

Pinch Bear

A little bear, but a big hero!

Throughout this story, Pinch Bear finds ways to do things that others say she can't do because she's too small. She doesn't worry about being too small, and she doesn't fear someone just because they are different. What can parents do to encourage both self confidence and compassion in their children?

Surviving Growing Pains

To an adult, children grow up in the blink of an eye. To a child, growing up can take forever! Remember how frustrating it was when you couldn't do certain things until you were bigger or older? Here are some ways to help your child deal with being "too little".

1. Note Advancements.

It's easy for children to focus on what they can't do, instead of recognizing their developmental accomplishments. Walking and talking, using the potty, and tying shoes are all examples of important benchmarks in a child's development. Remind your child of her achievements. Ask: "What can you do now that you couldn't do before?" Make a list together, and add items to it as your child continues to learn new skills.

2. Accentuate the Positive!

Stress to your child how special his size right now is—he will never be this size again! Ask: "What can you do at this size that you won't be able to do when you're bigger?" For example, explain that as a grown-up, you yourself are now too big to fit on your mother's lap. Brainstorm other things you have to be small to enjoy. For example, maybe your child's favorite spot is a small corner behind the couch where only a child can fit. Instill in your child the ability to enjoy things at every stage of life and remind him that everything happens in its own time.

3. Be Proactive.

Create a growing chart or scrapbook to record height and weight changes, or try the classic approach of devoting a wall in your home to mark height changes! Help your child to notice when her pants get shorter, her shoes get tighter, or her hair gets longer. Look at baby pictures together, or show your child just how tiny baby clothes are so she begins to realize how far she has come. Additionally, stress the role that eating right and exercise have in physical development.



Explain that our bodies need proper fuel and activity to function well. Encourage your child also to be mindful of those who are younger than she. Remind her that littler kids might need her help or attention as they play together, that this is her turn to be the “bigger person” who can help out someone smaller.

4. Help Them Make a Difference.

Regardless of size, there are little things that everyone can do to help accomplish a big goal. Encourage your child to turn off lights to save electricity, or to help clean up litter in the park. Ask your child to help pick out clothes or toys he has outgrown to give away. This marks not only his growing bigger physically, but also his growing into a caring and compassionate person aware of his community’s needs.

More Than Skin Deep

Although young children often are very open and tolerant of different people, prejudices about race, ethnicity, or religion can seep into their interactions as they grow older. Children model what they see, so parents should avoid displaying any intolerant behavior. However, sometimes children will absorb this behavior from other sources.

How do parents talk about race? How can parents discourage racism in their children?

Some parents bring up the subject of race with their child, others wait until the child begins to ask questions about race, and some ignore the issue altogether. Although many people feel it is polite to ignore racial differences, research indicates that when their parents are “color-blind” it can sometimes cause children to feel anxiety around people of different races. A positive way to address the issue of race is to talk with your child. Identify first and foremost that all people are people and have feelings. Encourage your child to always be respectful of others, and model this behavior consistently yourself. Instead of ignoring racial or ethnic differences, recognize and embrace them. Take your child to an ethnic festival or restaurant. Learn about holidays and traditions that other cultures celebrate. Explore both your own and other’s ethnic roots. Celebrate the diversity we enjoy in Philadelphia!

For more information on discussing race with children of all ages visit:

http://www.civilrights.org/publications/reports/talking_to_our_children/

<http://library.adoption.com/Cultural-Diversity-and-Racism/Young-Children>

<http://www.wnep.com/Global/story.asp?S=2661230>

Recommended Reading

You’re Too Small by Shen Roddie

Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus

Clifford The Small Red Puppy by Norman Bridwell

The Very Small by Joyce Dunbar

Tell Me What it’s like to be Big by Joyce Dunbar

Three Feet Small by Michael J Rosen

The Adventures of Tom Thumb by Marianna Mayer

Thumbelina by Brian Pinkney

The Lion and the Mouse by Gail Herman

The Sneeches and Other Stories by Dr. Seuss

Black is Brown is Tan by Arnold Adoff

Everybody Eats Rice by Norah Dooley

All the Colors of the Earth by Sheila Hamananka

Whoever You Are by Mem Fox

