Peanut Allergies... continued from page 9

as always, trust your instincts – you know your child and your family’s health his-
tory better than any professional. Allow your instincts and research to guide the
medical decisions you make for your child. When in doubt ask for confirmatory
testing that your child’s immune system is working properly prior to subjecting it
to any additional immune stimulation, no matter what the source of that stimulation
may be.

Kristi Whees is the mom of two children
from Gibsonia.

Daycare... continued from page 27

big difference,” Keller says. Try to pick up
at the same every day, if possible.

School success x

Read, read, read to your child. “Being read to is the single most consistent and
reliable predictor of academic success later in life,” says Kurumada Chuang. She
recommends reading to your preschooler for 20 minutes every night at bedtime
While you’re at it, stop every so often and ask your child a question about the story
before turning the page, such as: “Gosh, why do you think she was sad?” or “What
do you think it going to happen next?”
Making reading more interactive makes it more fun and helps build your child’s
comprehension skills.

Help your child learn to follow direc-
tions. To help your preschooler get the
hang of following directions, practice at
home by giving simple commands, such as “Please help me pick up your toys and
put them in the toy box.” Then, encourage your child to follow through by offer-
ing an incentive to do whatever it is you’re
asking. Tell your child that he can play
outside once he’s finished putting his toys
away. An incentive helps him understand
that following directions makes other fun
activities possible. If he doesn’t follow
your directions and, for example, put his
toys away, calmly explain that he won’t
be able to play with those toys for the
rest of the day or go to the park. Keep
it positive by focusing on how clean the
playroom will look when you’re done.
Then praise him when he’s successful.
“You followed my directions so well.
Thank you for helping me put your toys in
the toy box like I asked you to! That was
so helpful.”

Help your child master sharing and
turn taking. From age three to five,
children tend to hoard coveted toys and
objects. They’re not really ready to grasp
the concept of sharing yet. But you can
help your youngster practice by having
him “take turns” with toys and catch-
ing him when he shares on his own. To
help him develop the empathy that true
sharing requires, state what he did and
how it makes others feel, such as: “Thank
you for sharing. It makes your sister
feel good when you share the ball.” Your
child should be able to “own” special or
new toys, though, so keep them out of
sight on play dates or in his room away from
siblings.

By kindergarten, children are capable
of sharing well and taking turns. If your
child isn’t there yet, help him get the hang
of it by inviting a friend over for a cool in-
teractive task such as baking cookies. If
things aren’t going well, calmly ask him to
sit out. Pretty soon, he’ll get the idea and
want to join in on the fun again. You can
also read your child books about sharing
and discuss them. In the classic tale,
Stone Soup, retold by Heather Forest,
for example, two hungry travelers make
soup from ingredients that everyone in
the town contributes. What makes it extra
delicious is the sharing it took to make it.

Help your child make friends

If you get the sense your toddler or
preschooler needs a little help in the
social department, try hosting play dates
with others your child likes or with whom
she has common interests. Play dates
offer an opportunity to break away from
the group and foster individual friend-
ships. You might begin by asking your
preschooler, for example: “How about a
play date with Grace? I notice that she
likes to draw, too.” If you’re not sure
who to invite over first, ask your child’s
preschool teacher if there’s anyone in the
classroom who might be a good match
for your child.

To help your child play hostess, let her
pick the snack and ask her beforehand
what games and activities she and her
friend might like to do. On the play date,
feel free to play along and stay close by
to make sure everyone stays safe. But
give your child and her friend the chance
to play on their own, too. To help things
go smoothly, keep play dates to two
hours; children start to get tired after that.
And keep it simple by inviting just one
child over at a time.

Practice sharing

From age three to five, kids aren’t yet
capable of grasping the concept of shar-
ing, but you can help your preschooler
get the hang of it by having her “take
turns” with toys and catching her when
she shares on her own. Stating what she
did and how it makes others feel, such
as: ‘Thank you for sharing. It makes
your sister feel good when you share your
toast,’ helps her develop the empathy
that true sharing requires,” says Marcy
Guddemi, Ph.D., executive director of the
Gesell Institute of Human Development.
You can also read your child books about
sharing and discuss them.

Hone your child’s listening skills

At the dinner table and during car
rides, help your preschooler hone her
listening skills by asking her to wait to
speak until her brother has finished his
sentence. When it’s her turn, remind her,
“Now it’s your turn to talk. Thank you
for being patient and for being such a
good listener while your brother was
talking.” Explain that being a good listener
shows respect for the speaker, whether it’s her
brother or her teacher and the other
students at school who are trying to hear
what the teacher has to say. Mention that
it’s a two-way street: When she’s a good
listener, she’s showing the same kind of
respect that she gets when others listen
to her. If she continues to interrupt, keep
reminding her that she’ll get the chance
to talk. Becoming a good listener, like
many things, can take lots of practice.

Be there at pick-up

Focus on your child. When it’s time
to collect your child, be really glad to
see her. Make sure you’re not on your
cellphone or otherwise distracted. “Pick-
up should be all about your child,” Keller
says. “Your child wants to know you’re
super glad to see her and that you’ve
been looking forward to it all day.”

Sandra Gordon is a freelance writer
from Weston, CT.

Is it Time... continued from page 37

emotional coaching for students who feel
anxious, defeated or discouraged. The
right tutor will be able to advocate for
your child, equip them to perform to their
full potential on exams and help them
cope with worry.

Michele Ranard has a husband, two
children, and a master’s in counseling.
She is happy to report her son made
great progress and has learned invaluable
life lessons as a result of his academic
struggles.

Dear Teacher... continued from page 39

your son to start his homework by not
letting him do anything else before his
homework is completed.

Parents should send questions to Dear
Teacher, in care of Pittsburgh Parent, PO
Box 395, Carmel, IN 46028-0395