



PARENTS' GUIDE

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Mango Helps the Moon Mouse will entertain your children and at the same time teach them about social behavior and healthy eating. To make this DVD more effective, you as a parent or other caregiver can take an active role as a guide to the many teaching elements in the program.

LOOK, LISTEN, LEARN

As you watch the DVD with your child be aware of the different themes and the early socialization skills that the program focuses on. You can then use the following activities and suggestions to further the educational experience for your child. They will learn and have fun at the same time and you may be surprised at how pleasurable this interaction will be for you too. We hope you will begin to think of other activities. Each time you view the program, more ideas will occur to you.

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

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MANNERS

There are five magic phrases—please, may I, you are welcome, excuse me and thank you. Listen to the characters on 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.

COOPERATION

Birthday parties are special, but so are unbirthday parties. Make believe you are giving your child an unbirthday party and bake some cupcakes together or make them out of Play Dough. This is a good activity to do to emphasize cooperation.

Decorate the cupcakes and put the correct number of candles on them. This helps a child to count. Your child can make a wish and blow out the candles, and sing "happy unbirthday."

If you would like some guests to come to the party, make sock puppets or paper bag puppets. Draw faces with markers and use yarn for hair. Pretend that these puppets are Mango and Papaya who have come to the unbirthday party. Draw some presents together or cut them out of a magazine and pretend they are real. Cleaning up later will also require some cooperation.

HELPING

Mango and Papaya learn how to be helpful during the course of the story. They help Moon Mouse find some cheese, and then help him return to the moon.

Your children can also learn how to be helpful. This is the start of developing a sense of responsibility. Children can pick up their toys and put them away. They can help you set the table for dinner or put the dirty dishes in the sink. They can help you sort the laundry and learn the names of the clothes and learn about colors at the same time. Remember to always say "Thank you" when a child helps—this reinforces constructive behavior.

For a special way to emphasize helping and to make it a playtime treat, get a large cardboard box. Help your child decorate it with crayons. Pretend it is a space ship. Ask your child where he or she is going in this space ship and how you can help them find the right supplies to take along on the journey. When they are ready, you can help them blast off by counting down together from 10 to one. Use your imagination. Make up new adventures that feature the idea of helping. Children never tire of make-believe and play.

SHARING

Point out how Coco shares her water with Mango on the bus, and how Mango later shares his bananas with Moon Mouse King. Sharing is difficult for young children. Some very young children may think that giving something of theirs to another person means loss, as if "I am giving a part of myself away." The need to hold on to their possessions means a verification of self. However, as they become more sure of themselves, and develop a sense-of-self and a firm identity, children feel less threatened and are more willing to part with their toys or treats.

Cut an apple or orange into pieces and share them with your child. Make sure they know that it is your fruit, but you are sharing with them. When your child has a play date, encourage him or her to share toys with the visiting friend. Make a game out of sharing. Ask your child what they could share with others. Tell your child what you would like to share with him or her. Does your child have a favorite story that you often read together? You can both share this story with a friend when he or she comes to visit.

FRIENDSHIP

All the social behaviors we have discussed are necessary in order for children to form friendships and keep them. Explain to your children that a friend is a person with whom we cooperate, share our toys and treats, and help if they need some assistance. We also share adventures with our friends and have fun with them. Mango, Papaya and Coco visited the zoo together, celebrated Epoxies' birthday party together, helped Moon Mouse get his cheese, and even thought of a clever way to get him back to the moon. Watch the DVD with your child and find all the ways that the characters in the program demonstrate their friendship with each other.

NUTRITION

Play Food Detective. A jaunt to the local food market will give your child an opportunity to search for the foods and cheeses mentioned in the story. The child can name the fruits, identify the colors, and feel the various shapes and textures. Discuss with your child why fruits like

banana and apples are healthy, while other foods are considered to be unhealthy?

In the cheese section of the store, point out the names of the cheeses mentioned in the DVD. Be sure to smell the cheeses. Try and introduce a new cheese to your family. This can be an interesting food experience. Serve some cheese with fruit, bananas, grapes, or apples for dessert and your child might even come to like that as a snack instead of a cookie!

Now we invite you to make up your own ideas.

