

***Parent exercise three: Wishful thinking***

Draw a picture of how childhood could be different and how parenting could be different.

Imagine a plan for change. Draw it and write about it.

Maybe it would help to start with a wish list:

I wish my childhood had been \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

I wish my children's children could be \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

To make my children's childhood and other children's childhoods better, I will have to \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

Using the word "because" forces us to explain our statements to ourselves, encouraging more analyses, tighter logic and clearer explanations. "Because" teaches the brain to press on in the search for meaning.

***Warm-up exercises: Children ages 1 to 3 with their parents***

These preliminary mark-making exercises are for parents and children *together* from the time the child can gesture and scribble, between one and two years of age.

There are two goals for these warm-up exercises. First, to achieve an attentive, mindful state. Second, to get a feeling for what mark-making is by doing it. You may think that part of the preparation for these exercises is deciding ahead of time what your child is capable of visually, verbally, mathematically and musically. It isn't. Don't over-analyze. Let your child explore, using marks. Your child might just surprise you and invent algebra! Marks of meaning are part of your child's developmental mental bag of tricks.