

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Child Development

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Session Length: 2 hours

## Objectives

Participants will:

- Identify general stages of human development
- Review children's developmental abilities at different ages
- Explore personal questions about child development
- Discuss strategies for common parenting problems

## Synopsis

Effective parenting requires a clear understanding of the developmental abilities and limitations of children at different ages. This session is designed to provide information on the continuum of human development, with a specific focus on issues of childhood development. Participants are encouraged to thoughtfully consider whether certain expectations they place on their children are realistic. In addition, strategies for managing common behavioral problems are discussed.

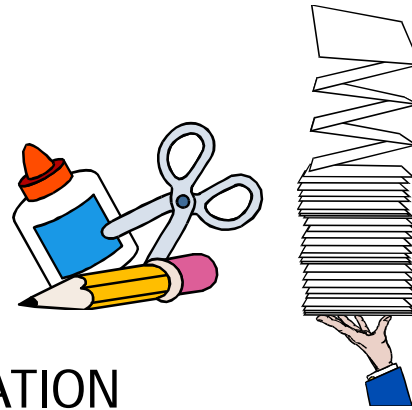
## Session Outline



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| Procedure                   | Time        |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Welcome                     | 05 minutes  |
| Session overview            | 05 minutes  |
| Homework review             | 15 minutes  |
| Stages of human development | 10 minutes  |
| Child development           | 40 minutes  |
| Survival skills for parents | 35 minutes  |
| Concluding discussion       | 05 minutes  |
| Homework                    | 05 minutes  |
| Total Time for Session 2    | 120 minutes |

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## MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- ▶ Here's what you will need to have ready for the group:
  - **SELF-STUDY** – The Appendix (pp. 197–) contains short articles on child development and parenting issues for additional reading. Likewise, the Resources (pp. 187-190) and References (p. 191) sections can direct you to other materials for self-study.
  - **COPIES OF MATERIALS** – Make copies of the following hand-outs, located at the end of the session:
    - *Tasks Across the Life Span* (p. 45)
    - *Growing Up* (pp. 46-48)
    - *Survival Skills for Parents* (pp. 49-50)
    - *Children Learn What They Live* (p. 51)
    - *Session Two Evaluation* (p. 52)
  - **SUPPORT MATERIALS** – Equip meeting room with a flipchart and easel, eraser board, or chalkboard. If you are using a flipchart, have masking tape or push pins available to hang completed pages for easy reference. Have extra pens, pencils, and paper available in case participants need them.

# PROCEDURE



10 Minutes

## *WELCOME / WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION*

- 1 Welcome participants as they arrive.
- 2 Introduce the session topic.
  - If I were to tell you that I really expect that my 4-year-old should be able to drive a car and enter medical school by age 6, you'd think I must be nuts. In this example, it's obvious that a child of that age would be unable to accomplish what I expect of him. When it comes to parenting, a fundamental need we all have is to be able to understand and accept the developmental capabilities and limitations of children.
  - Infancy and childhood are times of rapid growth and development at all levels - physical, mental, emotional, and moral. It is the beginning of a process that will continue until we die. Throughout life, our minds, bodies, emotions, and values continue to evolve and change. Human development takes a lifetime to complete.
  - Parents often find themselves asking "What's normal?" or "When should I expect that my child will be able to perform a certain task?" Some parents ask "How can I know if I am expecting too much or too little from my child, given his age?" These are the types of concerns we'll address in today's session.
  - Before we get started, let's review the take home assignment from last week.



15 Minutes

## *HOMEWORK REVIEW*

- 3 Review homework suggestion. Encourage a brief discussion using some of the following questions:

- The homework suggestion from last week was designed to make you think about what you like about your relationship with your child. You were asked to think about what you do and your child does that you like and want to continue to have happen.

- ? *What did you become aware of that you want to continue to happen in your family?*
- ? *What makes it important to you?*

**4** Gently redirect should a participant attempt to flip the focus by bringing up things she/he “doesn’t want to have happen” or “doesn’t like that happen.”

**5** When someone describes something he/she likes and wants to have continue, follow through by asking:

- ? *What is it you do that helps make \_\_X\_\_ happen?*
- ? *How might you make sure \_\_X\_\_ continues to happen?*

**6** Encourage further exploration with:

- ? *How did it feel to focus on the things you like and want to keep on happening?*
- ? *If we were to ask your child the homework question, how would your child answer it?*
- ? *What did you learn or discover from this assignment?*

**7** Thank participants for their efforts in thinking about the homework assignment. Point out that many parents find the homework question to be a helpful and hopeful idea to reflect upon when they are feeling disillusioned or frustrated about parenting.



10 Minutes

## ***STAGES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT***

**8** Provide an introduction to the concept of human development.



- Regardless of the age/ages of your children, it will be useful for you to have a basic understanding of the abilities and limitations of children at different ages. This understanding makes the job of parenting easier and helps make your expectations for your children more realistic. In addition, a better understanding of childhood development will help alleviate your anxiety about your child's progress.
- Because all children are a little different in terms of "normal" development, consider today's session as a chance to ask questions and share concerns you may have about your child.
- Let's begin with a "big picture" overview of human development. Many scientists who have studied how people grow and develop have found it helpful to think about the human life span in terms of "stages" or phases of development.



Handout,  
p. 45

## 9 Distribute handout *Tasks Across the Life Span*. Very briefly discuss the general developmental issues associated with each stage of life. Encourage questions. Incorporate some of the following points:

- The handout reviews eight stages of life. In each stage there are general "tasks" or hurdles that we must conquer. The stages are based on biology and society. Our biology determines when we are physically and mentally able to do something and what happens to us physically and mentally as we age. Our social system governs the behavioral expectations and demands placed on us and the approximate ages when those demands are made (for example, our society expects that children will enter school by age 6).
- Some stages are much longer than others, reflecting how dramatically we grow and change in the first 15 or 16 years of life, compared to later on. When we get beyond puberty and adolescence, the age lines between early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood or maturity are more blurred. Throughout life, our biology and our social structure guide development.

### ◆ Birth to 12 Months

- ➔ It's been said that the main job or task for infants in the first year of life is to grow and thrive. Infants require careful atten-

tion, plenty of sleep, good nutrition, and lots of interaction with parents and caregivers.

◆ ***12 months to 36 months***

→ A child's main job or task during this stage is to begin developing competence in basic motor skills and a sense of individuality. This involves play, exploration, mastery of skills (for example, walking, using words to communicate, eating alone), and the inevitable temper tantrums that result when early attempts at self-assertion end in frustration.

◆ ***3 years to 6 years***

→ Mastery of social skills and language, and the development of initiative and a sense of purpose are hallmarks of this developmental stage. During the preschool years, imagination develops and children enjoy stories and make-believe.

◆ ***6 years to 12 years***

→ Peer relations, expanded social skills, and intellectual development are key issues in this developmental stage. In our society, school-based education begins and children suddenly must learn how to deal with rules, conflicts, and frustrations that occur outside of the home.

◆ ***Adolescence (12 to 20 years)***

→ The need to create a personal identity, to fine tune self-image, and to establish independence are the overriding tasks of adolescence. In the wake of the physical and hormonal changes of puberty, children grapple with their emerging sexuality and with the so-called emotional roller coaster of a changing biochemistry.

◆ ***Early adulthood (20 to 40 years)***

→ During this stage, we begin to live our own lives, start our own families, and find our own place in the community. During these years we are concerned with the development of intimacy, with commitment in relationships, and with goals and achievements.

◆ *Middle adulthood (40 to 65 years)*

→ Career and family continue to be central concerns. In our work, these years may be our peak years in terms of experience, knowledge, and expertise. As our own children mature and as grandchildren arrive, we develop more a sense of continuity in life.

◆ *Maturity (65 and beyond)*

→ Acceptance of our life and of our choices and decisions is a key task involved in the integration and resolution of our sense of self during this stage of life. Acceptance of death, not just our own but that of those close to us, is also an important issue that must be worked through.



40 Minutes

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**10** Transition into a discussion of child development with some of the following ideas. During the discussion, encourage participants to ask questions.

- Thinking about lifetime development in terms of stages helps us get the big picture. When we focus on child development, it also is helpful to think in terms of tasks, jobs, or even hurdles that children must master as they grow.
- In a way, it's as if parents and their children share an unstated goal. The child's goal is to survive infancy, grow, learn, and become a self-sufficient adult. And the parent's goal is the same – for the child to survive, grow, learn, and become a self-sufficient adult.
- As parent and child work on this unspoken goal, they each have tasks. Because the parent is, after all, the adult, then it is the parent's task to help the child accomplish his/her tasks. In other words, the parents' job is to set the stage, provide instruction, guidance and support, and clear the way so the child can jump over all the hurdles of childhood and sail happily into adulthood.
- Understanding your child's stage of development and the tasks associated with it helps you set reasonable expectations and understand your own role as a parent.



- As we talk about developmental stages and corresponding tasks today, keep a few things in mind:
  - Development doesn't happen in a linear, hop, skip, and jump fashion. Sometimes a child will clear a hurdle, then return to work on it in a different way. This is normal. An example of this normal type of "regression" might be the child who returns to being shy around strangers following a phase of being outgoing and confident.
  - Don't expect what your child cannot deliver. Many parents become upset because a child is not following their timetable for development. It's normal for children to accomplish some tasks early within an age range, other tasks at the mid-point within the appropriate age range, and still other tasks in the late point within the age range.
  - Getting good at a skill takes time. There will be a lag between the time a child first attempts a task and when the child gets good at it. For example, your child may begin attempting to dress himself at age 2, but it may take him until age 4 to be able to put his right shoe on his right foot every time he gets dressed.
  - Accept that there will be few opportunities to "coast" through your tasks as parents. Just when you see that your child has mastered a set of tasks and you've figured out how to best help him, ZAP!! your child will enter the time when a new set of tasks begin, and off you go again. No rest for the weary (at least not for awhile).
  - Temperament and learning style influence how your child will go about mastering a developmental task. Some children are more persistent and less easily distracted than others. Persistence and focus are skills parents can help children learn at the appropriate developmental stage. Some children learn best by doing it themselves, others by watching how it's done, and others by hearing it explained. Parents can pick up clues to their child's learning style and use teaching tactics that might work best for the child.



Handout,  
pp. 46-48

**11** Use the allotted time to provide information about developmental tasks. Distribute *Growing Up* handout for parents to follow.



Focus on the child's and parent's tasks for each developmental stage and on what is reasonable for parents to expect from children in terms of physical, mental, and emotional ability. Encourage questions. Include some of the following points:

■ **Infants (0 - 6 months)**

- Love, affection, consistency, and care – these are the things most need by infants. The child's only task during this period is to live and grow, to bond with her parents, and to develop an awareness of her own senses (touch, sound, sight, taste) and her environment. The parents' task is to be dependable and to provide the love, care, nurture, safety, and support the child needs as she begins to become aware of her world.

■ **Early toddlers (6 - 18 months)**

- Awareness of the world leads to the need to explore it. As motor skills (body skills) develop, the child's task is to begin using them. Children this age spend a lot of time exploring their bodies, playing with fingers, toes, hands, reaching for toys or anything that looks interesting, tasting everything, rocking, crawling, pulling books off the shelf, and happily picking up tiny objects like crumbs.
- The parents' task is to provide a safe environment where exploration can happen. Parents also have the job of providing encouragement, of interacting with the child as he discovers his world, and of accepting the child's need to explore. Exploration will include putting things in the mouth, which a parent must monitor for safety. The reason that infants are so "oral" is because the mouth is their most highly developed sensory area at this age. An infant learns a lot about objects based on how they feel in his mouth.
- One of the most useful parenting tactics for this stage is using distraction and redirection. Remember that the child's job is to explore things. If the child pulls all the books off the shelf, he's not being "bad," he is simply being curious. The parent who wants to keep the books tidy or is concerned the child might be injured can gently remove the child from the bookshelf area and give him something else to explore, for example, a set of plastic cups or a favorite toy. This is called "redirec-

tion” and it’s one of the parenting techniques we’ll study and practice in this workshop.

## ■ Older Toddler (18 - 36 months)

- Having smoothed out their motor skills and done some observing and exploring, children next begin to think. Their task during this period is to begin understanding the difference between feeling and thinking, and to separate from their parents.
- “Separation” from parents does not mean that a 2-year-old is ready for independence. It does mean that she is now able to understand that she is her own person, and that her parents, too, are their own people. As with any new discovery, part of the child’s task is to explore this new awareness.
- Parents need to recognize that saying “no” and being stubborn are not signs of “badness” or purposeful disobedience, but rather that the child is beginning to have her own ideas about things.
- Patience, guidance, and acceptance are the tools for parents to use. We’ll look at some guidance strategies later today. It’s very important for the child to understand that she can express her will, experience intense feelings, and still be loved and accepted by her parents.
- In conjunction with this need for assertive “separation,” children at this stage may go through periods of intense fear or anxiety when they are actually separated from a parent. In most cases, this is considered part of normal development. Listening to and acknowledging your child’s feelings, along with gently assuring the child as often as needed that you will return can help her in working through separation fears.
- As children approach 3 years of age, they have developed better verbal skills. This means they can talk about their wishes rather than act them out and they understand things a little better. Children this age often display anger and have tantrums when their wishes aren’t met. Parents should encourage them to “use words” instead of crying, hitting, or screaming. When stressed, children may revert to crying and forget to use their newly acquired tool of language.



- Imagination and curiosity take off about this time. Children may ask “why” about everything. You can help by giving simple, honest answers that address only the question asked. This way, curiosity is not discouraged and your child learns she can talk with you.
- Reading is an important tool for parents during this time. Reading to children helps encourage imagination and helps lay down the foundation for reading skills. More importantly, reading provides an opportunity to snuggle and share quiet time together. Children love to be read to. It can become an important parent-child ritual that will last into later childhood.

### ■ Early-childhood (3 - 6 years)

- Perhaps the key task for this stage is for children to observe how people get what they want and how people use power. Children must learn how to manage their own (often very strong) wants and desires in the face of limitations imposed by parents and caregivers.
- The parents' most important job is to provide a good example of the appropriate use of power (or parental authority). This involves being consistent and fair and providing plenty of loving guidance, limit-setting, teaching, patience, and affection.
- During this stage, it's a good idea for parents to get into the habit of spending some special time with their children everyday. This means setting aside a bit of time everyday to read, talk, make things, or play a game with children. Many discipline problems can be avoided when parents give children a little bit of their undivided attention each day. By getting in the habit now, parents can help create a special family ritual of time together that can be carried on through adolescence.
- A parent's tasks are to model and to mold.
- As a parent, you are the most important role model for your child. This is one of the most challenging facts of parenthood. During this stage, children are like video recorders – they mimic and copy things they see adults doing and saying. They also begin to mimic attitudes.

- Parents must be painfully honest about the kinds of things they may unwittingly be teaching their child. For example, a child may talk to a friend or sibling in a very harsh voice after observing that's how mom and dad talk to each other or to him.
- The good news is that parents can decide to purposefully model behaviors and attitudes they want their children to copy. For example, saying please and thank-you, using a pleasant tone of voice when talking to people, or not hitting.
- Children have some social tasks during this stage. They need to begin getting to know their peers. Parents can help by finding opportunities for supervised play sessions. This helps children learn how to socialize and share. Whenever possible, parents should encourage children to solve social problems by themselves, such as an argument over a toy. However, parents should be prepared to intervene if children become too stressed or begin to act out aggressively.
- The other important task for parents during this time is helping to mold the child through guidance, fairness, teaching, and by being painstakingly consistent.
- Being consistent means being clear and dependable when it comes to rewards and discipline. Children become confused if they are disciplined for something one day but ignored the next time it happens. Likewise, if children are rewarded for something one day and punished for the same thing on another day, they may become discouraged, confused, and angry.
- A parent's "bag of tricks" would include:
  - Use praise. It's easier to mold behavior by rewarding good behavior rather than punishing bad behavior. Tell children what you expect of them and praise them when they make a good effort to follow through. The best kind of praise to help a child learn is immediate praise, delivered with honesty, enthusiasm, and affection.
  - Explain the rules. Clearly explain rules and limits. Choose simple words and short sentences. Children this age will become confused if the rules involve long complicated reasons and explanations. Be simple and clear. Children



this age do not have good memories, so you'll have to explain and re-explain the rules. Many children will honestly forget, especially when excited, so remain calm and kind when you have to give reminders.

- State the consequences. Establish consequences to curtail further misbehavior. Threatening to spank the child (or spanking, in general) is not an effective consequence for helping children learn. Removing privileges or limiting activities for a short time are examples of appropriate consequences. Use simple words to explain to your child the consequences of misbehavior. Consequences should be reasonable (remember that the purpose is to teach, not to punish). Don't let anger, resentment, or revenge come into it.
- Follow through. When misbehavior happens, promptly follow through with the consequences. Be consistent – in other words, really do what you say you will do, every time. Otherwise, you'll find yourself dealing with empty threats that are ignored for many years ahead. When a rule is broken, remind the child of the rule and the consequence of breaking the rule. Then, without delay or negotiation, carry out the consequence.
- Ignore tantrums and pleas. When parents begin applying consequences, children may whine, throw a tantrum, plead, and try to bargain. Often it is tempting, just for peace and quiet, to give in. Other times parents feel guilty. Enforcing consequences is an important teaching tool.
- Remember, it really is an act of love to stand firm. Children must learn that behavior and choices have a price. If you allow your child to avoid consequences by bargaining, whining, being clever or amusing, or throwing a fit, you may be teaching what you don't really want to teach.
- A child this age who throws a tantrum in the face of consequences is not "bad," nor is he "trying to get on your nerves" or "make you mad." He's simply testing the limits and learning to manage his feelings. It takes awhile for self-control to develop. Your job is to help him understand that there are limits, that when he exceeds them

there are consequences, and that it's nothing personal (in other words, it's his behavior, not his character, that's the problem).

### ■ Late-childhood (6 - 12 years)

- As children enter elementary school, they enter a developmental period that centers on structure and social learning. Their key task for this period is to understand how the world works and to develop a strategy for living in it.
- Early in this stage, children focus strongly on rules. They begin to feel that it is very important to conform. Six- to ten-year olds like to make up games with rules, for example boys against girls, or playing school (teacher and pupils). They also tend to isolate peers who don't follow the rules.
- Later in this stage, children become interested in reasons for rules and exceptions to rules. They may experiment with manipulating rules to fit what they want. The parent's task is to be a democrat rather than a dictator. This helps teach children negotiation skills, respect for rules and rule makers, and helps them develop a greater understanding of why rules are important.
- The parents' task is to offer skills and support to children as they develop rules for living with their peers, family, and community. This is the time for parents to increase the focus on teaching their children decision making and problem solving skills, how to motivate themselves, and how to get along with others.
- Exercise and nutrition are important life habits for children to learn about during this period. Encouraging exercise, rest, healthy food, and making good choices are part of the parental job.
- As in other stages of development, emotional growth is important during this time. Just when you begin to feel as if you've figured your child out emotionally, her actions, attitudes, fears, and confidences may shift. As the child continues to become more involved with school and peers, new types of emotional issues will be raised.



- Two tools a parent can use to help children with their emotional concerns are listening and acceptance. Acceptance means not saying things to your child like “you shouldn’t feel that way,” “try not to be so upset about it” or “it’s not going to do you any good to feel that way.” Instead, learn to give accepting feedback when your child needs to share her feelings with you. For example, “I can see that you are really upset over this,” or “Tell me about what’s made you so unhappy.” Accept that, like adults, children may not be able to talk about their feelings at a given time. The main idea is to leave the door open.
- This is an important time for self-esteem, too. You can help your child’s self-esteem by giving frequent, deserved praise. Avoid correcting or criticizing your child in front of others. Be sensitive to the things your child is proud of, and make it a point to not criticize those things (for example, artwork, handiwork, crafts). Providing support, guidance, and praise as children master new tasks enhances the development of self-esteem.
- Teach children how to resolve conflict with peers. One effective way is to not take over the conflict yourself and order solutions. Instead, establish consequences for bickering that encourage children to find their own solutions. For example, “I don’t like listening to this fighting. I want you to solve this yourselves. I’ll give you a few minutes to work out how you will stop fighting and play quietly. If you can’t work something out, you’ll have to put the game away for the rest of the day.” Remember, consequences should be undesirable, but not punishment.

## ■ Adolescence (12 - 18 years)

- This period of development is considered by many parents to be the most challenging. The key tasks for the child during this time are to continue to separate from parents, to refine social and coping skills, and to get through puberty.
- Puberty (which may actually begin before age 12 for many children) is the period of biological sexual maturation. During this time, girls and boys begin developing secondary sex characteristics. Voices change, breasts develop, pubic hair ap-



pears, perspiration changes, girls begin menstruation, and boys experience erections and wet dreams. Male and female sex hormones begin to be produced. These hormone surges may produce mood swings and emotional outbursts.

- The parents' tasks involve support, guidance, and a gradual turning over of decision-making to teens. Although teens may appear surly, confident, or indifferent, most are frightened and confused as they swim in these uncertain waters, somewhere between childhood and adulthood.
- The physical changes of adolescence can be disarming to parents. Suddenly, the child looks more like an adult than a child. It's an easy step for parents to project adult expectations onto their teenagers. If parents themselves experienced a painful adolescence, their child's movement into this developmental phase may dredge up some of their own unresolved conflict and anger.
- This is an important time for keeping communication channels open. Listening, conflict resolution, and avoiding roadblocks such as blaming, arguing, name-calling, and put-downs can help improve communication.
- Accept that your child may move through periods of rebellion, unreliability, withdrawal, rule bending, and risk-taking. Although consistency and consequences are still important tools for guidance, flexibility needs to be added to the mix when dealing with teens. Remember that the rule is less important than the results.
- Now, more than ever, a parent should strive to be a democrat (i. e., democratic) rather than a dictator (i. e., dictatorial). Being a democrat implies being fair, nonjudgmental, understanding, willing to listen, and open to negotiation, within reason. Being a dictator implies the reverse.
- With love and respect, help your teen understand why certain rules are important and the reason for the rules.
- Make sure rules are understood. Work with the spirit of rules, not the letter. Be willing to make the occasional reasonable exception. If a rule is broken, listen to your teen's explanation before you decide how to respond.



- Make sure teens understand the consequences of breaking a rule, not just the consequences to them, but the problems caused to others by breaking the rule.

**12** Thank participants for their questions. Offer extra handouts and reading suggestions for those wanting more information about developmental stages.



35 Minutes



Handout,  
pp. 49-50

## ***SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS***

**13** Distribute *Survival Skills for Parents* handout. Review the suggested parenting strategies and discuss their application. For each tip, model how it might be used with children of different ages (toddler, early elementary, late elementary, adolescent). When appropriate, use role play to help parents practice using the strategies.

- The “survival skills” we’ll discuss are broad and basic. Most of them can be modified for children of all ages, however, some of them will work best with children at a certain stage of development. For example, the strategy of praise is “one size fits all.” Praise works well with children of all ages and developmental stages, whereas as the strategy of distraction is best suited for toddlers and younger children.
- As we discuss these skills, we’ll brainstorm ways to use them with children of different ages.

### ◆ **HAVE A PLAN**

→ Take some time to think about the parenting skills and strategies that may work best for your children. Remember, you are the expert on your child, her temperament, and her personality. This puts you in a good position to experiment with different tactics, to think about and anticipate potential discipline problems, and to plan ways to prevent or stop misbehavior. For example, think about how you might deal with the tantrum over buying candy before you head out to the supermarket. The material we’re covering today, as well as what we’ll cover in the weeks to come, will help you in developing a plan that works for you and your child.

## ◆ SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY

- Simple sentences communicate best, especially with younger children. Even adults have trouble understanding and remembering long, rambling stories, instructions, or explanations. So, imagine how difficult it would be for a 4-year old. Using simple words and short sentences, make sure you tell your child about rules, limits, consequences, or reasons. In fact, children of all ages (even teens) will find it easier to understand your meaning when you are brief.
- Some parents find it helpful to practice by actually writing out simple, direct sentences to help set rules and consequences. For example, consider the difference between these two requests made to a 5-year old: "Don't tease other children. Teasing hurts people's feelings." or "Other children have feelings just like you do, and when you tease them or make fun of them you hurt their feelings and make them feel bad, and if you keep on teasing other children their mommies and daddies may not let them play with you."
- **Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:**
  - ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
  - ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*
  - ? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

## ◆ USE PRAISE AND REWARDS

- Praise is an all-purpose parenting technique and should be used frequently, when appropriate. It's probably not a good idea to praise every single good behavior your child performs during the course of a day, but certainly you should use it to help reinforce behaviors you want your child to continue doing. The best praise is immediate, sincere, and delivered with affection. It's a good idea to make the praise "personal" (as opposed to yelling "You did a great job!" from the kitchen). This may mean getting down on a toddler's level or making eye contact with an older child when giving praise.



- Simple, inexpensive rewards can be used to help children master tasks with which they have trouble. For older children, special privileges (staying up late to watch a movie, a trip to the mall) can be used as rewards. Sticker books, charts with gold stars, and other fun and creative ways of earning rewards can be used to help children master tasks and develop good habits (brushing teeth, cleaning rooms, etc.).
- **Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:**
  - ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
  - ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*
  - ? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

#### ◆ USE DISTRACTION AND REDIRECTION

- When younger children (under age 4) are being disruptive or are engaged in unacceptable behavior they often don't respond to direct requests for cooperation. Distraction and redirection are ways to get cooperation indirectly. These techniques involve replacing an inappropriate behavior with an acceptable one. This may involve directing the child's attention to a whole new activity (distraction) or substituting something else for part of the activity. For example, 3-year old Mary is repeatedly throwing one of her dolls against the wall. Mom may distract her by saying "Mary, come to the kitchen. I'd like some help baking this cake. You can stir the batter for me." Or Mom could walk over to Mary, hand her a Nurf Ball, remove the doll, and say "This is a better thing to throw against the wall because it won't break" (redirection). In both cases, Mom's goal has been reached. The behavior is stopped or changed, indirectly.
- **Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:**
  - ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
  - ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*

? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

#### ◆ RULES, CONSEQUENCES, AND FOLLOW-THROUGH

- With older children, parents must deal directly with misbehavior, rather than using distraction or redirections. This involves rules, consequences, and follow-through.
- Clearly and simply explain rules to children. Children can't read minds. You must tell them about limits and expectations, and you must be prepared to repeat the rules as often as it takes. Children are not very good at abstract thinking. They don't always make the same connections between things that adults do. In other words, children may have trouble understanding that "Don't jump on the couch" means "Don't jump on any piece of furniture in the house." Periodically restate the rules to help your child understand.
- Likewise, tell your child very specifically about the consequences for misbehavior before it occurs. Consequences should fit the crime. They should be undesirable to the child, but fair and logical. Consequences are not designed to punish or to "get even," but rather to mold and teach. As a parent, you will find it easier to enforce consequences if they are fair, rather than harsh. Threatening to spank is not an effective consequence. Removing privileges or restricting activities for an appropriate period of time are more effective consequences.
- Without follow-through, consequences have no meaning. The formula for success requires that a parent follow-through with enforcing consequences promptly, without delay or negotiation, every time the misbehavior occurs. The sequence involves:
  - (1) Remind the child of the rule and the consequences, and request compliance,
  - (2) Give the child a minute to comply. If he does, praise him. If he doesn't,
  - (3) Follow-through immediately. Ignore whining, tantrums, pleas, and bargaining. Don't give in.



→ You must be consistent and firm; otherwise, you'll teach your child to ignore you and view your consequences as empty threats. Your child may also begin to get the idea that he can whine or bargain his way out of facing consequences.

→ Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:

- ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
- ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*
- ? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

#### ◆ OFFER CHOICES

→ This works well with young children, and it may be modified to work well with children of all ages. The main idea is to avoid ultimatums (which create resistance) by allowing the child some choice (which promotes self-control). A 4-year old who doesn't want to get dressed can be allowed to make simple choices about clothes ("Do you want to wear your blue sweater or your red blouse?") or about how and when to dress ("Do you want to get dressed in your room or in the bathroom?" "Do you want to get dressed now or in 5 minutes?" "Do you want to put on your socks yourself, or do you want me to do it?") Whenever appropriate, with children of all ages, think about ways you can offer choices, rather than giving direct orders. For example, "You can finish your homework before dinner, and watch TV tonight, or you can watch TV now and then do your homework after dinner."

→ Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:

- ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
- ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*
- ? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

## ◆ PAY ATTENTION

- Taking time to pay attention and really listen to your children can be an excellent disciplinary tool. A lot of bad behavior children exhibit is often just an attempt to get your undivided attention. When you give your attention, you may help head-off discipline problems. Strategies might include playing with your child, making up fairy tales or stories together, or teaching your child how to build or make things.
- Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:
  - ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
  - ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*
  - ? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

## ◆ ACCEPT YOUR MISTAKES

- Despite all the skills and strategies, there may be times when you just lose it – you blow up out of frustration or overreact to some minor misbehavior. Learn to forgive yourself and to accept that you are not perfect and that you will make mistakes. When it happens, turn it into a learning experience for both you and your child. One way to do this is to apologize to your child. For example, "I'm sorry I lost my temper. I love you and I'm sorry I hurt you." In reality, it's helpful for children to see that parents aren't always perfect.
- Encourage discussion with some of the following questions:
  - ? *What do you see as most useful about this technique?*
  - ? *Have you attempted this or a similar technique before? How did it work for you?*
  - ? *Knowing your child, how might you need to adjust this technique to make it work?*

**14** Thank members for their participation. Encourage them to practice a few of the techniques they like the best and feel might be the most useful.



5 Minutes

## CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

**15** Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Mention the following points:

- We covered a lot of new information today and had a chance to begin sharing skills and strategies.
- In upcoming groups, we'll have a chance to expand on many of the ideas we covered today.
- Today's topic was intended to increase your knowledge about child development, not to increase your anxiety. Keep the following things in mind:
  - Children mature at different rates and move through developmental tasks at different rates. There are many, many "normals."
  - Throughout his/her development, along with plenty of love and affection, your child wants and needs your attention, your guidance, and your consistent follow-through in setting and enforcing limits. (Granted, this may not seem to be the case sometimes.) Structure helps build security in children.
  - It's never too late to help your child work on developmental tasks. A good place to start is by talking with your children about this group, what you are learning, and your goals for becoming a better parent and guide for them.

Handout,  
p. 51

**16** Distribute *Children Learn What They Live* handout. If time allows, have a participant read it aloud.



5 Minutes

## HOMEWORK

**17** Give the following homework suggestion:

- Between now and the time we meet again, observe and pay attention to something your child does that is typical of children his/her age, based on what you learned today. It doesn't have to be something special or extraordinary, just something that a child of your child's age is likely to do.



- We'd also like for you to practice using praise, one of the guidance ideas we discussed today. Again, this should be centered around everyday things. When you notice your child being good or doing something you really like, your assignment is to praise your child immediately.
- Remember that praise should be immediate, specific, and sincere. It's best to praise the behavior you are happy about instead of the child's character. For example, saying "What a good job you've done picking up all your Legos" is more effective praise than saying "You're a good boy for picking up your toys." It's also a good idea to use a kind, matter-of-fact tone when giving praise, rather than gushing or going on and on. Make your praise simple, short, and sincere.
- Here are some ideas for ways to give specific praise:
  - "I like it when you play quietly when I'm on the phone."
  - "You ate all your carrots! Good job!"
  - "I like the careful way you folded the laundry."
  - "I'm glad you shared your toys with Jimmy. You really helped him get over his tantrum by doing that."
- Mentally, give yourself a point for each time you notice good behavior and praise your child. We'll compare notes at our next meeting.

**18** Thank participants for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return to the next session.



Session  
Evaluation,  
p. 52

**19** Ask participants to complete a *Session Evaluation* form before leaving.

# Tasks Across the Life Span



## Birth to 12 months

Trust, bonding, attachment, security



## 12 months to 36 months

Motor skills, exploration, independence



## 3 years to 6 years

Language, social skills, imagination



## 6 years to 12 years

Peer relations, school, problem solving



## Adolescence (12 to 20 years)

Self-identity, peer relations, independence



## Early adulthood (20 to 40 years)

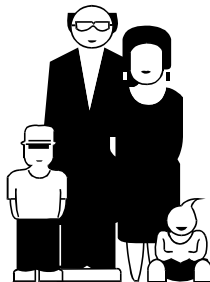
Intimacy, career, friendship, parenting

## Middle adulthood (40 to 65 years)

Career, family, community

## Maturity (65 and beyond)

Resolution, acceptance of life and death





## GROWING UP

### Age-Specific Tasks for Children and Parents

| AGE  | CHILD'S TASKS  | PARENT'S TASKS   | PARENTING TIPS   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Infants</b><br/><b>0-6 Months</b></p>        | <p>Grow, bond, become aware of senses (touch, taste, sight, sound); become aware of surroundings.</p>  | <p>Be dependable and responsive; provide love, safety, attention, stimulation, and care.</p>   | <p>It's okay to respond quickly and often to infant's cries and sounds. This helps develop your child's sense of trust and security. Help infant explore senses by talking, touching, singing, humming, and placing colorful toys or mobiles where the infant can see them.</p>          |
| <p><b>Early toddler</b><br/><b>6-18 Months</b></p> | <p>Continue to grow and bond; develop motor skills (grabbing, kicking, grasping and holding objects, crawling); explore surroundings and self (playing with fingers, toes, laughing, touching things).</p> | <p>Be dependable and responsive; provide a safe place for toddler to explore and allow child to safely explore things; provide encouragement and stimulation; interact by joining child in his explorations.</p> | <p>Toddlers are not being "bad" when their exploration leads to a mess or accident, they are being curious. Use <b>redirection</b> to head off problems. <b>Redirect</b> by gently removing the child from a problem activity and substituting a safer or more appropriate activity.</p> |



| AGE   | CHILD'S TASKS  | PARENTS' TASKS  | PARENTING TIPS  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Older toddler</b><br/><b>18-36 months</b></p> | <p>Continue to explore and develop motor skills; become aware of thoughts and feelings; develop language skills; experience <b>individuation</b> (awareness of self as separate from parents).</p> | <p>Provide guidance and safety; help child learn words; help child learn to vocalize thoughts and feelings; accept the child's feelings; provide reassurance; support child's need for separation and self-assertion.</p> | <p>Avoid power struggles by accepting that tantrums and stubbornness are not "being bad" but "being normal." Set firm limits, but help your child understand that he can express his will and his intense feelings and still be loved and accepted by you. Help your child use words to express feelings and needs.</p> |
| <p><b>Early-childhood</b><br/><b>3-6 years</b></p>  | <p>Continue to develop language skills; begin to observe adults in order to learn about power and how people get what they want; learn to manage own wants and desires; learn social skills.</p>   | <p>Provide guidance and limit setting; use your authority as a parent fairly; be a role model for behaviors you want your child to develop; guide child in learning to solve problems.</p>                                | <p>Guiding, molding, encouraging problem solving, and setting limits can be accomplished in many creative ways. See <b>Parent's Bag of Tricks</b> on following page for details on guidance ideas for this age group.</p>   |
| <p><b>Late childhood</b><br/><b>6-12 years</b></p>  | <p>Formal education; learn social requirements and rules; learn problem solving and how to get along with others; learn self-motivation, sense of purpose.</p>                                     | <p>Offer guidance and support; teach problem solving skills; establish consistent, fair rules; provide feedback and praise; be available to talk and listen.</p>  | <p>Help children with emotional concerns by listening and showing acceptance of their feelings. Develop an "open door" policy and make time to listen.</p>  |





| AGE  | CHILD'S TASKS  | PARENT'S TASKS  | PARENTING TIPS   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Adolescence</b><br/><b>12-18 years</b></p> | <p>Refine social and coping skills; separate from parents and develop independence; adjust to the physical and emotional changes of puberty; explore sexuality</p> | <p>Support, guidance, and a gradual surrender of decision-making responsibilities to teen; provide reassurance about physical changes and emotional concerns; be democratic; be open and flexible in setting rules but be consistent when enforcing them.</p> | <p>Strive to be a "democrat" rather than a "dictator." Keep communication channels open and avoid roadblocks such as blaming, arguing, and put-downs. Consistency and limit setting are still important, but flexibility must be added to the mix.</p> |

### ***Parenting Bag of Tricks***

**Using Praise:** It is easier to mold behavior by rewarding good behavior rather than by punishing bad behavior. Praise works best when it is immediate, honest, enthusiastic, and affectionate.

**Explaining the rules:** Clearly explain rules and limits with simple words and short sentences. Long, complicated reasons and explanations don't help. Be simple, clear, and fair. Younger children have short memories, so you will have to re-explain the rules on different occasions.

**Stating the consequences:** Establish consequences for misbehavior. Use simple words to explain the consequences of misbehavior. Consequences should be fair and should "fit the crime." Remember, the purpose is to teach, not to punish the child. Threatening to spank is not an effective consequence. It's more effective to remove privileges or limit the child's activities for a fair amount of time.

**Following through:** When misbehavior happens, promptly follow-through with the established consequence. Follow-through every time! When a rule is broken, remind child of the rule. If misbehavior continues, remind child of consequences of breaking rule, then without delay or discussion, follow-through with applying the consequence.

**Ignore tantrums and pleas:** When a parent applies a consequence, children may whine, throw a tantrum, plead, and argue. Don't give in or feel guilty. Applying consequences is an act of love (because it teaches). Children must learn early that behavior leads to consequences and that consequences can't be whined or argued away. You are the best person to teach your child this important life lesson.

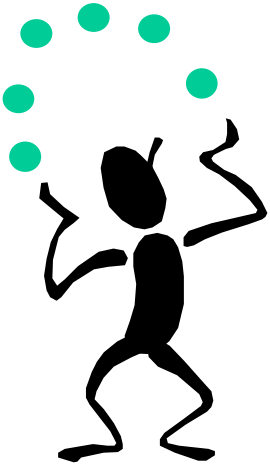
# ***SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS***



## **HAVE A PLAN**

What are my goals?  
What do I want my child to learn or remember?  
What will work best with my child?  
What might help "head off" problem behavior?

*Notes:*



## **SIMPLIFY, SIMPLIFY**

What do I want my child to understand?  
Am I using simple words?  
Am I using short sentences?  
Am I speaking clearly and calmly?

*Notes:*

## **PRAISE AND REWARDS**

When do I usually praise my child?  
How can I use praise more often?  
What kind of rewards might my child enjoy?  
What method of earning rewards might appeal to my child?

*Notes:*

## **DISTRACTION AND REDIRECTION**

What might work to re-focus my child's attention?  
How can I redirect when there is problem behavior?  
Am I being calm and gentle when I redirect?

*Notes:*

## RULES, CONSEQUENCES, FOLLOW-THROUGH

What do I want my child to learn?

How can I explain rules clearly and simply?

How might I remind my child about rules?

What types of consequences might be fair and logical?

How can I use consequences to teach instead of punish?

Do I always follow-through?

Do I follow-through gently, but firmly?

**Notes:**

## OFFER CHOICES

In what situations might I offer my child choices?

What types of choices might work with my child?

**Notes:**

## PAY ATTENTION

What are some ways to spend time with my child?

Do I listen when my child wants to talk with me?

How might I give attention before my child asks for it?

**Notes:**

## ACCEPT YOUR MISTAKES

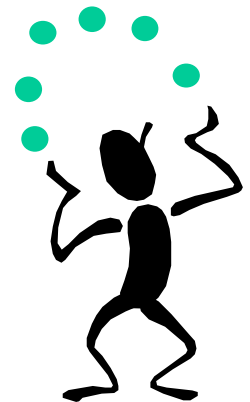
How do I usually feel when I "lose it" with my child?

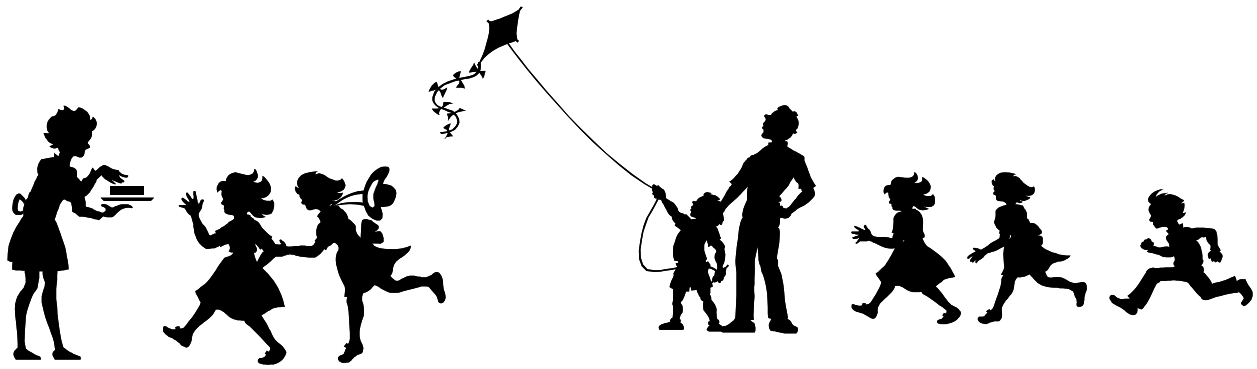
What can I say to myself when I make mistakes?

How might I apologize to my child?

How might I guard against repeating mistakes?

**Notes:**





# Children Learn What They Live

*By Dorothy Law Nolte*

*If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.*

*If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.*

*If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.*

*If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.*

*If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.*

*If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.*

*If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.*

*If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.*

*If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.*

*If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.*

*If children live with security, they learn to have faith  
in themselves and others.*

*If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is  
a nice place in which to live.*

**Copyright © 1972/1975 by Dorothy Law Nolte**

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## Session Evaluation Partners in Parenting Session 2

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please take a minute to give us some feedback about how you liked this session.

1. Use one word to describe your feelings about today's class \_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the most important thing you learned today?

3. What is one thing you realized today about your child's developmental stage?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you rate today's class? (Circle your rating.)

|      |    |    |    |             |    |    |    |    |           |
|------|----|----|----|-------------|----|----|----|----|-----------|
| 01   | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05          | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10        |
| Poor |    |    |    | Pretty Good |    |    |    |    | Excellent |

5. Do you have any suggestions to help make this class better?