

Where Kids Play to Learn + Parents Learn to Play

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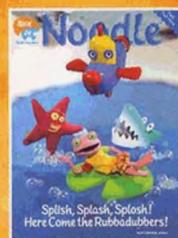
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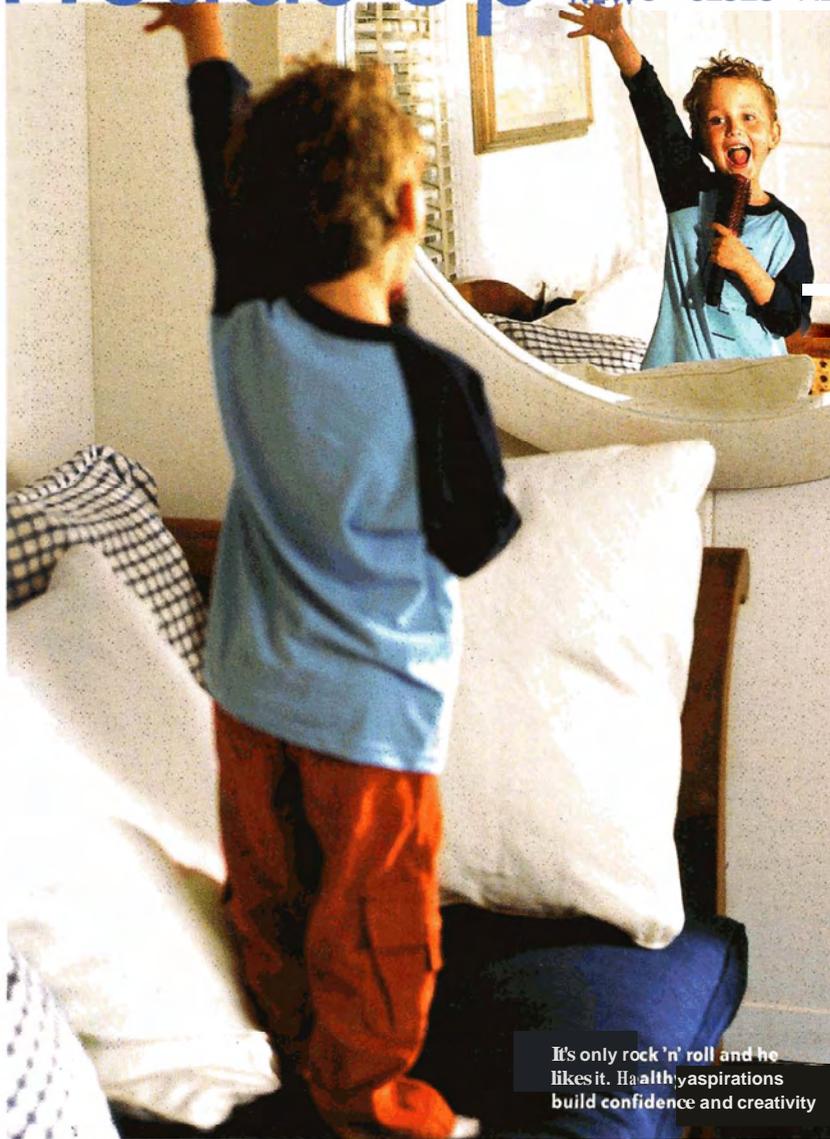
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Heads Up

NEWS+ CLUES+REVIEWS TO TAKE FUN FURTHER

Edited by Tracey Keevan
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It's only rock 'n' roll and he likes it. Healthy aspirations build confidence and creativity

I Wanna Be a RockStar

Four years ago, Cheyenne Kimball, of Plano, Texas, sat in her room, strummed her guitar, and wrote a song. Today, at age 13, with 188 original songs under her belt, she's the first winner of NBC-TV's America's Most Talented Kid. "She says the words and melodies just come to her," says her mom, Shannon, who cheers Cheyenne's musical talent but also encourages a mix of other activities to round out her play.

With shows such as Talented Kid and

American Juniors, it's not surprising to see kids wanting to practice their scales. Youthful dreams of stardom are nothing new to Thomas Baldrick, who interviewed over 15,000 kids for his book *Kids Rule! The Hopes and Dreams of 21st Century Children* (Popular Demand Book Company, 2001) and found that over 30 percent of them wanted to be famous. "Kids associate being famous with having power, respect, and wealth," says Baldrick.

Regardless of the ambition — be it royalty or rock and roll — it's okay for parents to encourage those dreams. In fact, the more "out of the box," the better, says Christy T. Corbin, PhD, associate director of Undergraduate Early Childhood Education at the University of Maryland. "A lot of kids' goals are based on fantastical thinking, which enhances creativity," explains Corbin.

But most childhood dreams are just that. What if your NBA wannabe is more suited for bocce ball? "Supporting a child's passion won't set him up for failure," says Charlotte Reznick, PhD, educational psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles. "With help from parents, a well-rounded child naturally gravitates to what he's good at."

To boost a child's confidence (and spirits), Corbin offers these ideas: **STUDY BUDDY** If your child loves tap dancing, read books on famous tappers together. If he's got a green thumb, visit gardens and greenhouses. Building an education around a talent or interest is a great way to encourage various curricula and show family support.

SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN Does your home hold a future Albert Einstein, Dominique Dawes, or Ruben Studdard? If so, put on a show. Whether you host an at-home science fair, Olympic Games, or Star Search, kids get the chance to perform for an audience and see that parents aren't so great at everything. **STUDENT TEACHER**: Even if it means donning a tutu yourself, let your child be the instructor. For more fun, exaggerate your lack of knowledge. The more she feels she can teach you, the prouder she'll be of herself.

—Katie Herrick