

# Preschool Puzzlers

By Fern Sanderson

Preschool Puzzlers is a monthly feature presented by the Jewish Preschool on Sardis. Fern Sanderson is the director of JPOS and a member of the national, state, and local Associations for Education for Young Children, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the National Jewish Early Childhood Network. She can be reached at [jpsonsardis@earthlink.net](mailto:jpsonsardis@earthlink.net).

**Q: I am unsure of how to select good play choices for my preschooler. What toys are educational? Is superhero play**

**good or bad? How much television should he watch?**

**A:** Children need to learn a lot about people and how things work before they are ready to count and read. Through play, children explore their world, discover how to get along with others, test their skills and muscles, try out new ideas, and feel competent enough to try different activities. Curiosity. Self-esteem. Language. Problem solving. Mathematics. Cooperation. Endurance. These are just a few

of the many kinds of learning involved in play.



Fern Sanderson

The more a child can do with a toy, the more likely it is to be educational. Offer materials/toys that give your son choices and opportunities to explore. Toys that are open-ended and unstructured, such as clay, blocks, generic toy figures, tend to encourage play that he can shape in his own way to meet his needs over a period of time. Your son will learn about geometry and gravity, shapes and balance when he plays with blocks. Using various art media enables him to perfect muscle control, leads him

toward drawing and writing and helps him to see cause and effect. You can see that most play activities will correlate with a set of skills, including language, physical, social and emotional.

A little superhero play may be okay. It can give preschoolers a sense of strength and power, of doing good deeds. But it can quickly escalate into hurting others and out-of-control aggression. Your supervision and direction will be needed to help your son in this area.

How much TV and what kinds of TV your preschooler watches are equally important. Nature specials or high quality programming (e.g., on public broadcast-

ing) can be positive learning experiences. As far as how much, many educational experts say that one quality program a day is sufficient.

Children learn best from trying out ideas and interacting with people and objects. In all productive play, the fun is in the doing. Children need lots of time to pursue their own ideas, to try doing things their own way, to see what it's like to be someone else. You can encourage your son to play in valuable ways by providing certain items for him and, when appropriate, extending his ideas during play. ☆

# Chanukah at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool

Sizzling latkes fill the air with a tantalizing aroma only satisfied when the last crispy bite disappears...children concentrating on wrapping little fingers around the dreidel's thin stem just so a quick twist of the wrist will send it whirling and dancing across the floor...upturned faces with rapt attention focused on the story of brave Judah Maccabee...chanukiyot with glowing lights as we add a candle each night...CHOCOLATE GELT AND DREIDEL COOKIES! ☆



Counting candles in our chanukiyah.



Chanukah friends.



Decorating dreidel magnets



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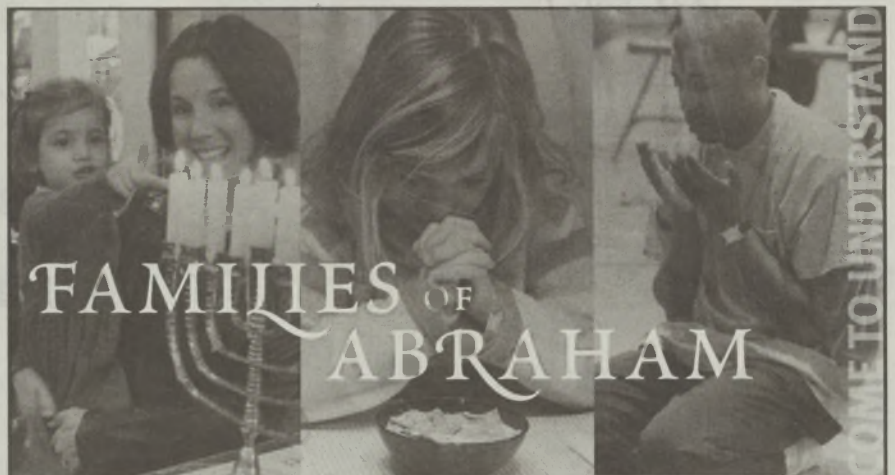
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