Dear Parent,

Welcome to The Let Grow Experience! It's going to be great! But first, a request: Please think back on your childhood.

The joy of playing. The afternoons absorbed in a hobby. Or even the time something went wrong and you had to figure out what to do — and you did.

Remember? You were trusted with some independence. And it shaped you.

But today, for a whole lot of reasons, kids don't get as many chances to do things on their own. This makes it hard for them to stretch and succeed, or even bounce back from disappointments. They need a little of that bracing, old-fashioned independence YOU had. The Let Grow Experience gives it to them. Why?

- In their free time, kids discover their deep interests.
- Kids who struggle with school or relationships feel great joy and relief doing something not graded or measured.
- Treating kids as fragile is making them so!

The Let Grow Experience is a homework assignment that has kids go out and do something new, on their own. Make breakfast, climb a tree, run an errand. The point is to stretch the boundaries of childhood just a little bit.

When kids do something new on their own, big things happen. Both generations get a burst of confidence. Worry gets replaced by pride and joy.

It can be hard to let go, so The Let Grow Experience provides this little push. And of course you and your child will discuss together what their activities will be. Be prepared for a lump in your throat. And thank you for giving your kids this gift!

— Your Friends at Let Grow

Video: The Let Grow Experience

or scan to watch ➔

scan me!

WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING WHEN YOUR CHILD DOES THE LET GROW EXPERIENCE . . .

They will be doing new activities that will:

- spark their interest and help them explore new things
- grow their self-confidence
- increase their self-reliance

They will interact with others, sometimes strangers, which will help them:

- learn to judge when an adult can be trusted
- be more comfortable and confident in public
- build new friendships (like the clerk at your favorite store)
- learn how to handle uncomfortable situations

They will enjoy some freedom to choose and direct their own activity, which helps them:

- develop stronger self-awareness so they can understand and manage their feelings and behavior
- discover new interests and hobbies
- practice self-control and handle frustration

They have the time and space they need to:

- become more mature
- discover their potential to pilot their lives in the direction they want to go

AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Freedom from fear, the joy of seeing your child thrive, and confidence and trust in your child's capabilities and decisions!

Interested in learning more? Visit us at letgrow.org.

YOUR ROLE EACH MONTH

1. YOUR CHILD MAKES A PLAN.

Each month during this school year your child's teacher will assign a Let Grow activity as "homework" (homework your child will look forward to!). Your role is simply to help your child determine what that project will be. (Activity Idea Lists are provided monthly for inspiration.)

- LOOK over the Let Grow Activity Handout with your child.
- TALK about their ideas and share your own stories.
- DECIDE on an independent activity together.

2. ACTIVITY TIME!

When your child does their activities, resist any temptation to jump in to help or supervise. Allow appropriate independence so that your child has the opportunity to enjoy doing something by themselves and feel a sense of accomplishment. Letting go is an act of bravery!

"YOU'VE GOT THIS."

3. HOW DID IT GO?

Soon after your child has completed their activity, spend a few minutes with them to allow them to reflect on their experience. This opportunity for reflection is an important part of the process and can enhance their growth. It also allows you a window into just how independent your child can be.

NOT SURE WHAT TO ASK? TRY THESE...

As they prepare...

- What excites you about this activity?
- What do you think might feel difficult or challenging about this activity?
- Can you think of any "what-ifs?" How could you respond to those "what-if" situations?
- What are your next steps?

What to say instead of "No, you can't do that"...

- Tell me why you think you are ready for that?
- Are there some stepping stone activities you might do before you tackle that?
- How did it go?

After they're done...

- How did it make you feel?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- How did you handle any what-ifs that may have happened?

REAL-LIFE STORIES FROM FAMILIES WHO HAVE "LET GROW" . . .

How To Become Neighborhood Explorers

Ashley Scroggins, Columbia, MO

I'm the mother of 7 year old twin boys (Theo and Van). One day, we went on a family bike ride in our neighborhood, but down some streets they had never been before. Very randomly Theo got very scared, almost in tears, thinking we were lost even though I was with him. He asked if I had my phone so we could look up where we were on maps. And that's when I realized they didn't know our neighborhood as well as I thought they did.

It made me feel like maybe they didn't have the freedom to explore that I thought they did, but also got me thinking about my own childhood as a military brat and how I had to learn a new neighborhood every couple of years. I have memories of easily navigating different streets with friends but none of the discovery. So, how did I do it?

After talking about it with the boys, we decided that they would each take turns after dinner to either walk one of our dogs or ride their bike by themselves to discover a different street in our neighborhood.

Van had no issues with this request and was so excited to take it on. Theo, who had the initial concerns about being lost, was still nervous. So he opted to walk the dog because our address was on her collar, and he thought that would help him find his way back. Very endearing.

At bedtime, we always talk about our favorite things about the day, what we're grateful for and what we're proud of. On that first night of this new assignment and with no hesitation, they both beamed that they were most proud of traversing the neighborhood by themselves.

It's been a few weeks of this little nightly assignment and instead of it becoming mundane, they'll sometimes turn it into a game. One time they created a map and left objects (like a painted rock) for the other to find, or they'll take chalk and leave messages for each other.

It's actually been quite impressive. I'll forever be inspired by their ingenuity and strength.

To Have Clean Clothing, Or Not to Have Clean Clothing?

Carol Guthrie, Bountiful, UT

When one of my eldest was a young teen, I noticed how lazy he was getting about doing simple jobs. He didn't like to keep his room clean, and he didn't like to put away his nicely washed and folded laundry. It only took a few times of noticing that one of his clean piles had been unceremoniously dumped back into his laundry bucket for me to instigate change. No longer would I do the laundry for anyone age 14 or older.

My children whined and moaned; my extended family warned me that I was being too harsh. Parents of other teens gave me the stink-eye. I felt a little guilty, but I did not relent. It took a while, but my son decided that he wanted to look and smell clean. In fact, he became super clean. The others came around to the new normal, and two of them took on the job by age 12. Occasionally, I played the laundry fairy when they were truly ill. Sometimes, I would do a load or two as a kindness. Last year for Christmas I gave my then 18-year-old a fancy coupon, "Three months of laundry and room cleaning." She loved it!