if you wish.

