

Based on
**TCU Mapping-Enhanced Counseling
Manuals for Adaptive Treatment**

As Included in NREPP



PARTNERS IN PARENTING

A manual with materials for an 8-session structured workshop that allows recovering participants to practice parenting strategies and discuss their experiences with others

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TCU Mapping-Enhanced Counseling manuals provide evidence-based guides for adaptive treatment services (included in National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, NREPP, 2008). They are derived from cognitive-behavioral models designed particularly for counselors and group facilitators working in substance abuse treatment programs. Although best suited for group work, the concepts and exercises can be directly adapted to individual settings.

When accompanied by user-friendly information about client assessments that measure risks, needs, and progress over time, *TCU Mapping-Enhanced Counseling* manuals represent focused, time-limited strategies for engaging clients in discussions and activities on important recovery topics. These materials and related scientific reports are available as Adobe PDF® files for free download at <http://www.ibr.tcu.edu>.

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Partners in Parenting



A DATAR/FIRST CHOICE Treatment Manual

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Partners in Parenting

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Introduction

The *Partners in Parenting* module was designed to address the needs and concerns of parents in substance abuse treatment programs. The manual provides materials and instructions for leading a workshop that focuses on concepts important for parenting effectiveness such as communication skills, guidance techniques, and positive discipline strategies. The emphasis is on building skills, providing support, and helping parents understand the needs and abilities of children during different stages of development.

The manual contains materials for eight structured workshop sessions that can be implemented according to program and participant needs. Each session includes instructions for leading the session, along with handouts, discussion questions, and ideas for presenting information on the topics covered. Homework assignments are included to encourage practice of parenting skills between sessions. Articles of interest, resources for obtaining teaching materials, and a bibliography of additional reading also are included in this manual.

The structured workshop sessions are designed for eight weekly meetings of about two hours each. However, some flexibility is recommended. In practice, discussions of parenting issues have been known to become lively and individual participants have been found to need extra support and processing time when painful memories are triggered. Therefore, longer sessions or extra sessions may be warranted. (See discussion of Extra Meetings in the *Ideas for Using This Manual* section.) The following topics are covered in the workshop:

- **Session One: *Building a Partnership***

The first meeting centers on group building and introducing the philosophy and tone of the workshop. Participants are encouraged to think about current parenting concerns and challenges, their goals and expectations for the workshop, and the strengths and skills they contribute to the group.

- **Session Two: *Child Development***

Effective parenting requires a clear understanding of the developmental limitations and abilities of children at different ages. This session focuses on child development, common parenting issues at different developmental stages, and parental expectations. Guidance strategies for children of different ages are introduced and discussed.

■ **Session Three: *Family Communication: Active Listening***

This session introduces participants to the skill of listening as a foundation for effective family communication. Techniques for conveying acceptance and emotional support through active listening skills are highlighted and participants are invited to explore their current listening style. How effective listening can be used in various parenting situations is discussed.

■ **Session Four: *Family Communication: Building Understanding***

Continuing with the theme of family communication, this session introduces participants to speaking skills that help increase understanding and cooperation. The impact of nonverbal communication is emphasized, and parents are introduced to "I-Messages" as a strategy for communicating clearly about feelings and for setting limits and making requests.

■ **Session Five: *Helping Children Behave***

This session is designed to help participants master strategies for increasing desired behaviors in their children through the use of praise, reinforcement, setting limits, redirection, and modeling. Ineffective methods of handling children's misbehavior are discussed and communication skills that work well for providing child guidance are reinforced.

■ **Session Six: *Sensible Discipline***

Discipline strategies are aimed at decreasing unwanted behaviors in children. This session focuses on techniques for effective and fair discipline, including ignoring, time out, and natural and logical consequences. The reasons for children's misbehavior are explored, along with common discipline problems and recommended solutions.

■ **Session Seven: *Self-Care for Parents***

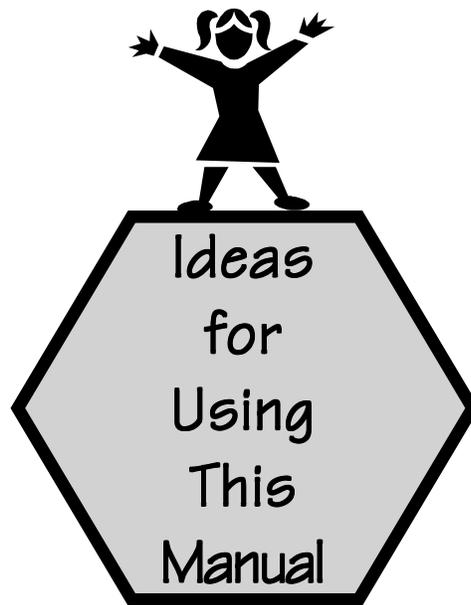
This session acknowledges the stress, insecurity, and low sense of self-esteem experienced by many parents who feel overwhelmed by parenting responsibilities. Participants are encouraged to focus on self-care and to pay attention to the potential negative impacts of not caring for themselves. Assertiveness, affirmations, time management, and strategies for dealing with the stress that results from negative "self-talk" are addressed.

■ **Session Eight: *Tomorrow and Beyond***

The final structured session emphasizes problem-solving, planning, and encouraging resilience in children. Parents are introduced to a problem-solving model

for working through future parenting challenges. The session also provides closure for the workshop by asking participants to review their parenting goals from the first session, to assess progress, and to set goals for the future. Time is allowed for a recognition activity (e. g., distributing completion certificates or awards).

In conclusion, the *Partners in Parenting* workshop has been designed to guide and support parents as they improve their communication, problem solving, and guidance skills with their children. It is hoped that by offering a forum where recovering parents with similar concerns can discuss options and solutions for better parenting, the result will be stronger, happier, and more supportive families.



The *Partners in Parenting* manual contains materials for eight structured workshop sessions. This section has been included to help counselors prepare for leading workshop sessions. It includes tips, techniques, and ideas to refresh and strengthen group leadership skills.

Preparation

Workshop leaders will benefit from allowing adequate preparation time for review and self-study. The Resources and References sections of this manual contain listings for books, articles, web sites, and videos that may be helpful. The following selections provide a good overview of parenting approaches discussed in the workshop:

Crary, E. (1993). *Without Spanking or Spoiling*. Seattle: Parenting Press.

Crary, E. (1990). *Pick Up Your Socks and Other Skills Growing Children Need*. Seattle: Parenting Press.

Gordon, T. (1991). *Discipline That Works: Promoting Self-Discipline in Children*. New York: Plume Books.

Gordon, T. (1970). *P.E.T.: Parenting Effectiveness Training*. New York: Peter H. Wyden.

Nelsen, J. (1996). *Positive Discipline*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Logistics

Each structured session of *Partners in Parenting* covers about two hours of material. Consider the following logistics issues in your planning and preparation:

- **Group selection** – The groups are designed for women and men who are actively involved in parenting children. Potential members should be emotionally stable, possess adequate social skills for group interaction, and not be in serious crisis. In addition, exercises, activities, and handouts used in the workshop require basic literacy in English.
- **Group size** – The ideal group size is likely to vary by treatment setting. In residential programs where clients live in close quarters and daily issues find their way into group discussions, smaller groups may work better. We found that a core group of 6 – 8 participants worked well in a small, residential women’s program, whereas groups with 10 – 12 participants were suitable for outpatient programs. An active, highly participatory group may benefit from having the session material split and presented over two meetings (see section on Extra Meetings).
- **Meeting room** – Tables or desks should be part of the seating arrangements, since many of the workshop exercises and activities include writing on worksheets. Other activities call for participants to move around the room or to work in pairs/small groups, so the meeting area should be large enough to hold everyone comfortably. In addition, the room should offer participants a sense of privacy.
- **Equipment** – Group leaders will need a flip chart or an eraser board for writing down key points during discussions and brainstorming activities.
- **Breaks/refreshments** – Offer participants a short break (10 minutes) at a logical stopping place mid-session. Coffee and other refreshments can add a nice touch and are generally appreciated by group members.
- **Child care** – Make child care available for participants during the meetings if at all possible. In this way, parents can attend without

the stress of arranging for a sitter and will be better able to concentrate on the workshop material. The child care room should be separate from the workshop room to help avoid distractions.

Extra Meetings

In addition to the eight structured sessions contained in the manual, extra sessions may be added to extend discussion and processing or to practice specific parenting skills. For example, we have found that clients often desire to discuss and process family-of-origin issues that arise quite spontaneously as a result of the topics addressed in the workshop. In the women's residential program where this workshop was piloted, counselors found it productive to help participants process these issues when they arose. In order to allow the time needed, the structured workshop material in each session was divided and presented over two meetings. In this program, the *Partners in Parenting* materials were spread out over 15 meetings.

Ideally, extra meetings should continue or expand the topics covered in the structured sessions. Beyond allowing time for processing issues and personal experiences, some other ideas for extra meetings might include:

- Use the meeting to show “trigger” films (short vignettes about parenting situations and responses) and discuss them vis-à-vis parenting skills and issues raised in the workshop material. Popular TV programs or sit-coms can provide excellent springboards for such discussions. In addition, parenting or mental health agencies in your area may have educational videos for loan or rent. To purchase parenting videos, check the Resources section of this manual for available catalogs.
- Extra meetings can be used to provide “hands-on” directions for specific parenting tips and techniques. This may include using the meeting to give parents time to actually construct incentive charts or other homemade “games” for encouraging children's positive behaviors. For example, leaders can provide poster board, paints, and other materials and show parents how to make an

incentive chart, a grid with behaviors like “brushing teeth” or “taking out the trash” listed in a column, with spaces next to each behavior where stars or checks can be placed each time the behavior is done. Parents can brainstorm how many stars are needed for a small reward, as well as what types of personal, inexpensive rewards might be appropriate for their child. For example, a week’s worth of brushing teeth equals staying up an extra hour on Friday night. Likewise, group leaders can teach parents how to use these types of games and activities to encourage and reinforce children’s cooperation.

- Use extra meetings to teach parents how to organize and hold family meetings. Once family meetings have been initiated in their families, parents can use the time to discuss progress and get pointers from other parents. Role play can be used to help parents practice problem solving and communication skills.
- Dedicate the extra meetings to allowing parents to discuss their experiences in actually using the parenting skills and techniques suggested in the structured sessions. Group leaders can provide further guidance in choosing and using appropriate reward and discipline strategies and participants can offer each other support and encouragement.

Modeling and Role Play

The *Partners in Parenting* material encourages group leaders to model (demonstrate) appropriate communication skills (listening, I-Messages, nonverbal congruence) and guidance techniques (time out, setting limits, redirection, enforcing consequences). As part of the preparation process, leaders may find it helpful to practice with peers and get feedback on the most useful ways of modeling the recommended strategies.

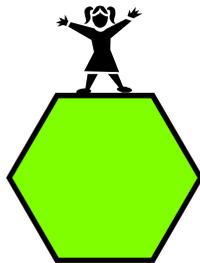
Role play is used extensively in the structured sessions to help participants practice new skills and become comfortable using them. Here are some things to keep in mind when leading role plays. You may find it helpful to use some of this information to prepare your opening discussion of role play with group members:

- Role play is not drama. Encourage participants to be natural and focus on helping each other create realistic situations for practicing parenting and communication skills.
- Stop and start the role play, as needed. It is sometimes helpful to role play just a few lines and responses, stop and process the interaction, then allow role players to repeat the scenario incorporating the feedback generated during the processing discussion.
- When processing a role play, encourage participants to talk about their feelings as well as the skills being practiced.
- Teach participants how to give each other helpful and constructive feedback. For example, “I think your child might listen better if you lowered your voice a little,” is more constructive feedback than “You’re yelling! No wonder your child ignores you!”
- Don’t force anyone to participate in role playing. Some people may be too uncomfortable. Remember that some people learn more from observing than from participating.
- Stop the role play if you sense that a participant is becoming distressed or uncomfortable. Let participants know they can stop or “bow out” of a role play at any time.
- When appropriate, you may want to take part in a role play activity, either by modeling effective communication or parenting techniques or by modeling a “difficult” child so that a member can practice.
- Encourage the group to discuss both verbal and nonverbal communication in the role play scenario. Help stress the importance appropriate nonverbal communication for effective parenting.
- If the parenting or communication techniques used by a member during role play are ineffective or inappropriate, ask the participant or other group members for alternatives. For example, “Based on what we discussed today in the group, can you think of another way to discipline the child that might work better?” Once an effective suggestion is generated, use role play to rehearse how it would look and sound.

- Thank members for participating in the role plays. Find opportunities to offer praise and compliment their willingness to try.

Evaluation

- There is an individual evaluation form for each session of *Partners in Parenting* (located at the end of the session). This simple evaluation is designed to give group leaders' some general feedback about the clients' reactions to the material, what they found most useful, and a global rating of the session.
- Programs interested in a more formal evaluation of the material can use the *Partners in Parenting Pre & Post Questionnaire* (pp. 193-195). In addition to measuring increases in knowledge based on the workshop content, the instrument is designed to capture changes in attitudes about parenting strategies, as well as changes in parents' sense of self-efficacy.
- To administer the pretest and posttest questionnaires, time should be allowed before the first session and following the last session. In some cases, group leaders may want to schedule a special meeting before the workshop starts (and again after the workshop is over) to administer the questionnaires. The same questionnaire is used for both pre and post administration. In the "gray box" area of the form, the person who administers it can circle whether it's being given as "Pre" or "Post." The gray box also features an area for collecting client identification, dates, and other information to help match pretests with posttests.





Building a Partnership

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand the purpose and philosophy of the group
- Identify current parenting issues and problems
- Identify personal goals for improved parenting
- Explore current strengths and resources

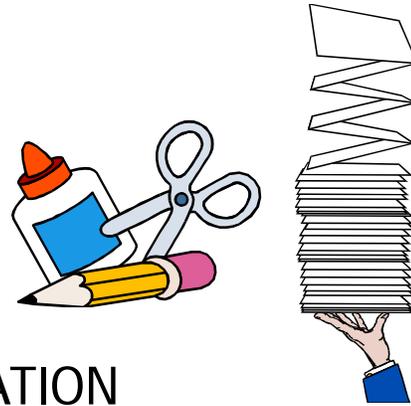
Synopsis

The first group is designed to help reinforce the title of the workshop *Partners in Parenting*. Group leaders present themselves as guides, not gurus, and participants are recognized as the primary authorities about their relationships with their children. Time is allowed for group building. The structure and philosophy of the group is explained and participants are asked to think about current parenting concerns, their strengths and coping skills to date, and their personal goals and expectations for the group.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome	05 minutes
Workshop introduction	15 minutes
Member introductions	30 minutes
Group contract	15 minutes
Concerns and goals	40 minutes
Concluding ideas	10 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 1	120 minutes



MATERIALS AND PREPARATION

- ▶ Here's what you will need to have ready for the group:
 - **POCKET FOLDERS** - Provide inexpensive cardboard pocket folders for participants to store handouts and exercises.
 - **COPIES OF MATERIALS** - Make copies of the following handouts, located at the end of the session:
 - *Workshop Schedule* (p. 13) [**Note:** Fill in dates before photocopying]
 - *Tower of Strengths* worksheet (p. 14) & word list (p. 15) (*optional*)
 - *Principles for a Productive Group* (p. 16)
 - *Goal Talk* (p. 17)
 - *My Goals for Better Parenting* (p. 18)
 - *Four Assumptions for Group* (p. 20)
 - *Session One Evaluation* (p. 20)
 - **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



20 Minutes

WELCOME / WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION

- 1 Welcome participants as they arrive.

- 2 Distribute pocket folders and *Workshop Schedule* handout. Fill in meeting dates ahead of time or allow time for participants to add dates.
 - To get us started, each of you is being given a folder and an outline of what to expect in this parenting workshop.
 - The folders are yours to keep, so you might want to put your names on them. During the workshop you'll be given a lot of handouts and information. We've found from other groups that participants like to keep these materials and that the folders help keep things organized.
 - You've also been provided an outline that gives you an idea of the general topic areas we'll cover.

- 3 Introduce the purpose, philosophy, and structure of the Partners in Parenting workshop. Include the following points:
 - This workshop is for sharing and learning, and for giving and getting support for the most challenging job in the world - being a parent.
 - This workshop recognizes and respects your courage as a recovering person and your concerns about the impact of your past addiction on your family. We will work to make this group a safe place where these issues can be brought forth and discussed without fear of judgment or blame.
 - As group leaders, we will function as "partners" and "guides," not as "experts" or "gurus." We'll keep things on track and share what we've learned about parenting with you. And we recognize that each of you brings valuable experiences and strengths to the group, as well, to share.



Handout,
p. 13

- If there were a “magic bullet” for raising perfect children who were always polite, helpful, well behaved, resourceful, and respectful, someone would have uncovered it by now. For most of us, parenting involves a lot of trial and error. An open mind and a willingness to experiment with new techniques are what help many parents muddle through.
- This workshop will cover basic parenting issues and introduce you to some tips and techniques recommended by experts for managing common family problems. As with almost everything in life, practice is the key, so you will be asked to “experiment” at home with some of the ideas suggested and you’ll have a chance to rehearse with fellow group members.
- Our working focus in this group will be on identifying personal strengths and resources and on finding workable solutions to parenting problems. Solutions are not “one-size-fits-all.” But sometimes we can tailor things that have worked for others to meet our own unique needs.
- We’ll use today to identify some of the parenting concerns and problems that are weighing most heavily on your mind and to talk about what you want to get from this workshop. We’ll also establish some group goals to help guide us in our work.
- Before we do any of that, however, we’re going to spend some time getting to know each other.



30 Minutes

MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

- 4 Go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves, and to tell a little about their children - ages, names, and each child’s favorite game, toy, or pastime.
- 5 Welcome everyone again, and comment on the good mix of parenting experience represented and how the group will benefit from that experience.



6 Establish a focus for the group building activity:

- For some of the work we'll be doing, you'll be asked to put your parenting "hat" to one side, and focus on the other hats you wear. In other words, although being a parent is a very important part of who you are, there are other parts as well.
- For the activities we'll be doing today to get to know each other better, focus on you and who you are - not just who you are as a parent. You'll have plenty of opportunity to focus on the parenting part as this workshop continues. For today, we want to get to know each other as people.

7 Use the allotted time to begin building group cohesion and trust. One or more of the following "icebreaker" activities may be used:

◆ Round-Robin Name Toss

- Have the group stand facing each other in a circle.
- Ask members to think of an adjective that describes them in a positive way that begins with the same letter as their first name (e.g., Nice Nancy, Rugged Ralph, Caring Carla, Magic Maria.)
- Go around the circle and have people introduce themselves with their adjective (e.g., Hi, I'm Energetic Elena). After each introduction, instruct the group to repeat the name back in unison (e.g., Hello, Energetic Elena).
- Then ask each person to go around the circle and say everyone's name (e.g., I'm Nice Nancy, next to me is Rugged Ralph, then Caring Carla, then Magic Maria, etc.)
- Introduce a bean-bag or soft sponge ball, and tell the group you want to see how fast the group can toss the ball around while remembering to say everyone's name.
- The "rules" for the toss are: (1) call out the name of the person who you are tossing to (e.g., I'm throwing it to you, Rugged Ralph), and (2) after you've caught the ball, use the thrower's name before throwing it yourself (e.g., Got it, Calm Carl. Here you go Magic Maria).

→ Instruct them to toss the ball randomly, and not around the circle. Allow the group to practice slowly to get the “rules” down. Then ask them to see how fast they can get the ball going in 1 or 2 minutes.

→ **Discuss the activity:**

? *How did it feel to have to pick a positive adjective for yourself?*

? *How will this exercise help you remember group member's names?*

◆ My Favorite Things About Me

→ Make sure participants have paper and pens to write with. If group size is 8 or more, divide them into smaller groups.

→ Ask participants to think of the 5 things they like best about themselves. These could be attitudes, feelings, values, accomplishments, or things they do well. These things need not be “lofty” or complicated.

→ In addition, ask them to think about times or situations in which they have demonstrated or put into action each of the things they like best about themselves. Ask them to make notes if needed.

→ Allow some time to introspect and make notes.

→ When participants finish the task, ask everyone to take turns in their group describing the things they like best about themselves and give examples.

→ Instruct those who are not speaking to listen carefully without making comments. Allow everyone to have a turn.

→ **Discuss the activity:**

? *How did you feel about doing this exercise?*

? *What did you learn about yourself?*

? *What did you learn from others?*

? *How come we are usually shy about revealing our good points?*



Worksheet
& Handout,
pp. 14-15

◆ Tower of Strengths

- Distribute *Tower of Strengths* worksheet and **Strengths Word List** handout.
- Ask participants to look through the **Strengths Word List** and to circle 10 words that describe strengths they believe they possess.
- Next, ask them to select 5 more words that describe strengths they would like to develop or that they are working on developing.
- Instruct them to write their current strengths and desired strengths in the appropriate spaces on the worksheet.
- Ask participants to share their worksheets, first by describing their current strengths and giving examples, and then by sharing their desired strengths and why they are important.
- **Discuss the activity:**
 - ? *Was it easier to identify current strengths or desired strengths? Why?*
 - ? *How can we learn to focus on our personal strengths?*
 - ? *How do we develop strengths? What steps do we take?*

8 Thank group members for their participation and for their willingness to self-disclose.



15 Minutes

GROUP CONTRACT

9 Introduce the purpose for having a “group contract:”

- Groups work best if participants have a sense of their rights and responsibilities and can develop a sense of safety and trust. By establishing some principles for how the group will operate, members can relax and be productive. Let’s review some guidelines for our group that we have found to be helpful with other groups.



Handout,
p. 16

10 Distribute copies of the *Principles for a Productive Group* handout, review each point, and discuss why it is important. Encourage questions.

- 11 Ask group members to sign their copy to show that they agree with principles suggested for the group and that they intend to remain a member of the group. Collect the signed copies.



40 Minutes

PARENTING CONCERNS AND GOALS

- 12 Set the tone for participants to discuss current concerns and challenges about parenting:
- Parents who are in recovery have a lot in common. Parenting, even in the best of circumstances, is a challenge. Parenting in the midst of an ongoing substance abuse problem probably felt like an impossibility to many of you.
 - The most important thing to remember at this point is that you survived those days, and your children survived. Now is the time for healing and rebuilding relationships. Both are slow processes.
 - None of us has the ability to “fix” unhappy things that happened in the past. This reality leaves most of us with feelings of remorse and regret.
 - We can get hope from realizing that it is possible to make positive changes now, today and into the future. The purpose of this group is to help in that process.
 - Before we move on to establishing our group goals, let’s discuss some of the parenting concerns and challenges that helped motivate you to join this group.
- 13 Encourage a discussion of parenting concerns using some of the following questions. Keep discussion focused on concerns about the parent-child relationship (e.g., move participants away from using time to ventilate about financial problems, child custody issues, ex-spouses, etc.). Use a flip chart or erasable board to list participants’ ideas. Model supportive listening and validation of feelings and concerns.
- ? *What concerns you most about your relationship with your child right now?*
 - ? *Is there anything you are particularly worried about?*

- ? *Are there any feelings you have, or feelings you sense your child may have, that concern you?*
- ? *Are there any recurring problems you'd like to see resolved?*
- ? *In spite of all the concerns and challenges we've been talking about, what is one thing you would not want to change about your relationship with your child.?*

14 Summarize the concerns raised by the group. Highlight the positive aspects of their parent-child relationships as volunteered in the last question. Briefly underscore how the topics that will be addressed in group and the group interaction itself will help members further address their concerns.



Handout,
p. 17

15 Lead participants in establishing group goals. Distribute *Goal Talk* handout and help create a working definition of "goals" before proceeding.

- As mentioned earlier, taking a few minutes to think seriously about goals and to establish group goals will help keep us on track.
- Goals can be thought of as action plans for creating solutions to current parenting concerns and problems.
- Your handout highlights the differences between "long range plans" and "goals." Let's examine some of those.

16 Read handout points aloud and discuss the following points:

- Both long-range plans and goals are important. Goals are the "workhorse," while the long-range plan is the "vision."
- Goals are accomplished and reached "one day at a time."



Worksheet,
p. 18

17 Distribute *My Goals for Better Parenting* worksheet and ask participants to write down a few goals they are interested in working toward as part of the workshop.

18 Prompt with some of the following questions:

- ? *What do you most want to get out of this workshop?*
- ? *What do you want to learn about most?*
- ? *What issues or concerns do you want help with?*
- ? *What might this workshop provide that will help you most in your job as a parent?*
- ? *What do you hope to gain from other members?*

19 Ask participants to contribute one of their goals to a list of “group goals.” Use flip chart paper or a piece of poster board to record group goals as members offer them. With participants’ help, frame goals in language that is specific, yet general enough to apply to most families (e.g., learn better ways to control my child’s tantrums, learn to control my own temper when child misbehaves).

- Based on everything we’ve discussed today, let’s generate a list of group goals. Goals that relate to learning and to developing new skills are especially helpful.
- Let’s begin by having each person state a goal for this workshop based on your needs and concerns as a parent. We’ll add to the list as needed.

20 Review completed list of goals. Thank participants for their input. Briefly reassure them that most of the issues reflected in their goals will be addressed within the topics to be covered during the workshop.

21 Let participants know you will keep the goals list, and that reviewing it will be part of the business of the final meeting. In addition, the group may want to refer back to specific goals during the workshop.



10 Minutes

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

22 Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight the following points:

- We will begin covering the topics described in the outline at our next meeting. The dates and times for each group meeting are included on the outline.
- As we cover each topic, you'll have a chance to explore the issues you've identified in the group goals. You may want to keep a list of questions or ideas that occur to you between sessions.
- As we explore issues related to developing a more effective parenting style and learning new skills, we will keep four assumptions in mind:

Four Assumptions

1. You are the expert on your child and on your relationship with your child.
 2. There are many things you are doing well, so, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.
 3. If it works, keep doing more of it.
 4. If it doesn't work, do something different.
- In the weeks ahead, we'll be exploring how to use your resourcefulness and good intelligence to figure out how to do things that work in your relationship with your children.

Handout,
p. 19

23 Distribute *Four Assumptions* handout.



5 Minutes

HOMEWORK

24 Introduce the purpose and guidelines for homework suggestions that will be a feature of each group.

- At the end of each meeting, there will be a suggestion for a "homework" activity or experiment. These will not be difficult or too time-consuming, however, they will require some thought and effort.

- We'll discuss the previous week's suggested homework at the beginning of each session. This will allow us to share with each other the successes or difficulties we encounter with the new skills we'll be learning.
- These take-home assignments will help you stay focused on your goals and accomplishments. In previous groups, participants have found the assignments to be fun, interesting, and helpful.

25 Give the following homework suggestion:

- Here's the assignment for next week:
 - Between now and the time we meet again, I'd like for you to pay attention to all the things that happen in your relationship with your child(ren) that you want to continue to have happen.
 - It may help you to keep some notes, but it's not necessary if you don't want to.
 - The important thing is to pay attention to things that happen between you and your child that you want to continue to have happen. In other words, "what works," "what's good."
- We'll talk about this assignment as well as many other things next time. See you then.

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

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



Session
Evaluation,
p. 20



Partners in Parenting Workshop Schedule

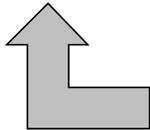


<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Date</u>
ONE	Introduction Discussion Group	_____ _____
TWO	Child Development Discussion Group	_____ _____
THREE	Family Communication Discussion Group	_____ _____
FOUR	Family Communication Discussion Group	_____ _____
FIVE	Promoting Good Behavior Discussion Group	_____ _____
SIX	Sensible Discipline Discussion Group	_____ _____
SEVEN	Self-Care for Parents Discussion Group	_____ _____
EIGHT	Problem-Solving Graduation	_____ _____

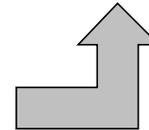
TOWER OF STRENGTHS



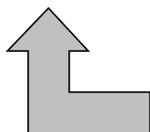
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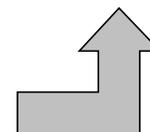
STRENGTHS I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE



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STRENGTHS I KNOW I HAVE





TOWER OF STRENGTHS WORD LIST

Adaptable	Forgiving	Peacemaker
Adventurous	Friendly	People-person
Ambitious	Funny	Persistent
Artistic	Generous	Polite
Athletic	Good intentioned	Practical
Believes in self	Good memory	Principled
Brave	Happy	Problem-solver
Community-minded	Hard-working	Quick learner
Competitive	Healthy	Quick thinker
Contented	Honest	Relaxed
Cool-headed	Imaginative	Religious
Cooperative	Independent	Responsible
Curious	Kind	Self-starter
Dedicated	Learner	Sense of humor
Dependable	Likeable	Sensitive to others
Determined	Logical	Sincere
Endurance	Loving	Smart
Energetic	Loyal	Spiritual
Enthusiastic	Mechanical	Spontaneous
Ethical	Musical	Strong
Even-handed	Optimistic	True to self
Expressive	Open-minded	Trusting
Fair	Organized	Trustworthy
Flexible	Patient	Warm-hearted

Principles for a Productive Group

These guidelines are a set of rules to be applied during group meetings to insure healthy interactions. Please read them over carefully and apply them.

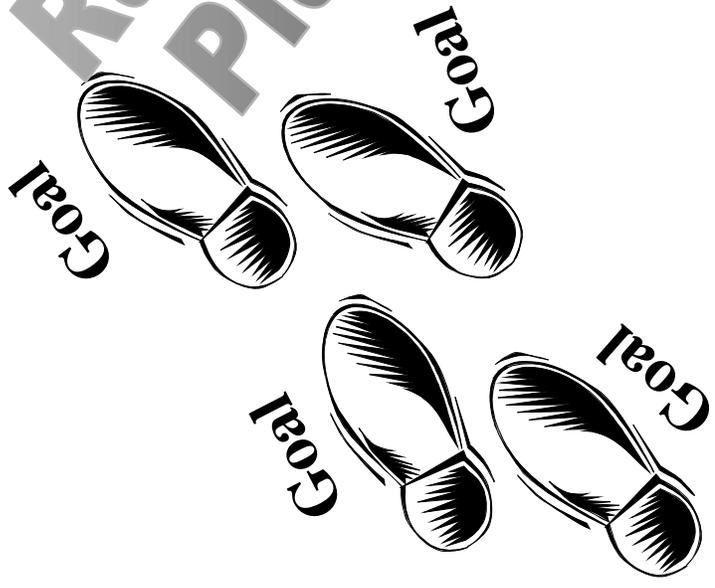
1. Attendance is very important to the group. Your presence and participation are valued and important. It is important that you attend not only for yourself, but for other members needing your support. If you must miss a session, please let the group know ahead of time. If this is not possible, please leave a message in the office.
2. Please be on time. If you are running late, please attend anyway, if possible.
3. Please honor the confidentiality of the group. Everyone must be able to feel comfortable that what they discuss in group will not be repeated outside of group.
4. Group members need to be supported when they talk about their feelings and concerns. There is no room in group for judging and blaming. Each person needs to be able to express feelings openly without fear of criticism.
5. Practice active listening. This means paying full attention to a group member who is talking instead of thinking about what you want to say next.
6. Parenting is a learning process. What works for one family may not always work for another. As group members we can offer support, hope, and encouragement, and at the same time respect that each person must find her/his own solutions.
7. Remember that each person in the group needs a chance to share. Since our meetings have a time limit, no one person should take over the conversation.

Signed _____ Date _____
Group Member

Signed _____ Date _____
Group Leader

GOAL TALK

Long
Range
Plan



A LONG RANGE PLAN:

- Inspires hope & motivation
- May be broad & "fuzzy"
- Reflects values & dreams
- Is reached in steps (goals)

Examples:

- Get along better with my kids.
 - Finish my education.
 - Quit drugs/alcohol.

GOALS ARE:

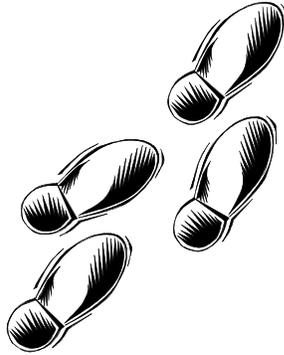
- Small
- Specific
- Realistic
- Important to you
- Require effort

Examples:

- Read to my child 4 times per week.
- Make appointment with advisor at community college.
- Attend 2 recovery activities per week.



MY GOALS FOR BETTER PARENTING



Some of my long-range plans for better parenting are:

Some of my goals for better parenting are:

One thing I really want to learn from this class is:



FOUR ASSUMPTIONS FOR GROUP



You are the expert on your child
and on your relationship with
your child.

You are already doing many things well,
so...

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

If it works, do more of it.

If it doesn't work,
do something different.





Session Evaluation Partners in Parenting Session 1

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 really like about your relationship with your child (children)?
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?



Child Development

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

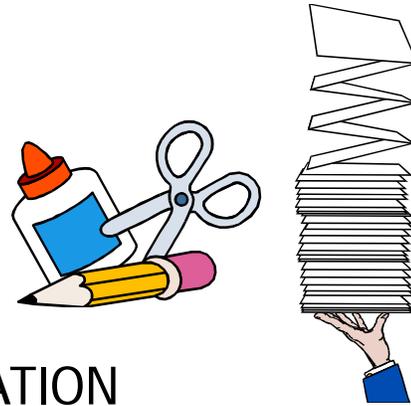
Synopsis

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



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



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)

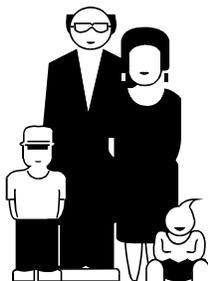
Intimacy, career, friendship, parenting

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>Infants 0-6 Months</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>Early toddler 6-18 Months</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 redirection to head off problems. Redirect 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>Older toddler 18-36 months</p>	<p>Continue to explore and develop motor skills; become aware of thoughts and feelings; develop language skills; experience individuation (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>Early-childhood 3-6 years</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 Parent's Bag of Tricks on following page for details on guidance ideas for this age group.</p>
<p>Late childhood 6-12 years</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>Adolescence 12-18 years</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?

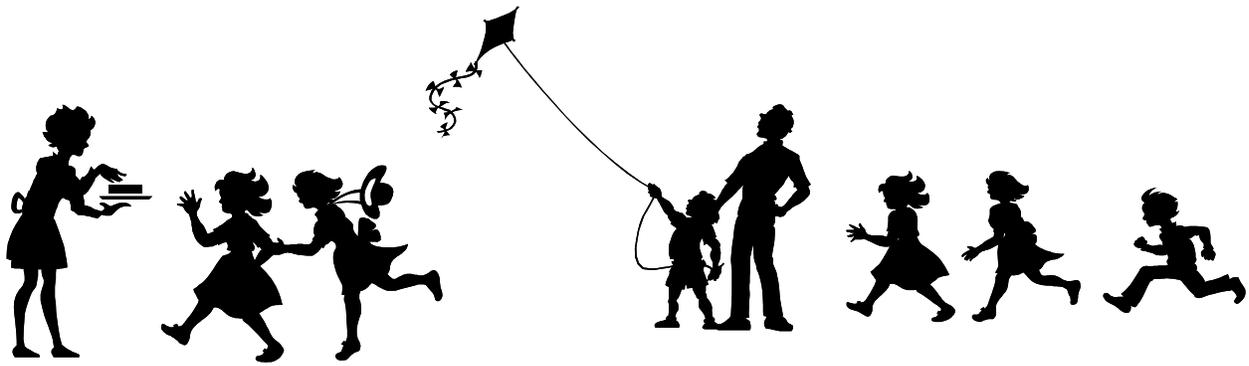
What can I say to myself when I make mistakes?

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.*

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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?



Family Communication

Active Listening

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand the child's need for parental acceptance
- Explore applications of active listening skills
- Practice skills through role play and discussion

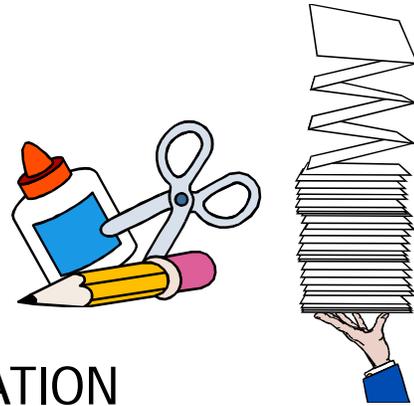
Synopsis

Since many family problems center on communication difficulties, this session introduces participants to the utility of using good communication techniques. The importance of conveying acceptance and emotional support through active listening skills is emphasized and parents are introduced to response styles that may impede effective communication (Gordon, 1973). How active listening might be used with children of different ages is demonstrated and participants are encouraged to rehearse active listening and explore its application to their parenting situations.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome	05 minutes
Session overview	05 minutes
Homework review	15 minutes
Acceptance	15 minutes
Your response style	20 minutes
Active listening	20 minutes
Practice and discussion	30 minutes
Concluding discussion	05 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 3	120 minutes



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:
 - *Your Response Style* (p. 68)
 - *Communication Roadblocks* (pp. 69-70)
 - *Listening from the Heart* (p. 71)
 - *Door Openers* (p. 72)
 - *Session Three Evaluation* (p. 73)
 - **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 / SESSION OVERVIEW

- 1 Welcome participants as they arrive.
- 2 Introduce the session topic.
 - Today's session and the session after that will focus on communicating with children. Effective communication involves not only talking and listening but also understanding.
 - As parents, one of the most important things we can do is teach our children that talking to us is safe and helpful. If we want our children to believe that talking to us is safe and helpful, then we must make sure that it is.
 - Today we'll explore how a special listening technique can be used to help children feel accepted for who they are and feel comfortable talking with their parents. We'll also explore how using this technique can contribute to problem solving and emotional maturity in children.
 - Before we jump in, let's review the homework assignment.



15 Minutes

HOMEWORK REVIEW

- 3 Review homework suggestion. Encourage a brief discussion using some of the following questions:
 - One part of the home assignment was to pay attention to things that your child does or says that are "typical" of children in his/her age group. This is based on some of the developmental issues we covered at the last meeting. Let's hear some examples.
 - ? *How is what you are describing "typical" for a child of that age?*
 - ? *How did your knowledge about child development influence your reaction what your child did?*

- You also were asked to give yourself a point every time you noticed your child behaving in a way you liked (even if only briefly). You were encouraged to immediately praise the child's behavior or otherwise tell him how pleased you were.
- You were encouraged to pay attention to how you felt after noticing the child and giving praise, and how you sensed your child felt. I also suggested that you might want to pay attention to any other positive changes in your relationship with your child. Let's talk about it.
 - ? *Was noticing your child being good easier or more difficult than you thought it would be?*
 - ? *What strategies did you use in your quest?*
 - ? *How did your child react at first? Did this change over the week?*
 - ? *How did you feel when you noticed your child behaving in a way you liked and gave some praise?*
 - ? *What differences in your relationship with your child did you notice over the week?*
 - ? *What did you learn from this "experiment?" What do you think your child learned?*

- 4** Thank participants for their willingness to give the assignment a try. Reiterate that praising or otherwise recognizing good behavior is important for children. We all like to hear a good word when we've done well, and children are no exception. Positive feedback helps children learn about social cooperation.



15 Minutes

ACCEPTANCE

- 5** Introduce the topic of acceptance by referring back to the group goals from the first session. Use a flip chart or chalkboard to write out points of emphasis as discussion unfolds.
- Many of our goals from the first session centered on the bigger idea of wanting to do the best for our children. Parents want to be effec-

tive at helping their kids prepare for adult life. We want to help them be happy, secure, competent, and to feel good about themselves.

- Communication is a very important part of doing the best we can for our children. Acceptance is the starting point.

? *What is acceptance?*

? *When we say we accept our children for who they are, what do we mean? What is involved?*

6 Discuss issues raised by participants about the nature of acceptance. If necessary, help clarify the difference between acceptance of a person (e.g., unconditional positive regard) and acceptance of behavior (which has its limits). Summarize with the following points:

- If we want to teach our kids that talking to us is safe and helpful, then we must learn and practice the language of acceptance.
- When we are able to feel and communicate genuine acceptance to our child, we provide that child with the foundation of good mental health.
- Acceptance fosters self-esteem, competence, and willingness to try.
- Acceptance must be communicated. Acceptance must be demonstrated.

7 Lead a discussion with the following question. Record participants' answers on flip chart or chalkboard.

? *How do we show another person that we accept them?*

? *How do we demonstrate acceptance?*

8 Discuss answers and make sure the following points are brought up and discussed:

- We can let children know they are accepted nonverbally as well as verbally.

- Acceptance is conveyed through eye contact, gestures, tone of voice, and touch.
- “Letting go” conveys acceptance. This means not intruding when a child is occupied with an activity, permitting the child to make and learn from “mistakes,” and allowing separateness.
- Many parents don’t realize that they may be nonverbally communicating nonacceptance by interfering, intruding, moving in, checking up, or joining in. For example, Mary is happily coloring in her book, pressing down hard on the crayon, and going out of the lines. Mother jumps in and says “It will be prettier if you don’t press so hard and stay inside the lines. Here, let me show you.” Although well-intended, this intrusion may convey to Mary that her way of coloring is unacceptable.
- Listening conveys acceptance and is especially effective in helping us convey to our children that we accept their feelings, their concerns, and their struggles.
- When our children feel genuinely accepted by us, they learn that we are safe and helpful, and they see us as people they can talk with.



20 Minutes



Worksheet,
p. 68

YOUR RESPONSE STYLE

9 Distribute *Your Response Style* worksheets, and ask parents to complete them based on how they would realistically respond. Introduce the exercise using some of the following points:

- We’ll spend the rest of today discussing skills for conveying acceptance to our children. To get us started, we’ll use this short exercise. Look at the situations on the page and you’ll see that they are fairly common for children of different ages.
- For the five situations described on your worksheet, write down how you might normally respond, or, if you have faced a similar situation, write down how you responded in the past.
- There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Write a short sentence about how you might respond based on your first reaction to the situation described. Remember, this is not about “right” or “wrong” responses - we’ll be using this exercise as a springboard to continue today’s discussion.

10 When participants have completed their worksheets, ask for volunteers to share their responses and discuss them using some of the following questions:

- ? *How familiar were the situations on your worksheet?*
- ? *Which situation was the easiest for you to respond to? Which one did you find most difficult?*
- ? *If these had been "real life" situations, how do you think you would have felt as you responded to your child?*
- ? *How might your child have felt?*



Handout,
pp. 69-70

11 Distribute *Communication Roadblocks* handout. Without further explanation, ask parents to read over the descriptions of "roadblocks."

12 Ask participants to determine if any of their worksheet responses might be roadblocks or contain elements of roadblocks. Allow time for discussion, stressing some of the following points:

- Remember, there truly are no "wrong" or "bad" responses to the situations in the exercise. *We label these responses as "roadblocks" because they are roadblocks to listening. Remember that the focus of this session is to work on listening skills.*
- Most parents are surprised at how many "roadblocks" to good listening they sometimes use. In the example situations on the worksheet, simply listening might be an effective response to use.
- Remember, listening to children helps them feel accepted. If we can learn to hold back and simply listen, we can help children learn to express themselves and solve their own problems. Like adults, sometimes children like to "think out loud" or just "vent" about things. At these times, it feels good to know that someone is there just to listen, without judging or trying to make us feel better.
- In many of these examples, the child is coming to the parent because he has a problem he needs to solve or talk about. In other examples, the child is coming to the parent with feelings he needs to express or ventilate. In particular, the child is looking for a safe and helpful place to bring his troubles.

- Remember, no one is saying these so-called roadblocks are “bad” or “terrible mistakes.” Some of them may be appropriate responses in other situations, and most of them come from the parent’s good intentions.
- However well-intentioned, when your child needs to talk through a problem or feeling, these types of responses will tend to reduce your effectiveness in getting the child to open up and feel accepted.
- In many ways, it’s like you, as parent, are your child’s “counselor” or best friend. When we have problems to think through or emotions with which we want to come to terms, it’s good to have a counselor or best friend with whom it is safe and helpful to talk. Kids need this kind of person, too, and most parents want to be this person for their children.
- Many parents feel some frustration about this idea of “roadblocks.” They say: “If it’s not a good idea to offer suggestions or reassurance when my child comes to me with a problem or hurt feelings, then what the heck am I supposed to do??!”
- The alternative is listening. Listening without giving advice, without giving opinions, without intentions of responding in any other way except listening. Plain old listening is important and so is a more sophisticated style of listening called “active listening.”
- For the rest of the session, we’ll explore listening as one of the most powerful tools a parent can use to strengthen her relationship with her child. We’ll talk about when to use active listening, when not to use it, and how to use it with children of different ages. We’ll also practice with each other so we can later practice with our kids.



20 Minutes

Handout,
p. 71

ACTIVE LISTENING

13 Distribute *Listening From the Heart* handout. Model the three types of listening and discuss how they convey acceptance and encourage children to open up. Include some of the following points:

- It’s hard to imagine any single thing that does a better job of conveying “I care about you,” “I respect you,” and “I love you” than really listening to your child.

- To sense that we've been heard and understood makes us feel good, and children are no exception. Among the many things children need from their parents is a sense of being cared about and understood.
- It's often helpful to understand what listening is not. This helps reduce anxiety and opens the way to a better understanding of listening as a skill.
 - Listening is not the same as agreeing. Often parents will stop listening and jump in "correcting" the second they hear their child say something with which they don't agree. They may fear that listening without interrupting will convey that they agree with the child's "misguided" notions.
 - Listening is not "second-nature." The sense of hearing that most people are born with is not the same as listening. Listening is something we have to learn how to do. Children learn how to listen by observing adults.
 - Listening is not easy. Our feelings, moods, health, or levels of tiredness, stress, or preoccupation can interfere with listening. Many parents find they have to be aware of these influences and work to manage them in order to be able to listen when their children really need it.
- There are three listening techniques that help children feel cared about and understood. We'll call them "door openers" because they can help open the doors of communication. These door openers work wonders with other adults as well.
 - Neutral responses are simple responses that you are familiar with and probably use a lot. They are short and don't communicate judgments, feelings, or opinions, but do let the child know you are listening. For example:
 - "I see."
 - "Oh."
 - "Really."
 - "How about that."
 - "You did, huh."

- Invitations to say more are phrases that encourage your child (or anyone else, for that matter) to keep talking. For example:
 - "Tell me more about that."
 - "I'm interested in hearing all about it."
 - "Keep talking - this is fascinating."
 - "Would you like to talk about it?"
 - "Tell me the whole story."
 - "Sounds like you had a heck of a day."
 - "For real? Tell me more."
- Active listening is the most effective door opener, in that it not only opens the door, but also helps keep the door open.
 - In active listening, the parent tries to understand what the child is feeling and what he is trying to communicate.
 - The parent then puts his understanding into words and feeds it back to the child for verification.
 - If need be, the parent "bites his tongue" in order to beat down the urge to use "roadblock" responses.



Handout,
p. 72

14 Distribute *Door Openers* handout and review points. Encourage brief discussion. Summarize with some of the following points:

- One of the most important duties of parenting involves helping children understand, manage, and communicate about their feelings and emotions.
- Listening, especially active listening, is a key skill for helping children learn to name feelings and to work through problems.
- When parents are able to listen compassionately as children deal with their feelings and troubles, they help children learn that feelings are manageable, that talking helps, and that parents trust them.
- Like all skills we want to master well, listening takes practice.
- Often, parents must show their children that they are willing and ready to listen. Making it a point to spend a bit of time each day giving your child your undivided attention can open the door to

communication. Simple statements like “Tell me about your day” can serve as icebreakers and let children know you are available to listen.



30 Minutes

PRACTICE AND DISCUSSION

15 Introduce the practice session by establishing guidelines for role-play and giving constructive feedback. Include some of the following points:

- One benefit of this group is that we can practice skills and “experiment” with each other to get a feel for new techniques.
- The purpose of role-play is to help each other learn and “get the hang” of skills that may feel awkward or even silly at first. We’ll work at a pace that is comfortable for everyone.
- We’ll use “real life” situations. This will give everyone a chance to apply new skills to recurring parenting problems and get some feedback.
- After each person practices, the rest of us will provide feedback on what we observed and offer suggestions, when appropriate, about how effectiveness might be improved.
- As group leader(s), my job will be to provide you with several role-played examples of how a skill is used and what it looks and sounds like before we get started.

16 Discuss the use of listening skills with preverbal children. Model the use of active listening with children under 3 or 4 years of age and answer questions. Discuss the following points:

- In terms of developmental stages, active listening is most effective with children who are verbal, that is, able to talk and understand words. From about age 3 onward, children respond favorably to active listening.
- Active listening with children under 3 might include paying attention to the child while he is playing and providing a “running commentary” as he interacts with his toys. In this way the parent can “reflect” back feelings and interactions as the child experiences them. For

example, watching Jimmy playing with his train, his mother might say: "You really like that train. It makes you happy to push it on the floor. Oops, it got stuck. You really don't like it when it gets stuck, it makes you mad," etc. This type of parent/child interaction, even with children who can't yet talk, provides a foundation for communication in the future.

- This type of active listening can be practiced with infants, as well. Although they may not be able to use words, they can sense when parents are "listening" to them and they love the attention.

17 Set the stage for participant role plays with some of the following points:

- Listening and active listening skills are used to help children deal with their feelings and problems. Listening is a foundation skill that we will build on during this workshop.
- For today, let's narrow our focus to just the skill of listening. Later on we'll see how it fits in to other issues like discipline, limit setting, and gaining compliance.
- When it's your turn to practice, here are some things to remember:
 - Really tune in and listen. Use door openers and repeat back to the "child" what you understand about her feelings or concerns.
 - Avoid responding with roadblocks. If you feel the urge to respond with a roadblock, choose a neutral response instead (e.g., "I see," "Tell me more," or "Umm, really.") or use active listening (e.g., "You're really angry about not being able to play outside right now.")
 - The words you choose to indicate that you are listening are less important than how you say them. Pay attention to your nonverbal signals:
 - Look at your child when she is speaking.
 - Keep your expression pleasant and open. Use your face to communicate caring, interest, and concern.
 - Avoid allowing your voice to sound sarcastic, mocking, impatient, bored, or uninterested.

- Take pride in what you're doing when you listen to your child. You're giving your child something valuable - your time and your acceptance.

- Active listening helps children learn it's okay to talk about their feelings. Parents can help children learn words that describe feelings by offering suggestions or using "feeling" words themselves. For example, after watching Johnny sigh and frown because he can't make a puzzle fit together, the parent might say: "Looks like you are feeling really frustrated about that puzzle."

18 Model several examples of how to use active listening with different age children based on realistic parent-child encounters. Encourage questions.



Worksheet,
p. 68
Handout,
pp. 69-70

19 Lead participants in a role play session to practice listening skills. Use example situations from *Your Response Style* worksheet or ask participants to volunteer real situations. Suggest that participants keep their *Communication Roadblocks* list handy for reference.

20 Discuss the practice session using some of the following questions:

- ? *How did it feel to practice active listening?*
- ? *What benefits do you see in learning to listen to your child?*
- ? *In which types of situations do you think active listening will be most helpful?*
- ? *What's going to be the most difficult challenge for you in using active listening?*
- ? *How might you use active listening in your adult relationships? What benefits might there be?*

21 Thank participants for their work. Reassure them that active listening takes time and practice to master, but many parents have found it to be one of the most useful parenting "tricks" they can draw upon.



5 Minutes

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

22 Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight the following points:

- As with any good thing, active listening can be overdone. Remember that its purpose is to encourage children to talk about their feelings and concerns. Here are some examples of times to not use active listening:
 - When your child asks you specifically for help or information, don't switch to active listening. For example, if your child asks "What time will you be home from work today, mom?," you probably want to just give a straight answer rather than "You're puzzled about when I'll be home." Here's another example. If your child says "Can you give me a ride to school this morning?," don't respond with "You're concerned about getting to school today."
 - Timing is a critical issue. Sometimes children don't want to talk about their feelings, no matter how many doors you open. Respect their rights, and let them know you're ready to listen when they are ready to talk.
 - For your part, don't begin active listening with your child unless you have the time to hear all the feelings that might come up. Opening the door then slamming it shut is not helpful for either of you.
- Keep the roles straight. It's the parent's job to be the active listener, not the child's. Naturally, it's important for you to talk about your feelings with your child (next week we'll cover ways to do that); however, when you have difficult problems or feelings, call on another adult to help you talk them through.
- In order to use active listening effectively, you must want to listen and understand your child. You must genuinely want to be helpful. You must be willing to take the time.
- In order to make active listening work, you must be able to accept your child's feelings - even when those feelings are different than what you think the child "should" feel, even when they are different than what you feel.

- It helps many parents to remind themselves that feelings are “transitory.” Feelings states come and go. There’s no such thing as “good” feelings or “bad” feelings. A child expressing his anger is not going to get “stuck” in anger. Quite the contrary - talking about feelings helps them pass more quickly. When we listen, we help children learn to talk through their feelings rather than act out on them.
- Finally, it’s helpful to work on accepting your child as his/her own person, and as a person who is separate from you. Respecting this separateness allows you to let your child experience his own feelings, thoughts, and ideas.



5 Minutes

HOMEWORK

23 Give the following homework suggestion:

- Practice active listening with your child. Make it a point to use active listening at least once every day during the coming week. This will help you make it a daily habit. Pay attention to how you feel and how your child responds when you use the technique.
- The second part of the experiment is to make a purposeful effort to avoid using roadblocks - especially the more negative ones like blaming, ridiculing, lecturing, and name-calling. Pay attention to the kinds of strategies you are able to devise to avoid using roadblocks. Pay attention to how you feel when you successfully avoid using a roadblock.

24 Thank group members for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return to the next session.



Session
Evaluation,
p. 73

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





YOUR RESPONSE STYLE

If you were the parent, how would you respond to the following messages from your child? Write in your responses.

CHILD: I hate my teacher. She's old and stupid and bossy. I never want to go back to her class again!!

How you would respond: _____

CHILD: I want to sleep in your room. I don't like my room anymore. Your room makes me feel better at night.

How you would respond: _____

CHILD: (Crying) I never get to go anywhere. Why can't I go to the movies with Mary and her friends. She always gets to go everywhere.

How you would respond: _____

CHILD: No carrots. No. No. No eat carrots.

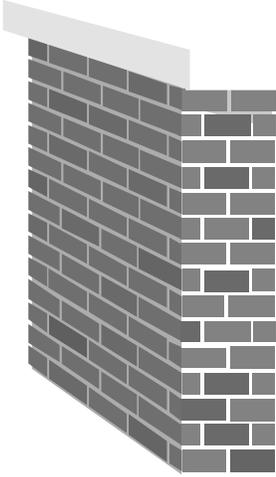
How you would respond: _____

CHILD: I'm not too young to wear makeup. All the girls are wearing it. You just want to make me look stupid with my friends!!

How you would respond: _____

Communication Roadblocks

(Things that get in the way of listening)



Giving orders (Telling the child what to do)

- "Get back in your own bed!"
- "Eat those carrots right now."
- "You stop talking about your teacher like that."

Using threats (Warning the child of consequences)

- "If you don't stop whining, I'll ground you!"
- "I better not catch you wearing makeup again."
- "You'll sit there all night if you don't eat those carrots."

Preaching (Telling the child what he "should" or "ought" to do)

- "You shouldn't talk about your teacher like that."
- "You ought to be nicer to your sister."
- "You shouldn't be so vain about your looks at your age."

Lecturing (Trying to influence the child with facts or logic)

- "You need to respect your teachers in order to get ahead in school."
- "Your sister is older and wants to spend time with her friends."
- "A girl your age doesn't need to wear makeup."

Giving advice (Telling the child how to solve a problem)

- "Try being nicer to your teacher and see what happens."
- "If you turn on the night light you'll feel better in your room."
- "Go play outside. It will help you forget about the movies."

Blaming or criticizing (Making negative comments)

- "It's your own fault your sister never lets you tag along."
- "If you weren't so mean, maybe your teacher would be nicer."
- "You are driving me nuts with this carrot business!!"

Ridiculing, shaming (Making fun of the child)

"You're acting like a such a baby!"

"You never think of anyone but yourself, do you?!!"

"You look like a silly clown with all that paint on your face."

Analyzing (Assuming you know the child's reasons or motives)

"You're just mad at your teacher because you failed her test."

"I think you are jealous of your sister's friends."

"You want to wear makeup just to make me angry."

Consoling, reassuring (Trying to make the child feel better)

"Now. Now. Mrs. Smith isn't all that bad of a teacher."

"Your sister doesn't mean to hurt your feelings."

"I felt the same way when my mother wouldn't let me wear makeup."

Asking questions (Trying to find causes or motives)

"Why is Mrs. Smith angry with you? What did you do?"

"Why is it so important for you to do what your sister does?"

"What's wrong with the carrots?"

Humoring, placating (Trying to distract the child)

"Yes, dear. I know. You'll feel better tomorrow."

"Try not to think about it."

"When you are older, you'll understand my reasons."



LISTENING FROM THE HEART



Neutral responses are simple responses that signal you are listening but don't communicate judgments or opinions. For example:

- ***"I see."***
- ***"Oh."***
- ***"Really."***
- ***"How about that."***
- ***"You did, huh."***

Invitations to say more are phrases that encourage your child (or anyone else, for that matter) to keep talking. For example:

- ***"Tell me more."***
- ***"I'm interested in hearing all about it."***
- ***"Keep talking – this is fascinating."***
- ***"Would you like to talk about it?"***
- ***"Sounds like you had a heck of a day."***

Active listening opens the door and helps keep it open. In active listening, the parent tries to understand what the child is feeling and trying to communicate. The parent then puts his understanding into words and repeats it back to the child. The parent **avoids** all "roadblock" responses. For example:

Johnny: ***"I'm bored. I don't have anyone to play with."***

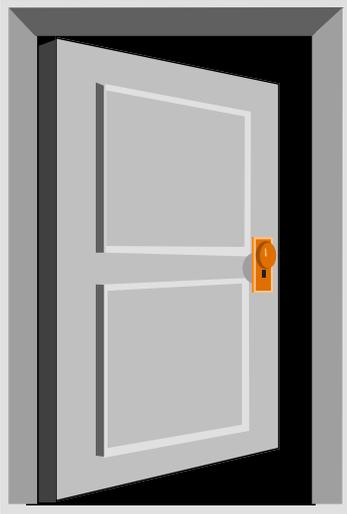
Dad: ***"You're not happy about the fact that your friends are out of town."***

Johnny: ***"Yeah. I don't know what to do around here for fun."***

Dad: ***"You're having a hard time figuring out what you'd like to do this afternoon."***

Johnny: ***"Uh, Huh. Maybe I'll go down to the gym and see if I can get in a basketball game."***

Dad: ***"Good idea. Want a ride down there?"***



DOOR OPENERS ...
say more than just what the words say.

When you listen with love and use door openers, your child “hears” more than the words you use. Here are some of the things that listening “says” to your child:

- *You have a right to express how you feel.*
- *I respect you as a person with ideas and feelings.*
- *I can learn things from you.*
- *I really do want to hear your point of view.*
- *Your ideas are important to me.*
- *I am interested in you.*
- *I want to understand you better.*
- *I’m here for you.*
- *I’m glad you want to share your life with me.*
- *Your feelings are important and valid.*



Family Communication

Building Understanding

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand the impact of nonverbal communication
- Identify utility of I-statements vs. you-statements
- Explore techniques for sending clear messages
- Practice skills through role play and discussion

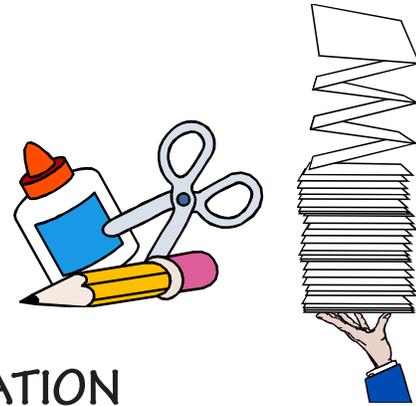
Synopsis

Continuing with the theme of family communication, this session introduces parents to speaking skills that help increase cooperation and understanding. The importance of nonverbal signals, especially in family communication, is emphasized and participants are introduced to “I-Messages” (Gordon, 1973) as a strategy for expressing parental feelings and requests to children in a nonjudgmental way. Techniques for sending clear messages to children are demonstrated and participants are encouraged to rehearse skills and explore applications with their children.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome/Session overview	10 minutes
Homework review	15 minutes
Speaking without words	20 minutes
The “I-Message”	20 minutes
Clear, kind, and firm	15 minutes
Practice and discussion	30 minutes
Concluding discussion	05 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 4	120 minutes



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:
 - *Maximizing Communication* (pp. 92–93)
 - *100 Real Feelings* (p. 94)
 - *I-Messages vs. You-Messages* (p. 95)
 - *I-Message Practice* (p. 96)
 - *Sending I-Messages* (pp. 97–98)
 - *Sample Scenarios* (p. 99)
 - *Session Four Evaluation* (p. 100)
 - **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 / SESSION OVERVIEW

- 1 **Welcome participants as they arrive.**
- 2 **Introduce the session topic.**
 - In today's session we will continue to explore communication strategies that can help improve family relationships.
 - Last week, we explored a skill called active listening that parents can use as a door opener to encourage children to talk about their feelings and problems. Today, we'll delve into speaking skills that help answer that age-old parental plea "How can I talk so that my kids will listen to me?"
 - Unfortunately, there's no magic formula that can guarantee that children will listen to or comply with everything a parent says or requests. However, there are several time-tested techniques that do increase the odds that kids will listen and cooperate. As an extra bonus, these techniques work well with adults, too.
 - Let's go over the homework activity before moving on.



15 Minutes

HOMEWORK REVIEW

- 3 **Review homework assignment. Encourage a brief discussion using some the following questions:**
 - The homework assignment was to practice active listening skills daily during the past week. You also were asked to avoid using the "roadblocks" we identified. Let's hear about what happened with active listening first.
 - ❓ *Describe an active listening attempt that was the most successful for you (even if it wasn't "perfect"). Give some quick background and share what happened.*

- ? *How did you make yourself stay focused on active listening?*
- ? *How did your child react? Was it different from what you would have predicted? In what way?*
- ? *How about the active listening attempt that turned out to be the least successful? What happened?*
- ? *In retrospect, how would you have handled it differently?*
- ? *Tell me about a situation last week when you were about to use a “roadblock” but caught yourself. What was the situation and which roadblock did you avoid?*
- ? *What did you do instead?*
- ? *What helped you catch yourself in time?*

- 4** Thank participants for their willingness to give the assignment a try. Reiterate the importance of active listening and avoiding roadblocks, especially the more negative roadblocks (e.g., blaming, humiliating, making fun, criticizing). These skills take time, patience, and practice to master. The first step is simple awareness.



20 Minutes

SPEAKING WITHOUT WORDS

- 5** Lead into a discussion on the importance of nonverbal communication with some of the following points:

- As we shift our focus slightly from listening to talking, keep in mind that much of the meaning we send when we speak is carried not in our words, but in how we say those words.
- Similarly, much of the understanding we get when others communicate with us comes from how they say what they say.
- It’s called nonverbal communication, or “body language.”
- What we do with our bodies, our tone voice, our faces, our eyes, our hands, and our gestures says much more than words alone.
- Our feelings and attitudes are usually very obvious in our body language. The body language we use will often influence how people react or respond to us.

- In just a bit we'll talk about some of the body language issues parents need to keep in mind when communicating with their children.
- First, though, let's try a fun activity that will help increase our awareness of how nonverbal communication impacts us all.

6 Use one of the following exercises to help participants explore the dimensions of nonverbal communication:

◆ Wearing Your Feelings

- ➔ Prepare headbands or small signs for each person in the group to wear (use one or the other). Each headband or sign should have written on it a feeling, mood, or attitude.
- ➔ Put a headband or sign on each group member. The person wearing the headband or sign should not be able to see what is written on it. Headbands should display the feeling word facing outward. If you use signs, they should be affixed to each person's back. In this way, group members can see and read each other's signs, but not their own.
- ➔ Instruct them not to tell each other what is on their signs or headbands.
- ➔ Ask them to pretend they are at a gathering, like a party, where they are meeting new people.
- ➔ Instruct them to mill around together and to react non verbally to each person based on the mood or feeling that person is "showing" on their headband or sign.
- ➔ Instruct them to react "as if" the other person really was displaying the mood or attitude he/she wears, but not to spill the beans! They are not to tell others what's on their headbands and not to ask about their own.
- ➔ Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the role play.
- ➔ Discuss the activity:
 - ? *What do you think is written on your sign?*
 - ? *How do you know?*
 - ? *How did you figure out what was on your sign?*

- ? *What about the nonverbal reactions you gave to others? What did you find interesting about their reaction to your reaction?*
- ? *Were some moods and feelings easier to react to than others? Which ones? How did you react?*
- ? *What did this exercise teach you about nonverbal communication?*

◆ Statues

- Have participants choose a partner.
- Distribute to each pair a card with a mood, feeling, or attitude written on it (e.g., angry, afraid, ashamed, in love, depressed, broken hearted, confident, etc.).
- Tell pairs to keep their cards to themselves.
- Give each pair a turn in front of the group. One person will be the “statue”, and the other person will arrange his legs, hands, posture, and face to act out the feeling on their card. Instruct them not to talk or use words while completing their arrangements
- After each pair completes this arrangement process, the rest of the group guesses what feeling is being portrayed. Instruct the group not to start throwing out guesses until each team has completed its “statue.”
- Discuss the exercise:
 - ? *How did you and your partner decide who would be the statue and who the “sculptor?”*
 - ? *For the feeling on your card, how did you decide on which gestures, postures, and facial expressions would be best to use in your arrangement?*
 - ? *For those who served as statues, what difference did it make that you already knew the feeling on the card? How would it have been different had your partner been trying to “arrange” you when you didn’t know the feeling?*
 - ? *When you were trying to figure out the other teams’ feelings, what were some “cinches” or “dead give-a-ways” that alerted you to the answer?*

? *What has the exercise helped you learn about body language?*

7 Thank participants for their willingness to take part in the exercise. Encourage them to try it with their children. Most kids will find this kind of activity fun, and doing it with them provides parents with a teaching opportunity for helping children better understand nonverbal communication, too.



Handout,
pp. 92-93
Handout,
p. 94

8 Distribute *Maximizing Communication and 100 Real Feelings* handouts and summarize the discussion on nonverbal communication using some of the following points:

- When we pay attention to what we are “saying” nonverbally we maximize our communication effectiveness. This is often easier said than done because most of the time we are not very aware of our body language.
- Children, however, are very aware of their parents’ body language. When your tone of voice, eyes, or face are conveying strong emotions, children may not be able to pay attention to your words or understand what you are trying to say.
- Becoming aware of the powerful impact body language has on how others interpret what we say is the first step.
- Once we are aware of our body language, we can make changes and do things differently in order to increase our effectiveness.

9 Model how each of the following nonverbal dimensions can be used to enhance parent-child communication (e.g., appropriate tone of voice; getting on the child’s eye level). Also model examples of body language that may inhibit communication (e.g., angry gestures; looming over a small child).

- Here are some key types of body language to keep in mind when talking with your child.
 - **Body Posture:** Whenever possible, make sure you are at your child’s eye level when you talk to him. Avoid “looming” over your child when you speak. This is especially important when you

want to redirect a toddler's activity, or when you need to set limits or explain consequences to a preschooler. It may be hard on your knees, but getting down to your child's eye level helps him feel respected as a human being and makes it easier for him to really "hear" you.

- **Eye Contact:** Look at your child when you speak to him using natural, comfortable eye contact. Avoid glaring or trying to stare your child down.
- **Facial Expression:** Make sure your face matches your words. Nothing is more confusing for a child than trying to figure out what the real story is when a parent's facial expression contradicts what he or she is saying. For example, smiling when you tell your child that you are angry, or frowning when you're telling the child how much you appreciate something.
- **Gestures:** Natural gestures add emphasis to a message and help clarify its meaning. Avoid using hostile or aggressive gestures with your children. Examples include finger-wagging, pounding the table, or shaking a finger or fist in your child's face.
- **Voice:** A firm, well-modulated voice reflects a calm and confident emotional state. Shrillness, screaming, or yelling reflect anger and lack of control. A soft, wavering voice reflects indecision or lack of confidence. Avoid speaking with a sarcastic, bitter, or mocking tone of voice (your child will almost surely begin mimicking you and it'll drive you nuts). As much as possible, use a calm, level voice when talking with your children.
- **Touch:** How we touch our children sends a strong, nonverbal message. Grabbing, shoving, slapping, or poking a child will almost always send a negative message. Touching children as part of communication should be neutral or gentle, never rough. For example, holding your child's shoulder while you calmly direct him to a "time out" room communicates firm, but gentle authority. Pushing or shoving him into the "time out" room communicates anger and disrespect, not authority.
- **Personal Space:** Respect the child's need to control his "personal space" whenever possible. All of us, children and adults alike, develop a preference for how close we like to be

when we interact with other people. If your child doesn't want to be tickled, hugged, or kissed by Aunt Betty, respect that choice. Don't force your child to get closer to someone than she is comfortable with.

10 Discuss ideas for improving and staying aware of nonverbal communication using some of the following questions:

- ? *Why is nonverbal communication so powerful?*
- ? *What do you remember about how your parents communicated nonverbally with you?*
- ? *When you get on your child's level and have eye contact, what are you communicating to your child? How might your child feel?*
- ? *If you talk in a shrill tone and shake a finger at your child, what are you communicating? How might your child feel?*
- ? *How might you apply good nonverbal communication skills in your adult relationships? What benefits might there be?*



20 Minutes

THE "I-MESSAGE"

11 Briefly define I-Messages and review the rationale for using them more frequently in parent-child communication. Include some of the following points:

- Along with active listening, I-Messages round out a basic system for effective communication.
- Parents are encouraged to use I-Messages to express their feelings and concerns to their children, and to describe problems. I-Messages are also good for modeling a constructive way to handle anger or deal with unpleasant situations.
- I-Messages may be neutral, preventive, or confrontive, depending on what the parent needs to express.
- Neutral I-Messages are used in the course of normal, no-conflict interactions to express ideas, opinions, or feelings. For example,

‘I don’t want french toast for breakfast,’ “I feel relaxed now that I’ve had a nap,” or “I like the way our new chair looks in the living room.”

- Parents can use preventive or confrontive I-Messages when they experience feelings of annoyance, frustration, resentment, tension, discomfort, or anxiety over the behavior of the child. For example, the child is kicking the back of the chair, the child is interrupting you on the phone, the child has left his toys all over the stairs, or the child is running through the house screaming.
- The first step is to get a feel for the difference between I-Messages and You-Messages.



Handout,
p. 95

12 **Distribute *I-Messages Vs You-Messages* handout, and walk participants through the key differences between the two communication strategies. Include some of the following points:**

- You’ve probably already gotten an idea about the difference between an I-Message and a You-Message from last week’s handout on communication roadblocks.
- You-Messages tend to produce communication roadblocks and I-Messages tend to open the door to better communication. Remember, how we say what we say is sometimes more important than what we say.
- Let’s go over a few examples:

13 **Review examples from handout and help participants explore the differences.**

- ? *What’s different about these two ways of communicating?*
- ? *What roadblocks do you see represented in the You-Messages?*
- ? *In one example, the You-Message is “You’re stupid. You never do anything right.” How would you feel if someone said that to you? How do you think hearing that might make a child feel?*

14 **Summarize the differences between the two communication styles using some of the following points:**

- The main advantage the I-Message has over the You-Message is that I-Message is much more honest. (It's kinder, too.)
- When we use I-Messages we give our children an honest reading of our feelings and we help them learn how their behavior impacts us and others.
- I-Messages help open communication and involve the parent in solving the issue with the child. You-Messages can be seen as pushing the child away.
- The I-Message is much less likely to cause resistance, and is much less likely to harm the child's self esteem. When you learn to use I-Messages correctly, you help protect your child from feeling blamed, rejected, "bad," or beyond redemption.
- To communicate honestly to the child the effect his behavior has on you is much less threatening and hurtful than suggesting that something is bad or wrong with the child because of the behavior. In other words, telling your child how you feel is far less threatening than accusing him of causing your bad feelings.
- Let's take a few minutes to practice what we've discussed so far. After that, I'll show you a "formula" for putting I-Messages to work. We'll spend the rest of the session practicing and talking about how to make it work with your kids.



Worksheet,
p. 96

15 **Distribute *I-Message Practice* worksheets and allow time for participants to complete this practice exercise.**

- Don't make the exercise more complicated than it needs to be.
- The purpose is to help you get a sense of the difference between "I" and "You" Messages.
- It's okay for your sentences to be short and simple. Relax, and have fun with it. Don't try to say too much. Just concentrate on getting the spirit of using I-Messages.

16 **When participants have completed the exercise, review it by having volunteers share their I-Message response. Provide clarification as needed and encourage questions.**



15 Minutes

Handout,
pp. 97-98

CLEAR, KIND, AND FIRM

17 Distribute *Sending I-Messages* handout. Review suggestions for communicating clearly with children. Model examples of how these techniques may be used. Include some of the following points:

- I-Messages are not magical sentences that will instantly influence children to straighten out and fly right. Rather, they are part of an interaction sequence that usually begins when the child's behavior is a problem for the parent, others, or the child himself.
- The most common format for using I-Messages is:
 - **I feel ...**
 - **when ...**
 - **because ...**
 - **request ...**
- The "I feel" part expresses your feelings about the child's behavior, the "when" part is a specific, nonblaming description of the child's behavior, and the "because" part explains the effects the child's behavior is having on you. For example, "I get frustrated (feeling) when you track mud on the floor (the behavior) because I spent the last hour cleaning it." (explains why the behavior bothers you).
- In some cases, this type of I-Message is enough to stop the behavior or elicit a positive response from the child, such as cleaning up the mud in the example just given.
- In other cases, the parent may want to add a command or request to the child to stop the behavior. For example, "When you play on the stairs (the behavior) I worry (the feelings) that you'll fall and get hurt (the reason). I'd like for you to move away from the stairs to play (request for the child to stop the behavior)."
- Of course, even the most carefully thought out I-Message delivered perfectly will fail to move some children some of the time. This doesn't mean the technique is flawed. It just means that parents must use additional skills in order to help children behave.

- The **broken record** technique is often effective when children ignore a request for behavior change. It gets its name because it involves repeating the same request over and over. Here are some guidelines:

- When you plan your I-Message, determine what you want your child to do (e.g., “I want you to play away from the stairs”).
- Keep requests simple, especially for younger children. State one request at a time, rather than giving the child a string of commands.
- Calmly repeat what you want the child to do if he argues with you or ignores you (e.g., “Billy, I want you to play away from the stairs”).
- Do not respond directly to any argument or resistance from the child. For example:

Billy: “Aw, Mom. I’m being careful. I want to play here.” (argument)

Mom: “Billy, I want you to play away from the stairs.” (broken record)

- Use a broken record a maximum of three times. If your child does not obey, be prepared to set consequences and then follow-through (e.g., “Billy, you have a choice. You can move away from the stairs right now or go to your room for 10 minutes”).
- Along with I-Messages and the broken record, parents can also use their body language as a powerful tool for effective communication. To maximize these techniques, remember these points:
 - Stay calm. Don’t scream or yell your I-Messages, requests, or broken records at your child. Speak in a firm, calm tone of voice. When you are calm, you communicate to your child that you are in control. Use gestures only to emphasize your words, not to intimidate your child.
 - Look your child in the eye when you speak. Eye contact helps you communicate to your child that you are serious about your request and want her to take it seriously, too. You can increase the effectiveness of what you say with eye contact. If your child won’t look at you, gently turn her head to look in her eyes.

- Touch your child. Gently placing your hand on your child's shoulder and getting on eye level with him helps him focus on your message and tells him nonverbally that you expect him to pay attention.
- Lastly, don't drop the ball on active listening. Active listening and I-Messages can work hand-in-hand, and a parent may have to switch back and forth between them when working with a child to change or alter behavior. For example:

Parent: *I don't like it when you turn the TV volume up so loud because it hurts my ears. Please turn the volume down. (I-Message)*

Janie: *You never make Billy turn it down.*

Parent: *You think I'm being unfair about the TV volume rules. (active listening)*

Janie: *Yeah. Billy always has the TV on loud.*

Parent: *You're wondering why I haven't said something to Billy. (active listening)*

Janie: *Yeah, it's not fair.*

Parent: *Well, you may be right. I'll have to think about it. But for now, I don't like the TV being so loud. Please turn the volume down. (active listening and broken record).*

18 Encourage questions and discuss how these techniques may be used with different age children.



30 Minutes

PRACTICE AND DISCUSSION

19 Introduce the practice session by reviewing guidelines for role-play and giving constructive feedback.

- One benefit of this group is that we can practice skills and “experiment” with each other to get a feel for new techniques.
- The purpose of role-play is to help each other learn and “get the hang” of skills that may feel awkward or even silly at first. We'll work at a pace that is comfortable for everyone.

- We'll use “real life” situations. This will give everyone a chance to apply new skills to recurring parenting problems and get some feedback.
- After each person practices, the rest of us will provide feedback on what we observed and offer suggestions, when appropriate, about how effectiveness might be improved.
- As group leader(s), my job will be to provide you with several role-played examples of how a skill is used and what it looks and sounds like.



Handout,
p. 99

20 Lead participants in a role playing session to practice using I-Messages and related skills. A page of sample role play scenarios is provided. However, participants may prefer to volunteer real life situations for practice.

21 Help parents experiment with using both active listening as well as broken record techniques when I-Message requests are met with resistance. It's helpful to play out a scenario using one technique and then follow with the same scenario using a different technique. This will help parents weigh their strategy choices for dealing with their children's arguments or noncompliance.

22 Discuss the practice session using some of the following questions:

- ? *How did it feel to practice using I-Messages?*
- ? *What benefits do you see in using I-Messages more often?*
- ? *In what types of situations do you think I-Messages will be most helpful?*
- ? *What's going to be the most challenging thing for you in using I-Messages?*
- ? *How might you apply some of these skills in your adult relationships? What benefits might there be?*

23 Thank participants for their work. Reassure them that many parents find using I-Messages to be awkward in the beginning, but with practice it becomes easier.



5 Minutes

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

24 Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight the following points:

- There are a couple of important points to keep in mind about I-Messages, active listening, broken record, and the other communication issues we've discussed.
- For many parents, these skills "feel" like a foreign language. The good news is that if you begin using these skills consistently (and early with young children), there's a good chance they'll become the "native" language for your child. Remember, when you use these skills to improve your parenting, you are also modeling them for your child. An effective communication style will help your child throughout life.
- These skills enable parents to put into action some of the values they may hold and want to instill in their child (e.g., respect for others, honesty, kindness, consideration, and problem-solving).
- The steepest mountain is often the hardest to climb. Odds are, if you can master using these skills with your children, you'll be able to use them with just about anybody.
- Listening, avoiding roadblocks, and using I-Messages to head off problem behavior has the added benefit of helping you feel good about yourself. All of us get a self-esteem boost when we are able to help others by listening or when we are able to resolve a problem calmly without blaming or name-calling.



5 Minutes

HOMEWORK

25 Give the following homework suggestions:

- Between now and the next time we meet, practice using I-Messages, body language skills, active listening, and broken records. Make it a

point to use three (3) I-Messages each day. Pay attention to how you feel and how your child responds when you use these techniques.

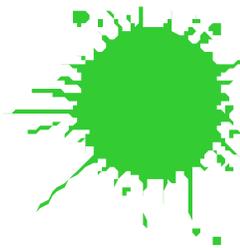
- If you “catch” yourself using a You-Message, stop immediately and correct it. For example: “Johnny, how many times have I told you not to leave your toys on the floor!!!! Whoa – let me back up on this one.” Then calmly, but firmly: “Johnny, I really get upset when you leave your toys all over the floor because I’m afraid I’ll trip over them. I want you to put them away right now.”
- Your children or partner may look at you like you’ve flipped out when you practice these “self-corrections”. Just tell them proudly that you are trying to learn to express yourself better. You’ll also model for your children that perfection isn’t required, and that even parents have to work hard sometimes to make changes.
- As with last week, keep on thinking about roadblocks and making purposeful efforts to avoid using them. Keep on devising your own strategies and successes for avoiding roadblocks. Pay attention to how you feel when you’re successful.

26 Thank group members for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return to the next session.



Session
Evaluation,
p. 100

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



MAXIMIZING COMMUNICATION



Posture

Don't stand over the child - get on the child's eye level.

Eye Contact



Look at your child when speaking to him/her. Use natural, comfortable eye contact. Avoid glaring or hard stares.



Facial Expression

Your face should match your words. Explain what you are feeling, don't expect your child to guess based on your facial expression.



Gestures

Use natural gestures to add meaning. Avoid hostile or aggressive gestures such as finger-wagging or pounding a fist.

Voice

Use a level, calm tone.



Avoid shrillness, sarcasm, and mocking. If you whine, your child may learn to whine, too



Touch

Touch should be neutral or gentle, never rough. Avoid grabbing, shoving, slapping, or poking. Use touch to communicate gentle authority.



Personal Space

Respect the child's need for physical distance. Don't force your child to be hugged, kissed, or tickled if he/she doesn't want to.

Notes

I plan to make the following changes in how I communicate non-verbally with my child:

1. _____

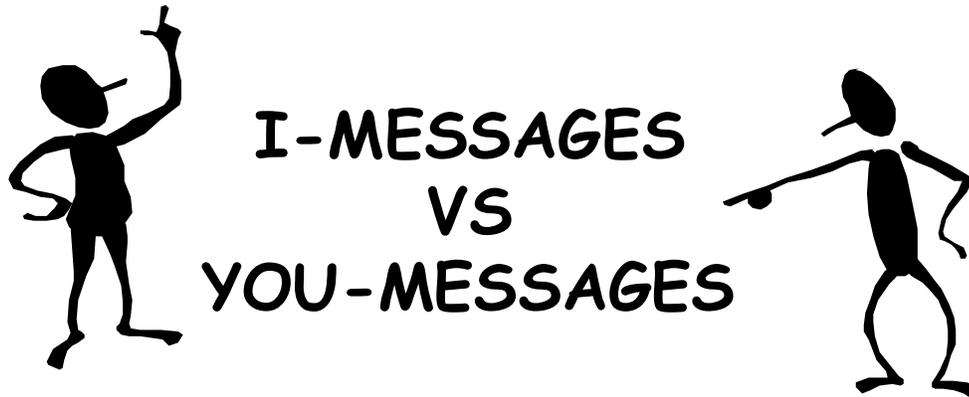
2. _____

3. _____

100 REAL FEELINGS

affectionate	fatalistic	misunderstood
afraid	fearful	needy
alone	feminine	old
angry	flirty	optimistic
anxious	frustrated	out-of-control
attractive	generous	oversexed
awkward	genuine	paranoid
beaten	gentle	passionate
beautiful	glad	peaceful
brave	grateful	persecuted
calm	guilty	phony
caring	happy	playful
comfortable	hateful	pleased
committed	hopeful	possessive
concerned	hopeless	preoccupied
confident	hostile	pressured
confused	hurt	proud
content	ignored	quiet
cruel	impatient	rejected
curious	inadequate	repulsed
defeated	incompetent	restrained
defensive	inferior	sad
depressed	insecure	secure
deprived	isolated	seductive
desperate	jealous	self-pitying
different	joyful	self-reliant
disappointed	judgmental	sexy
eager	lively	shallow
easygoing	lonely	shy
embarrassed	lovable	silly
envious	loved	sincere
evil	loving	sinful
excited	masculine	sorry





I-Messages open up communication.
You-Messages create roadblocks.

I-Messages are honest and kind.
You-Messages are harsh and hurtful.

I-Messages protect self-esteem.
You-Messages hurt self-esteem.

I-Messages focus on feelings and behavior.
You-Messages focus on fault and blame.

Examples:

I want you to stop running in the house.

Vs

You know you're not supposed to run in the house.

I would like for you to help your sister.

Vs

You're suppose to help your sister.

I don't like all this noise. Please turn the volume down.

Vs

You're giving me a headache. Turn that thing down.

I'm angry about this mess. Please clean it up.

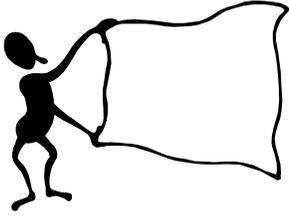
Vs

You make me so mad!! Now look what you've done!

I'd like for you to tell me what's upset you so much.

Vs

You're acting like a baby.



I-Message Practice

For each of the following situations, write a "You-Message" response, then an "I-Message" response. Write only one sentence for each, and keep it simple.

Your child has just tracked in some mud on your clean floor.

You-Message _____

I-Message _____

Your child keeps interrupting you while you're on the phone.

You-Message _____

I-Message _____

Your child is ignoring your request to turn off the TV.

You-Message _____

I-Message _____

Your child forgot to do one of his assigned chores.

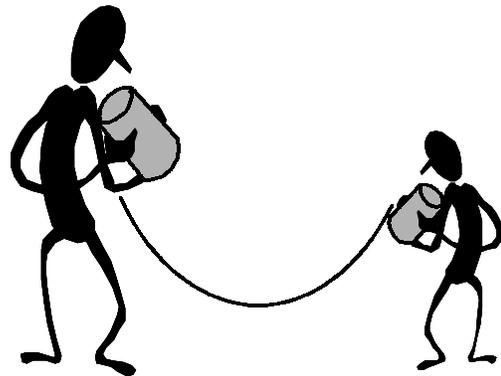
You-Message _____

I-Message _____

Sending I-Messages

I-Message formula:

- *I feel ...*
- *When ...*
- *Because ...*
- *Request for change ...*



- ✓ The “**I feel**” part allows you to express your feelings honestly and respectfully.
- ✓ The “**when**” part allows you to tell your child in a non-blaming way about the problem behavior.
- ✓ The “**because**” part allows you to explain why the behavior is a problem.
- ✓ The “**request**” part allows you to add a command or request that the behavior be stopped or changed.

Example

“When you play on the stairs (behavior), I worry (feelings) that you’ll fall and get hurt (reason). I want you to play in the living room instead (request).”



I-messages are not magic. They won’t guarantee that a child will behave. However, using I-Messages helps parents communicate clearly and honestly in a way that a child can understand.

Tips for using I-Messages

★ **Stay Calm.** Deliver your I-Message in a firm, calm tone. Calmness and a level tone communicate to your child that you are in control. Screaming or yelling communicates that you have lost control.

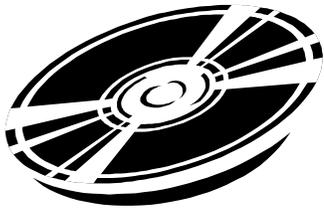
★ **Look your child in the eye.** Eye contact communicates to your child that you are serious about your request. Don't glare or frown.

★ **Touch your child.** A gentle hand on the shoulder and getting on eye level will help your child pay attention.



Broken record technique

- ★ Use when child ignores or argues.
- ★ Do not respond directly to the argument or resistance.
- ★ Calmly repeat your request or command for behavior change.
- ★ Repeat request no more than 3 times.
- ★ If child fails to obey, state the consequences and follow-through.



Example

"Billy, you have a choice. You can move your game off the staircase right now or you can go to your room for a 10 minute time out."

Sample Scenarios for role play or case study

Apply I-Messages and related communication techniques to these scenarios. Use role play to practice what you might say and how you would say it.

You asked your child to clean his room an hour ago. As you walk by his room, you notice that he's been playing with his toys rather than cleaning.



You discover your child playing with her finger-paints on the living room carpet, something you have told her not to do because you don't want stains on the carpet.

You have just accidentally knocked over a glass of juice that your child placed in the refrigerator without a cover. You have house rules against uncovered glasses in the refrigerator. Your child walks in as you are cleaning up the mess.

Your child is bouncing a ball off the living room ceiling, right next to a vase that you really like.

Your child is going through a phase of serving herself large portions of food at dinner, then not eating what she puts on her plate.

While watching your child playing, you notice that he is pushing and bullying a smaller playmate.

You discover that your child failed to give you a note from her teacher describing a discipline problem she has been having.



Session Evaluation Partners in Parenting Session 4

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. In what situations do you plan to use I-Messages more often with your child (children)?

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?



Helping Children Behave

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Examine ineffective responses to misbehavior
- Identify ways to encourage wanted behaviors
- Explore common guidance problems
- Practice guidance techniques

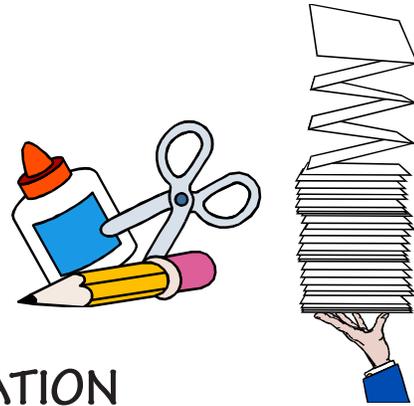
Synopsis

Helping children behave appropriately requires attention and guidance from parents. This session is designed to help participants learn techniques for increasing desired behaviors in their children, including praise, reinforcement, limits, redirection, changing the environment, and modeling suggested by Crary (1993). In addition, ineffective methods of dealing with misbehavior are discussed and communication skills that augment guidance are demonstrated. Participants are encouraged to practice guidance skills and explore their application with their children.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome/Session overview	10 minutes
Homework review	15 minutes
Ineffective responses	15 minutes
So what works?	35 minutes
Planning and practice	35 minutes
Concluding ideas	05 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 5	120 minutes



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:
 - *Things That Don't Work* (p. 115)
 - *Guidance That Works* (pp. 116–117)
 - *Sample Scenarios* (p. 118)
 - *How to Hold a Family Meeting* (p. 119)
 - *Guidance Plan* (p. 120)
 - *Session Five Evaluation* (p. 121)
 - **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 / SESSION OVERVIEW

- 1 Welcome participants as they arrive.
- 2 Introduce the session:
 - Today's session will focus on what we can do as parents to help children behave the way we would like them to. Helping kids learn good behavior requires guidance and attention on the parent's part.
 - Fortunately, there are many tried and true techniques that parents can use in their job as guides for their children. We'll examine some of these techniques and look at how and when to use them with children of different ages. You may already be using many of them without giving them a name. We'll take time to share experiences and practice some of these guidance ideas.
 - We'll also discuss some of the less-than-effective ways parents deal with misbehavior and why they don't work.
 - Before we get started, let's review the homework task.



15 Minutes

HOMEWORK REVIEW

- 3 Review homework. Encourage a brief discussion using some of the following questions:
 - It was suggested that you practice using I-Messages during the week, even if it meant catching and correcting a You-Message. It was suggested you use three (3) I-Messages per day, and that you also practice some of the other skills from last week, like broken record and active listening. Let's discuss the assignment.
 - ? *Let's talk about an I-Message attempt that you feel turned out pretty good. Give us a quick background and share what happened.*
 - ? *How did you make yourself remember to use I-Messages?*

- ? *How did your child react? Was it different from what you would have thought? In what way?*
- ? *How about using other techniques, like good body language or broken record? How did that go?*
- ? *How about an attempt that didn't work well? What happened?*
- ? *In retrospect, how would you have done it differently?*

4 Thank participants for their willingness to try the assignment. Encourage them to keep on practicing I-Messages and active listening.



15 Minutes

INEFFECTIVE RESPONSES

5 Lead into a discussion of ineffective responses to children's behavior using some of the following points:

- Over the next two meetings, we'll discuss ideas for providing guidance to children and ways to help children learn to control their own behavior. As with many things, there's good news and bad news. The bad news is there is no magic formula that makes guidance and discipline easy. The good news is there are lots of proven techniques and strategies that can work very well when parents invest the time.
- First, let's quickly review some of the things parents do when they want to correct misbehavior. Over the years, parents have come up with a lot of desperate measures to try to get children to behave.
- Unfortunately, some of these end up like the alligators-in-the-swamp story. All parents really want to do is "drain the swamp" (get kids to behave), but they suddenly find themselves "up to their necks in alligators" (dealing with even worse behavior). They really want to help their children behave appropriately, but they end up with chaos.
- Let's look at some things that parents find themselves doing that almost never work. You'll recognize some of these, I'm sure. Keep in mind we're not saying these things are "wrong," but rather that they just don't work very well.



Handout,
p. 115

6 **Distribute *Things That Don't Work* handout and review the points. Model how some of these interactions might sound. Encourage questions and cover some of the following points:**

- **Questions:** Often, in frustration, parents think that if they can only figure out why their child is misbehaving they can stop it. Unfortunately, most younger children don't know why they are misbehaving and older ones are apt to give you "reasons" you won't like. Typical questions include: "Why don't you listen to me?" "What am I going to do with you?" "Didn't I tell you to mow the lawn?" "How many times do I have to tell you to clean that room!?"
- **Pleading and begging:** Parents may feel so overwhelmed or helpless over their child's behavior they start begging the child to be good. Sometimes we think that maybe if we can make the child feel guilty or sorry for us, the child will behave. It may sound like this: "Come on, honey. Be good for Daddy and please, please, go to bed now." "We're going to Aunt Helen's. Please promise me you won't touch any of her figurines, okay?" "Sally, I'm begging you, please turn off that radio."
- **Statements of fact:** Many parents think if they just point out one more time what the child should be doing, the child will do it. They assume the child is not aware that he is misbehaving. Parents say things like: "You still haven't taken out the trash." "You're still not listening to me." "You haven't put those toys away yet."
- **Lectures:** Some parents hope that if they talk long enough and really make the child see their point they will be able to appeal to the child's reason. Another form of lecturing involves long-winded attempts to make the child feel guilty or ashamed for the bad behavior. Parents assume that if they can make children feel remorse, the behavior will stop.
- **Hostile responses:** Parents may feel anger and frustration over the misbehavior and direct hostility toward the child in a futile attempt to shock or shame the child into compliance. Unfortunately, hostile responses also hurt children's esteem and feelings. Examples include verbal put-downs ("You are acting like a spoiled brat." "I'm sick of you and all the mess you make."), threats ("Now you're going to get it." "If you leave clothes on the floor one more time you've had it!"), or severe punishment ("You're grounded for the

rest of the school year!” or “You can never use the telephone in this house again!”).

- **Spanking:** As we’ve discussed before in this group, the purpose of any guidance or discipline technique is to teach. Responding to bad behavior with spanking or hitting hurts children and sets them up to feel angry, withdrawn, and uncooperative. It’s also hard on parents who may feel helpless, guilty, or out-of-control after they spank. The experts say spanking does little to change children’s behavior in the long run. It closes down communication and makes it more difficult for parents to teach and guide their children toward appropriate behavior.



35 Minutes

SO WHAT WORKS?

7 Introduce the discussion of guidance techniques using some of the following points:

- If there’s one thing that’s been learned about parenting over the years, it’s this - the best way to improve a child’s behavior is to reinforce what you want to continue. In other words, reward what you like.
- Attention is a powerful “reinforcer.” Attention and recognition from others, especially parents, is a basic need.
- With all children, but especially with young children, your attention is the thing they most treasure and want. Children figure out pretty early what kind of attention parents will give (e.g., praise, spanking, scolding, smiles, pats) and how to go about getting it (e.g., coloring a pretty picture, putting toys away, pinching sister).
- If your child can get your attention and praise by putting her toys away or other “good” behavior, she is very likely to continue those behaviors.
- However, if the only way a child can get her parents’ attention is to hit her sister or pull books off the table, she’ll likely continue those behaviors. To a child, any type of attention is preferable to no attention.

- By giving children the right kind of attention, including guiding or directing them toward behaviors you want, many misbehavior problems can be altered or eliminated. Let's look at the basic strategies.



Handout,
pp. 116-117

8 **Distribute *Guidance That Works* handout and cover each of the strategies. Encourage questions. Model how techniques may be used with children of different ages. Include some of the following points:**

■ PRAISE

- Praise tells a child that you like what he did. Praise can be given with words, gestures, and facial expressions. Praise is a type of attention that children crave, because praise makes them feel respected, happy, and proud.
- Praise is one of the easiest guidance strategies to use. When you see your child doing something you want to encourage, give him some praise. Things parents find helpful to praise are cooperation, thoughtfulness, going to the potty, being gentle with pets or younger siblings, trying something new, eating all the carrots.
- To be really effective, praise should be specific, immediate, and sincere.
- However, it is possible to sabotage praise. Avoid coupling praise with indirect criticism, for example: "You did a good job cleaning the bathroom this time. I hope you'll remember to do it this way all the time." Sometimes parents feel they should sandwich a criticism with some praise or compliments to reduce its sting. All this does is confuse a child and make her wonder about your honesty.

■ REWARDS

- The basic idea is that rewarding a behavior increases the frequency of that behavior.
- A reward can be anything a child wants, needs, or likes - food, praise, attention, toys, special treats. In order to be effective, a reward should be given immediately after the good behavior is witnessed or observed.

- Parents should decide what behavior they want their child to do, determine whether the behavior is reasonable for the child's age, decide on an appropriate reward, then watch carefully for the behavior. When the child does the wanted behavior or attempts it, a reward is given.
- When the child begins to perform the behavior frequently, slowly decrease the rewards (e.g., reward less frequently). For example, you can reward every other time the behavior is done, then reward occasionally, and eventually stop giving rewards for that particular behavior.
- This technique differs from what some people call "bribing." When a parent bribes a child he usually says something like "Here's some candy. Now I expect you to go play quietly with your toys" (desired behavior). With reinforcers, the parent "catches" the child in the act of doing the desired behavior and gives a simple reward.
- Another approach for using rewards involves negotiating with the child for desirable behavior. For example, a parent may say to her child on the way to the grocery store "If you listen and follow directions while we are at the store, you can buy some candy when we are finished shopping." The parent reminds the child of the upcoming reward during the shopping trip by gently asking "Remember, if you want to buy candy later, what should you do?" At the end of shopping, the parent can again reinforce the desired behavior when the child picks out her candy by saying "You did such a good job of listening and following my directions, you get to buy some candy."
- When you reward you are reinforcing a behavior and you send a clear message that you like the behavior. The child is more likely to continue that behavior because he has, in a sense, been praised and complimented for it.

■ REDIRECTION

- Redirection is most useful with younger children. It is helpful when the child's activity or behavior is unsafe, annoying, or disturbing others.

- Redirection involves replacing something the child is doing that you don't like with an activity that is acceptable to you. This may involve directing the child's attention to a whole new activity (e.g., distraction) or substituting something else for one part of the undesired activity.
- The parent must decide on how to redirect or make a substitution, calmly and firmly intervene, explain briefly why, and encourage the child to carry on with the new activity or substitution. For example, Billy is trying to cut his apple with a sharp knife. Dad is concerned about accidents, so he takes the sharp knife away and replaces it with a dull knife saying "This sharp knife is for cooking; here's a knife that's better for cutting apples."

■ CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Sometimes the easiest solutions are the best for younger children with behavior problems. Changing the environment or the surroundings is one technique for encouraging behavior you want or limiting behavior that you don't want in young children.
- Changing the environment is a helpful strategy, especially when redirection isn't appropriate for the issue at hand. Many parents of young children swear by this technique because, with thought, it so often can help stop problems before they really begin.
- This technique can be used for safety reasons (e.g., the child is pulling the cat's tail and you know the cat scratches), when what the child is doing causes conflict (e.g., the toddler is playing with the remote when older brother is watching TV), or just to make the parent's life easier (e.g., putting a step stool in the kitchen so the child can get her own juice).
- The child's environment can be changed or adjusted by adding to it, limiting it, or changing the way things are arranged.
 - **Adding to the environment** might include things like providing books, new toys, or new activities. It can also include broader strategies for helping the child behave,

such as taking drawing materials to the doctor's office so the child can entertain himself during the wait.

- **Limiting the environment** might include things that reduce stimulation so the child calms down (e.g., no roughhousing) or physically removing things that are involved in the misbehavior (e.g., removing crayons or scissors). It may also involve restricting activities in certain areas (e.g., tricycle riding outdoors only, play-dough played with in the kitchen only, loud toys outdoors only).
- **Changing the environment** might include simplifying or rearranging things to address behavior problems or head them off before they happen (e.g., installing a low coat rack so the child can hang up her coat or putting toys on low shelves so the child can reach them).

■ SETTING LIMITS

- The technique we'll discuss today is most suitable for younger children. Next week, we'll discuss how this technique is modified for use with older children. However, the basic idea is the same no matter what the child's age. The idea is to help children learn to control their own behavior by setting consequences for bad behavior and enforcing those consequences everytime the undesired behavior happens.
- For younger children, consequences should be simple and straight-forward. A short time-out or taking away a toy for a short time are examples of good consequences to use with younger children. Spanking is not considered to be an effective consequence, as it emotionally upsets children and makes it difficult for them to pay attention to what you want them to learn.
- Children usually judge what you will do by recalling what you have done in the past. Therefore, when limits are set, parents must always be consistent and follow-through. Being consistent means acting to enforce the limits every time they are broken. Children become confused if parents enforce a rule one day and ignore the rule the next.

- There are 3 parts to setting limits for guidance:

(1) Establish a clear rule or request.

Make sure you have explained to the child in a firm, gentle way what the rules/expectations are and what the consequences for defiance are. When you have set the limit, get the child's attention immediately when you see a behavior that's unacceptable. In a kind, clear way, tell the child the rule and wait a minute for compliance.

"Timmy, remember there's a rule about jumping on the furniture. I want you to stop it."

(2) Give an explanation of the choices.

If the child fails to obey, explain the choices. Tell the child what he may do instead of the bad behavior and what will happen if he continues to ignore or defy you.

"You may go outside if you want to play rough. If you keep jumping on the furniture, I will take you to your room for a time out."

(3) Immediately follow-through with assisted compliance, if needed.

If he persists, assist the child to comply, gently and firmly. Physically direct the child to do what you asked.

(Parent gently takes Timmy by the shoulders and leads him away from the furniture, then escorts him to his room for a time out.)

- It's important to give a lot of thought to how you will use this technique. Understand what you want the child to do and what you will do if the child defies or ignores you. Remember, if you don't follow-through, you are teaching the child to ignore you.

■ MODELING & INSTRUCTION

- Modeling is an effective teaching technique that can be used to help children learn new behaviors. Effective guidance involves helping children learn the behaviors parents expect and want through modeling and simple instruction.

- If you want your child to learn from modeling, you must do exactly what you want your child to do. Children will learn good behaviors as well as bad ones from what they see you do.
- If you want your child to speak quietly, say “please,” or pick up after herself, then you need to monitor those behaviors in yourself and make sure you are providing a “model” that you want your child to copy.
- Simple instruction is used to help teach children new behavior or how to do a task. The most important rule is to keep it simple. Young children get lost when there are too many words. They really can’t remember more than one instruction at a time.
- For example, it would be difficult for a young child to follow this instruction: “Mary, please remember to wipe your feet when you come in from playing, and if you have mud on your pants when you come in, take the pants and put them on top of the washing machine, but be careful not to knock over the bottle of detergent that’s on top of the dryer.”
- Ideally for young children, verbal instructions should be short, with gestures and demonstration of how to do the expected behavior.



35 Minutes

PLANNING AND PRACTICE

9 Lead participants in a planning and practice session for using guidance techniques.

- Several sample scenarios are provided for use as role plays or case studies so that members can practice applying skills. However, discussion may be more productive if participants volunteer real life situations and problems to work on.
- Help parents experiment with praise, reinforcement, limits, redirection, modeling, and changing environments. Spend time allowing participants to practice the steps involved in implementing these techniques. Discuss their uses with children of different ages and temperaments.



Handout,
p. 118

- Parents will enjoy spending time planning how to use reinforcement. It may be productive to show them items that other parents have used that worked well, for example, star charts, spinners, marble jars, etc. Encourage creativity. If appropriate, allow group members to spend time actually making some reinforcement tools to use at home.
- It's also helpful to let parents experiment with using different guidance techniques on the same discipline problem and weighing how each might work with their own children.

10 Discuss the practice session using some of the following questions:

- ? *How did it feel to practice these techniques?*
- ? *Which technique seems to work best for your situation?*
- ? *What is going to be the most challenging thing for you in applying these guidance techniques?*
- ? *How will you evaluate whether or not these techniques are working? How might you modify them if they don't work?*

11 Thank participants for their work. Reassure them that most parents need time and practice before feeling completely comfortable with new ways of guiding children.



5 Minutes

CONCLUDING IDEAS

12 Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight some of the following points:

- The primary job of all parents, after safety and nurture, is guidance. The world is a complicated place and your children need your help in learning the rules and getting along.
- Planning and knowing what will work and what won't work based on your child's temperament and personality are important considerations.

- Children of all ages need guidance. As they grow and change, techniques that worked may stop working. Rules and expectations will have to be altered, and new consequences will have to be used. This is when parents learn to rely on their creativity, common sense, and patience.
- One way to improve family communication and help children take part in setting rules, guidelines, and consequences is through holding regular “family meetings” to discuss issues as they arise.



Handout,
p. 119

- 13** Distribute copies of *How to Hold a Family Meeting* handout for participants to read. If time allows, briefly review some of the guidelines for family meetings.



5 Minutes



Worksheet,
p. 120

HOMEWORK

- 14** Distribute *Guidance Plan* worksheets. Give the following homework suggestions:

- The homework assignment is to complete a short worksheet. Complete the worksheet so that it reflects your concerns about guidance and your goals.
- In addition, think about how you plan to begin using some of the guidance techniques we discussed today. Remember that the planning is an important step in making these strategies work. If you feel ready to begin using these ideas, go ahead. If you need some time to digest them, that’s okay, too. Hopefully, the worksheet will help you with this process.

- 15** Thank group members for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return next session.



Session
Evaluation,
p. 121

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



THINGS THAT DON'T WORK

Questions

"Why don't you listen to me?"
 "Didn't I tell you to stop?"
 "How many times do I have to tell you?"



Pleading and begging

"Please behave at Aunt Sally's house."
 "I'm begging you to be quiet."
 "Now I want you to be a good boy, Okay?"

Statements of fact

"You still haven't done the dishes."
 "You're not listening to me."
 "Your clothes are all over the bathroom."

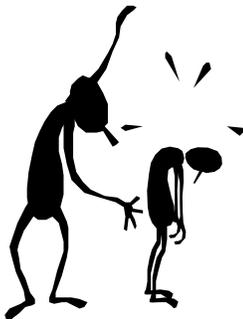


Lecturing

"...and another thing, when I was your age, we knew how to behave. If you want to get ahead in life you have to know the rules..."

Hostility and threats

"Now you're going to get it..!"
 "I'm sick of you and your messes."
 "Clean it up or else!"



Spanking

"This hurts me more than it hurts you."



GUIDANCE THAT WORKS

Praise

Specific, immediate, sincere.

Example: "You did a great job cleaning your room!"

Notes:

Rewards

Given immediately after desired behavior is performed.

Failure to perform the behavior is ignored.

Example: "You remembered to brush your teeth by yourself! Let's put an extra star on your happy tooth chart."

Notes:

Redirection

Most useful with younger children. Replaces an unwanted activity with an acceptable one. Helpful when child's behavior is unsafe or annoying. Redirection is best given in a calm, matter-of-fact way.

Example: "I'm happy to see you get a snack by yourself. But this sharp knife is only for cooking. Use this knife instead."

Notes:

Changing the environment

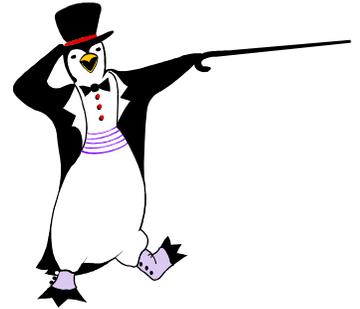
One of the easiest solutions with younger children.

The parent makes changes to the child's surroundings.

The parent adds, takes away, or changes things.

Examples: Moving the TV remote out of reach; placing a step-stool so the child can reach the sink.

Notes:



Setting limits

Helps child understand behavior you want.

Helps child understand consequences of disobeying.

- *Set reasonable rules and limits.*
- *Immediately get child's attention when rule is broken.*
- *State consequences. Suggest alternative behavior.*
- *If child ignores or persists, immediately follow-through.*
- *Help the child comply, if needed.*

Example: Escort the child to timeout.

Notes:

Modeling & Instruction

Instruction for new tasks or behaviors should be simple.

Avoid giving complex instructions (too many words).

It's okay if you have to repeat instructions again later.

Children learn from what they observe parents doing.

Be a model for the behaviors you want your child to learn.

Notes:

Sample Scenarios for role play or case study

Apply different guidance techniques to these scenarios and discuss the advantages of each one. Use role play to practice what you might say or do for each one, and how you would say or do it.



Five-year old Shauna is jumping on the chair in the living room. Parent asks her to stop the behavior. Shauna stops for a few minutes, then begins jumping on the sofa.

Six-year old Timothy is working on a project, gluing leaves on a piece of paper. Parent notices that he has a tube of super glue to work with.

Three-year old Mishella wants to fold the washcloths from the laundry.

Parent notices five-year old Aaron has left his coat on the floor beneath the coat hanger.

Parent comes home and finds that nine-year old Melissa has washed and dried the breakfast dishes that were left in the sink that morning.

When parent says it's time for bed, six-year old Mary quits playing and runs ahead to the bathroom and brushes her teeth.

Eight-year old Johnny is teasing his little sister, who has started to scream and cry. Parent has set rules about not teasing sister.

Five-year old Andy loves the aquarium. However, he is over-enthusiastic about feeding the fish. Parent has caught Andy with the can of fish-food, really pouring it in.



How to Hold a Family Meeting

A family meeting is just what it sounds like – a “formal” meeting of all family members for the purpose of sharing feelings and ideas, planning activities, setting limits, or resolving problems. Family meetings can help improve communication and problem-solving between parents and children and make the job of guidance easier. Meetings also help families build a bond of trust and help children feel accepted, valued, and worthwhile. More importantly, setting aside a special time each week to meet as a family helps demonstrate commitment to each other, to the family, and to respecting each person’s contribution.

Here are some guidelines for making family meetings a part of your family life:

- First, introduce your children to the idea of holding regular family meetings. Get their ideas about when and where to hold the meeting. When a time and place are agreed on, let your children know it is a priority. Don’t “blow off” the meeting or allow family members to be interrupted by the phone or other distractions.
- Establish some guidelines for how you will conduct your meetings. One idea is to keep an agenda list for each week on the refrigerator door. Encourage family members to write down problems, concerns, and ideas for discussion at upcoming meetings. Other ideas might include establishing guidelines for listening, for handling differing opinions, for presenting problems, and for brainstorming solutions to problems.
- Alternate the roles of “chairperson” and “secretary” each week. The chairperson’s job is to lead the meeting; the secretary’s job is to keep a record of decisions or new rules that come from the meetings.
- Hold your first meeting around a simple issue, such as planning an outing or picnic. Use this meeting to show how meetings will be conducted. Model good listening and problem solving skills for your children.
- Family meetings should help teach children how to share ideas, discuss problems and solutions, and share power. The purpose of the meeting is not to gather the children together so the parents can lay down the rules. Each family member (children and parents alike) should have a say in all decisions that come from family meetings.

From *Positive Discipline for Single Parents* by
Jane Nelsen, Cheryl Erwin, & Carol Delzer

GUIDANCE PLAN

I have been having the following guidance problem with my child:

I will concentrate on using the following guidance techniques with my child in the coming week:

1. _____
2. _____

In the past, I reacted to the problem in the following ways:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Here is what I plan to do differently:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

This is what I learned this week:

Session Evaluation Partners in Parenting Session 5

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 guidance technique discussed do you think will work best with your child (children)? Why?

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?



Sensible Discipline

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Examine why children misbehave
- Identify strategies for effective discipline
- Explore common guidance problems
- Practice discipline techniques

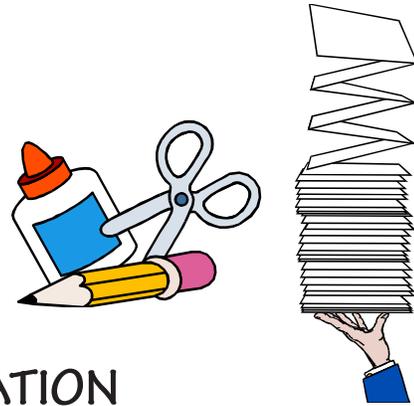
Synopsis

Discipline involves strategies for guidance that are aimed at decreasing unwanted behaviors. This session is designed to help participants learn techniques for effective and fair discipline, including ignoring, time out, and natural and logical consequences as discussed by Crary (1993). In addition, the reasons why children misbehave are discussed and common discipline problems are explored. Participants are encouraged to practice discipline strategies and explore their application with their children.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome/Session overview	10 minutes
Homework review	15 minutes
Why do children misbehave?	15 minutes
Discipline basics	40 minutes
Planning and practice	30 minutes
Concluding ideas	05 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 6	120 minutes



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:
 - *Why Children Misbehave* (p. 137)
 - *Sensible Discipline Techniques* (p. 138)
 - *Steps for Sensible Discipline* (p. 139)
 - *Sample Scenarios* (p. 140)
 - *What Experts Say About Spanking* (p. 141)
 - *Parent's Diary* (p. 142)
 - *Session Six Evaluation* (p. 143)
 - **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 / SESSION OVERVIEW

1 Welcome participants as they arrive.

2 Introduce the session:

- Today's session is about a key parenting concern—discipline. The term discipline is often confused with punishment. But as we'll discuss today, it's better to think of discipline as teaching rather than as punishment or “pay back” for doing bad. Helping children learn good behavior requires guidance and fair discipline.
- Discipline is an issue all parents grapple with. Fortunately, there has been a lot of study of discipline strategies. Although there is no “magic bullet” for correcting behavior problems, there are many sensible, tested techniques that parents can rely on. We'll examine some of these today and explore how and when to use them with different aged children.
- We'll also discuss some of the reasons why children misbehave in the first place.
- Before we get started, let's review the homework task.



15 Minutes

HOMEWORK REVIEW

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

- It was suggested that you practice using some of the guidance techniques we have covered, and you were given a **Guidance Plan** worksheet to help you get organized. Let's talk about the assignment.
 - ? *What specific concerns and goals did you identify on your plan?*
 - ? *What guidance techniques did you decide to use?*

- ? *How did it work out? Was it different from what you would have thought? In what way?*
- ? *How about an attempt that didn't work well? What happened? What did you learn?*
- ? *What guidance technique do you see as the most useful?*

4 Thank participants for their willingness to try the assignment. Encourage them to continue practicing guidance techniques.



15 Minutes

WHY DO CHILDREN MISBEHAVE?

5 Lead into a discussion of misbehavior in children using some of the following points:

- Why do children misbehave? That has been the eternal question of parents since time began.
- Contrary to what you might think sometimes, children do not misbehave just to get on your nerves. There are many reasons for misbehavior, and the child's age and temperament may play a part.
- It may help you to remember not to take the child's misbehavior personally. A first step in coming to terms with a child's misbehavior is to stand back from it a little in order to get perspective. Understanding why a child is acting badly can give you valuable clues about how to deal with it.
- So let's begin by looking at some things we know about why children act up.



Handout,
p. 137

6 Distribute *Why Children Misbehave* handout and review the points. Encourage questions and cover some of the following points:

- Children often misbehave for the simplest of reasons - they are tired, hungry, sick, angry, afraid, or discouraged. Attending to the child's needs (offering a snack, encouraging quiet time) or helping the child with his feelings (active listening, reassurance) may be all that is needed in some cases to deal with problem behavior.

- It's not always possible to know the motive for a child's misbehavior. When the problem behavior is not associated with a child's basic needs or feelings, there may be other reasons to consider. These are attention, power, revenge, and inadequacy.
- Most parents are aware that misbehavior sometimes comes from a child's desire for attention. Many types of attention-seeking behavior annoy parents, especially when they keep happening. For example, when reprimanded the child stops the behavior immediately, but then she slowly edges back to the offending behavior or activity. After being told "Don't bang on the table with your fist," the child (whose motive is adult attention) waits a few minutes, then begins to kick the table with her feet! Giving attention to this kind of annoying behavior will usually cause it to increase (after all, the child is being "rewarded" with sought after adult attention when she does the behavior). We'll talk about discipline strategies for this type of behavior later today.
- Children also misbehave over power issues. They want to call the shots and be in control. The usual parental response to power-seeking misbehavior is anger. Parents will either give in (in frustration) or dominate (show who's boss). In reality, both kinds of response reinforce this type of misbehavior because they send the message that power is important to win or lose. Experts recommend responses that side-step the power struggle and encourage mutual problem solving.
- Children may sometimes act badly for revenge. Children may turn to revenge when their needs for attention or power are not being met satisfactorily. Many parents are hurt or angered by their child's obviously vengeful behavior and may respond by displaying their hurt feelings or retaliating against the child. Both responses contribute to the problem because they send the message that the child's vengeful behavior has hit home. It's best for parents to refuse to act hurt, find ways to build trust in the relationship, and increase the child's feeling of being loved and being valued.
- Sometimes children misbehave because they feel inferior or inadequate. The behavior may be confined to one area where the child feels she can't succeed (e.g., refusing to do math homework) or it may affect several areas. Parents may despair and feel helpless when they suspect that feelings of inferiority are behind their child's

bad behavior. Many parents, desperate to help, begin to pity or overprotect the child. A more effective strategy might involve finding ways to reinforce any attempts at positive behavior, initiative, and problem solving made by the child. Active listening can be a useful tool for helping children open up and talk about their feelings. If a parent suspects that feelings of inadequacy are causing the child to feel depressed, demoralized, or hopeless, then consultation with a pediatrician or mental health professional might be a good idea.



40 Minutes

DISCIPLINE BASICS

7 Introduce the discussion of discipline techniques using some of the following points:

- We mentioned this last week, and it's worth saying again. It is usually easier and more effective to increase good behavior than to decrease bad behavior. However, there are times when parents need to grab the bull by the horns, so to speak, and do something concrete to decrease bad behavior.
- Each child is different, and discipline techniques that work well for one child may not work with another. Also, children are constantly changing, so guidance and discipline strategies will change as the child learns and matures.
- Attention is a powerful reinforcer. Many of the discipline techniques that are the most effective with small children involve managing attention (e.g., paying a lot of attention to good behaviors and very little attention to annoying behaviors).
- Enforcing consequences when bad behavior occurs is another important discipline technique. The use of consequences can be applied successfully to children of all ages.
- Removing privileges, limiting activities, or having the child make amends (e.g., cleaning up a mess or replacing something that was destroyed) are examples of workable consequences. Spanking or threatening to spank are not effective consequences for helping children learn.

- The purpose of any guidance or discipline technique is to teach. Responding to bad behavior with spanking or hitting diminishes the parent's ability to be an effective teacher. A child may stop a particular behavior after being spanked or threatened with a spanking; however, children don't seem to learn much about self-control, decision-making, or responsibility as a result of spanking. This type of learning requires a more thoughtful response from parents. Keep in mind, we are not saying that spanking is always "wrong" or "bad," but rather that it is not as effective as other strategies for teaching children the self-control they will need to get along in the world.
- Let's review some basic strategies that have been shown to be more effective in helping children stop bad behavior and learn good behavior.



Handout,
p. 138

8

Distribute *Sensible Discipline Techniques* handout and cover each of the strategies. Encourage questions. Model how techniques may be used with children of different ages. Include some of the following points:

■ IGNORING (TUNE OUT)

- Many parents have a hard time understanding why ignoring a bad behavior is considered a form of discipline. Others say "When my child is acting up, I can't just ignore her. It's not right."
- It's helpful to remember a couple of things. First, when you use ignoring or the "tune out" technique, you are not really ignoring the child. Rather, you are making a decision based on what you observe to not reward the child with attention when she behaves badly.
- Using the tune out technique is not appropriate for all discipline problems. However, it is very effective for annoying behaviors that you would prefer that your child not use, for example, whining, pouting, interrupting, talking back, begging, or crying. It's well suited to behaviors that are aggravating but not dangerous or destructive. Here's how it works:
- Decide what behavior you want to decrease. Commit yourself to tolerating the behavior while your child is learning to control

it. Be honest. If you know you won't be able to last long ignoring the behavior, choose another discipline technique. Ignoring is not for the faint of heart.

- The next time the behavior happens, ignore the child. Don't look at her or talk to her. Turn away, don't make eye contact, don't show feelings, literally "tune her out."
- Your child will probably start acting up even more loudly and persistently than before. Do not look at her, make eye contact, or give any attention.
- When the behavior stops, or the child begins doing what you've requested, give plenty of reward and praise and attention. This is an important step, because it helps the child learn that behaving the way you want can be rewarding.

■ TIME-OUT

- The "time-out" technique is well-known and has been used by parents for many years. It's an updated version of a popular parenting technique from times gone by - making the child sit in the corner.
- Time-out is used to interrupt unacceptable behavior by removing the child from the scene until he regains control. Time-out is helpful for stopping behavior before it escalates into chaos.
- When a child continues to engage in unacceptable behavior after being asked to stop, he is sent to a quiet room or area of the house alone and told to stay there until he calms down.
- A time-out is used to teach self-control and consequences, not to punish. The time-out should be short enough to be meaningful, but not so long that it's a prison sentence (3 to 5 minutes is long enough for most small children). A general guideline would be one minute of time-out for each year of age. Remember that to a young child, a minute can feel like an hour. If the time-out period is too long, the child may forget what led to it.
- Choose a time-out room that is secluded enough so that the child won't be able to provoke others or get attention, but

close enough so that you can monitor him. A hallway or a quiet, dull room are good locations.

- Before using a time-out, make sure your child understands concepts like “waiting” and “being quiet.” Children can usually understand this concept between ages 3 and 4, although some may understand it earlier.
- Before using time-out for the first time, explain it to your child. Tell him what a time-out is and when it will be used. Walk your child through the first couple of time-outs. Count only the quiet time and show your child how you will keep time. Let him know that the clock begins when he is quiet—yelling, whining, or pleading will only result in a longer stay. A kitchen timer may be useful for keeping up with the minutes.
- Tell your child when the time-out is over. It’s a good idea to follow the time-out with a brief discussion. Ask him to tell you why he had to go to time-out and what he will do differently next time. By talking about it you can make sure that your child knows what he did that resulted in the time-out and what choices he might make next time that would have better outcomes. Praise and reinforce good behavior when your child returns from a time-out.
- Time-out is most effective when presented as a choice, for example, “Obey my directions or go to time-out.” It can be effective when the child is emotionally “flooded” or out-of-control as a way to help the child learn to manage his own emotions.
- Time-out can be over used. Remember, the length of time must be brief and the parent must stay on top of it. It’s not a good idea to get involved in something else and forget that you left the child in time-out for 30 minutes.

■ NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

- Establishing consequences for inappropriate behavior and following through with those consequences every time the bad behavior happens is one of the most effective and loving discipline techniques that parents can use.

- Loving? Yes, loving. In order to get along in the world, children must learn early that choices carry consequences, that behavior is a choice, and that the consequences of poor behavior choices may be unpleasant.
- Applying consequences is an extension of setting limits. Limits are established as part of guidance. However, most children will test the limits, especially older children.
- Using consequences requires plenty of thought and planning. Parents can improve the effectiveness of this technique by having a clear idea about their goals and what they want their child to learn and remember.
- The purpose of consequences is learning, not revenge or punishment. Applying consequences and always following through helps teach your child how to be responsible for her own behavior.
- There are two types of consequences—natural and logical.
 - **Natural consequences** are those that help a child learn from the natural order of the physical world (for example, not eating dinner leads to hunger or touching a hot stove will burn your hand). Some natural consequences may be too dangerous to allow to happen or may occur too infrequently to be remembered by the child. In applying natural consequences, the health and safety of the child should always take priority.
 - **Logical consequences** are those that are devised and administered by parents or other caregivers. This type of consequence is used most often in disciplining children. Examples might include loss of privileges (e.g., no television tonight), making amends or repairs (e.g., having to mop the floor after tracking mud on it), or complying with preset family rules (e.g., being more than 10 minutes late for curfew results in losing an hour off next weekend's curfew).
- There are several things to consider when planning how to best use consequences:
 - **Is the consequence reasonable?** Consequences are used to teach, not to punish. It's important to think

seriously about the consequences you may decide to impose. Your child's age, temperament, and needs should influence the consequences you choose. Older children (10 and up) can be involved in helping make decisions about what types of consequences they consider "fair" for their offenses. Not only can they come up with some very good ideas, but when allowed to take part in the decision making they may be more likely to comply without protest.

- **Is the consequence related to the offense?** The most effective consequences are fair and logically related to the "crime." For example, if a child is late for dinner, it's fair and logical that she warm up her own dinner and clean up afterwards. It would not be fair and logical to tell her she must clean her closet as a consequence for being late for dinner.
- **Is the consequence enforceable?** The best way to evaluate if a consequence is enforceable is to honestly ask yourself if the consequence will cost you more work than you want. For example, telling a child "If you don't finish reading that book for your book report, I'm going to sit with you at your desk every evening until you finish it." Or "If you don't stay buckled in your seat all the way to Six Flags, we'll turn around and go home." Remember, consequences will not work at all if you are not prepared to follow-through consistently every time the rule is broken.
- **Is there anger, resentment, or revenge associated with the consequence?** Consequences are most effective if they are devised and presented as calmly and kindly as possible. (Remember, we want to teach, not punish.) If presented with anger, criticism, or blame, or if the consequence is too severe, it loses its punch. The child may end up feeling hurt and resentful and not be able to learn from the experience.



Handout,
p. 139

9 **Distribute *Steps for Sensible Discipline* handout, and quickly review the sequence of steps recommended for enforcing time-out and logical consequences.**



30 Minutes

Handout,
p. 140

PLANNING AND PRACTICE

- 10** Lead participants in practicing discipline techniques and planning how best to use them with their children. A page of sample role play scenarios is provided; however, participants may prefer to volunteer real life situations for practice.
- 11** Provide direction and feedback as participants practice ignoring, time-out, and natural and logical consequences. Discuss the uses of these techniques with children of different ages and temperaments. It's helpful to allow parents to practice using different discipline techniques on the same discipline problem in order to get a sense of how each technique might work.
- 12** Discuss the practice session using some of the following questions:
- ? *How did it feel to practice these techniques?*
 - ? *Which technique seemed to work best for you?*
 - ? *How do you think your child will react to ignoring? To time-out? To logical consequences?*
 - ? *What is going to be the most challenging thing for you in applying these discipline techniques?*
 - ? *How will you evaluate whether or not these techniques are working? How might you modify them if they don't work?*
- 13** Thank participants for their work. Reassure them that most parents need time and practice before feeling completely comfortable with new ways of disciplining.



5 Minutes

CONCLUDING IDEAS

- 14** Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight some of the following points:

- As you've probably figured out from today's session – discipline is one of the many areas of parenting that requires thought and attention.
- Planning and knowing what will work and what won't work based on your child's temperament and personality are important considerations.
- When many of us were growing up, discipline may have involved spankings. In years past, physical punishment was considered one of the best ways to manage children. Nowadays experts have shown us that there are better ways to get the job done. A carefully thought-out discipline plan is much less likely to damage your relationship with your child than is hitting and spanking.
- The discipline techniques discussed today require more time, energy, and creativity than does physical punishment. The extra effort can be viewed as an investment in your child's future. Through your positive guidance, she will learn problem-solving skills, logical consequences, creative thinking, and self-control. More importantly, she'll develop a stronger sense of trust in others and a healthier self-image (all of which you, as her parent, will have modeled.)
- Remember that making decisions about discipline will be an ongoing activity until your children are grown. Discipline techniques that work when your child is six might not work when he is nine. (It's a good thing parents are so creative and flexible.)



Handout,
p. 141

15 Distribute *What the Experts Say About Spanking* handout. Encourage participants to read and think about the issues raised in the handout.



5 Minutes

HOMework



Worksheet,
p. 142

16 Distribute *Parent's Diary* worksheets. Give the following homework suggestions:

- The homework assignment is to complete a short worksheet. The assignment is to write a few paragraphs about the quality you most want your child to develop in order to lead a successful life. This is an informal essay—spelling and grammar don't count, but your ideas do.

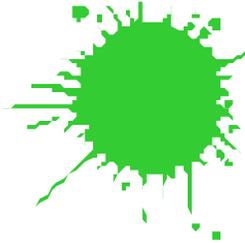
- In addition, think about how you plan to begin using some of the discipline techniques we discussed today. Remember that the planning and thinking through that you do is an important step in making these strategies work. If you feel ready to begin using these ideas, go ahead. If you need some time to digest them, that's okay, too.

17 Thank group members for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return next session.



*Session
Evaluation,*
p. 143

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



WHY CHILDREN MISBEHAVE



When your child misbehaves, ask yourself:

- Is my child tired?
- Is my child hungry?
- Is my child angry?
- Is my child sick?
- Is my child afraid?
- Is my child discouraged?

Understanding the feelings or needs behind problem behavior will give you clues about how to handle it.

Other reasons for misbehavior



Wanting attention

A good response is to _____

Power struggles

A good response is to _____

Revenge

A good response is to _____

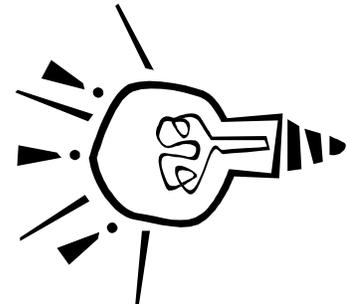
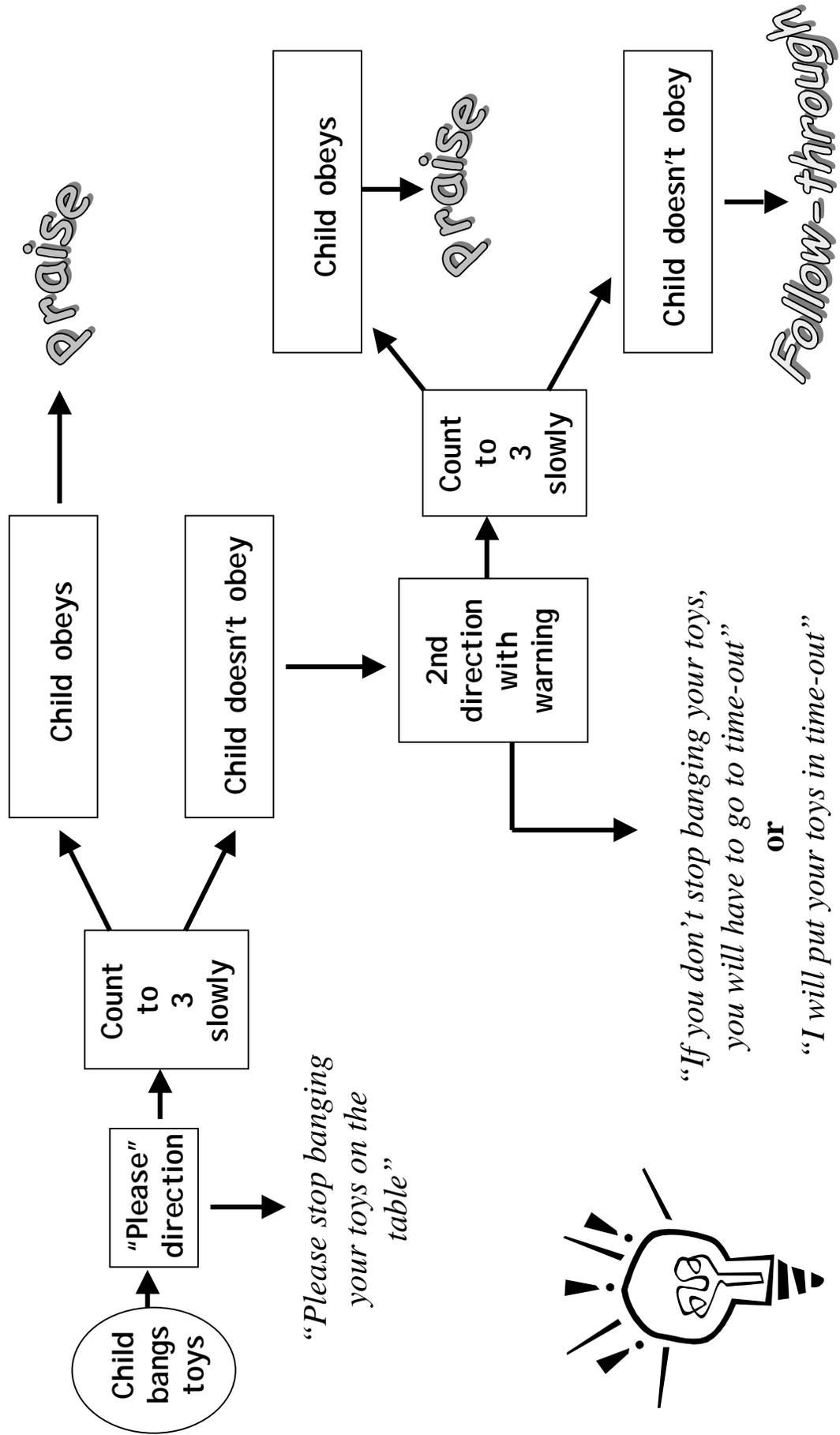
Feeling inadequate

A good response is to _____

SENSIBLE DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES

IGNORING (TUNE OUT)				
Good for	Process	Advantages	Disadvantages	Examples
Whining, pouting, crying, arguing, making noise. Is most effective with younger children.	Tune the child out. Stay busy with your own activities or leave the room for a short time. Avoid eye contact, talking to, or looking at the child.	Requires little effort. Can be very effective. Helps avoid reinforcing problem behavior. Provides an opportunity to praise desired behavior when problem behavior ceases.	On some days, you may need nerves of steel to stick to your resolve. Child may get nosier. Many parents find it a difficult tactic to use in a public setting.	Child demands another Popsicle using a whiney voice. Parent turns away until child asks in a pleasant voice. Once child asks without whining, parent praises the desired tone of voice.
TIME-OUT				
Disobeying, temper tantrums, fighting, arguing, or any problem behavior that parent can't ignore or that indicates the child is not taking control of his actions. Works best with younger children.	Explain time-out before you use it. When problem behavior occurs, place child in a quiet, dull room or designated area for 3 to 5 minutes. Don't start counting time until child is quiet.	Gives both the parent and the child time to cool off. Child experiences an immediate removal from attention. Helps child learn self-control. Helps cut down the frequency of problem behavior.	Requires parent to be patient and consistent. Parent must be firm but gentle, and must not give in to protests or apologies. Requires having a boring, but safe time-out area.	Child pushes another child. After pointing out the problem and allowing a few seconds to obey, parent immediately places child in time-out. Consistent follow-through is the most important part of this technique.
LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES				
Breaking rules, not finishing chores, damaging property, making messes, homework or school problems. Good for children of all ages.	Consequences should be fair and logical. Explain how you will enforce consequences. When problem behavior happens, immediately enforce the consequence. Don't give in to arguments or excuses.	Works quickly and effectively. Older children can be allowed to help set their own consequences. Helps children learn about responsibility and cause and effect. Protects self-esteem of both parent and child.	Requires consistency and monitoring. May be inconvenient sometimes. Technique loses its power if parent cannot follow-through consistently every time the problem behavior occurs.	Child fails to do homework. Parent enforces loss of TV watching for the next day. Consequences should always be fair, related to the problem, and not extreme. In this case, loss of TV is for a day, instead of a week or month.

STEPS FOR SENSIBLE DISCIPLINE



Sample Scenarios for role play or case study

Apply different discipline techniques to these scenarios and discuss the advantages of each one. Use role play to practice what you might say or do for each one, and how you would say or do it.



When asked to come in for dinner, the child says "No! You can't make me!!"

The child lies about how a toy got broken. She broke it, but she blames it on her brother.

When told "it's time to go home now," after playing with a friend, the child throws a tantrum (screaming, yelling, and refusing to leave).

There is a rule against playing in the street. The parent catches the child riding his tricycle in the middle of the street.

The parent is talking on the phone. The child tries to get the parent's attention by whining and figeting.

The parent has set a rule that the child be home by 9:00 p.m. The child comes home at 9:45 p.m.

One of the child's family chores is to take the trash to the curb on trash day. The parent discovers that the child has been "hiding" the trash bags in a garage closet.

After being warned not to play "rough", the child pushes a friend causing the friend to drop and break a favorite toy.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY ABOUT SPANKING

Children's doctors (pediatricians) and psychologists in this country have studied the subject of physical punishment or spanking. They have looked at families that use spanking for discipline and families that don't use it. In a recent report, they strongly recommended that parents learn to use positive discipline techniques instead of spanking. They found the following negative side-effects of using spanking:

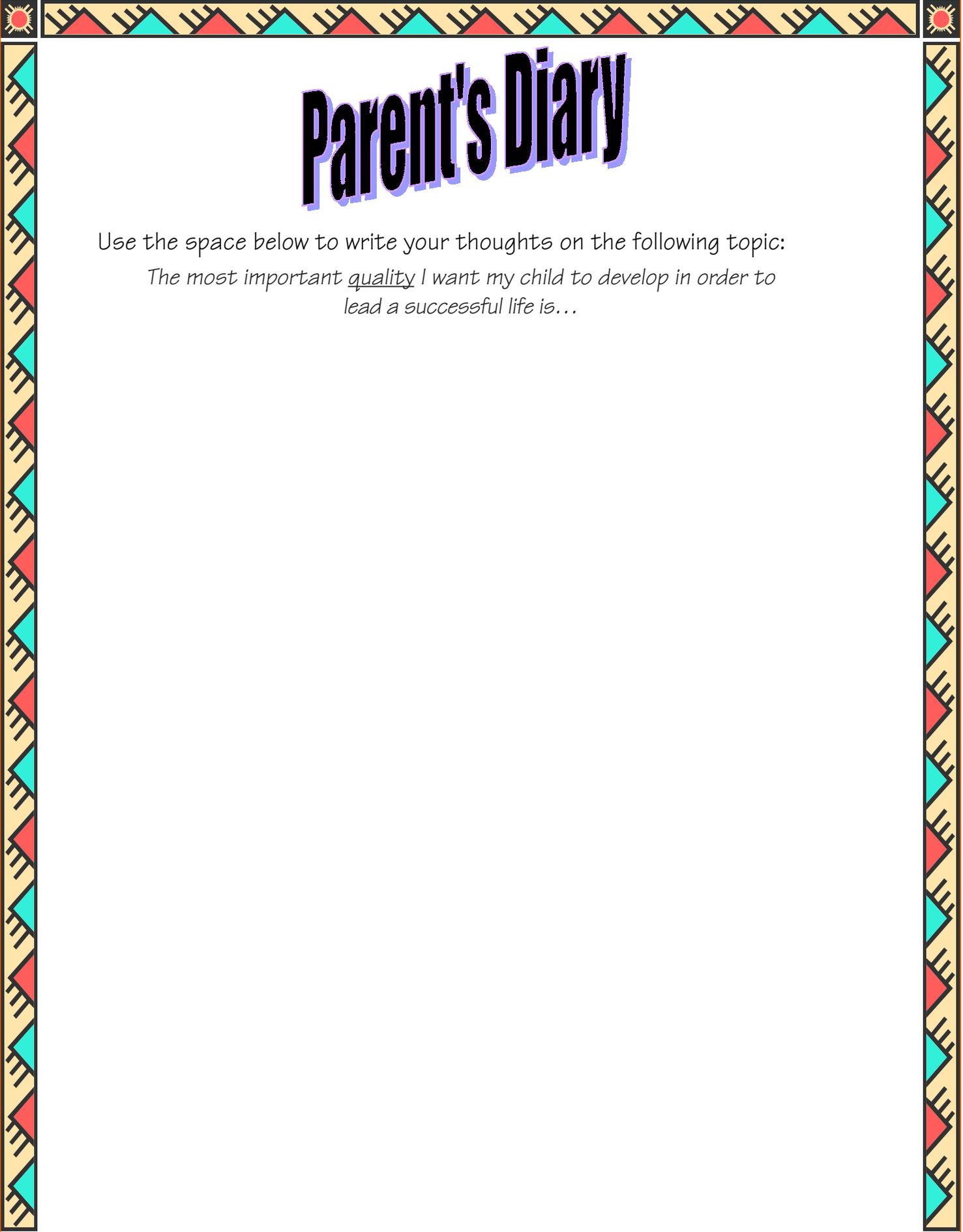
In the long run, spanking doesn't really work: Spanking may stop bad behavior when it is happening, but it doesn't prevent bad behavior when the parent isn't around. Using Time-Out and Consequences are better choices for helping children learn to control their own behavior.

Spanking hurts self-esteem: Children who are spanked a lot often start thinking that something must be wrong or "bad" about them. They also begin to think that their parents do not like them very much. These kinds of thoughts damage self-esteem.

Imitation: Children who are spanked a lot may learn that when you are angry, it's okay to hit someone. This is especially true if parents spank when they are angry. Children may learn to vent their anger by hitting other children or pets, or by bullying others with threats.

Fear: Children become afraid of people who use physical punishment, especially when the punishment is harsh or frequent. Parents who spank a lot may notice that their children are nervous and fearful around them. Children who are spanked a lot may be less likely to come to parents for help with their problems because they are afraid or they become withdrawn.

Positive discipline techniques (such as ignoring, setting limits, using Time-Out, and enforcing consequences) require time and patience to master. Most parents who stick with it find these techniques are well worth the effort. When used consistently, these strategies help parents teach their children about responsibility, self-control, and cooperation.



Parent's Diary

Use the space below to write your thoughts on the following topic:

*The most important quality I want my child to develop in order to
lead a successful life is...*

Session Evaluation Partners in Parenting Session 6

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 discipline technique discussed today might work best with your child (children)? Why?

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?



Self-Care for Parents

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Explore issues of personal rights and self-esteem
- Review affirmations and positive self-talk
- Identify self-care strategies
- Explore a hopeful future using the “miracle question”

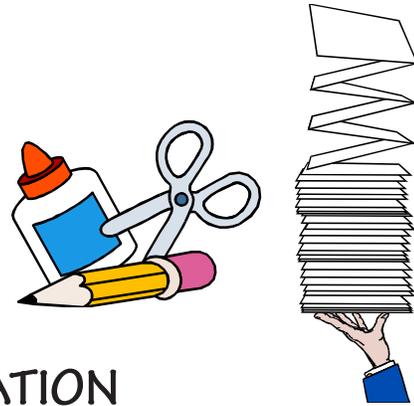
Synopsis

Stress, low self-esteem, and poor attention to self-care are issues that may contribute to parents feeling depressed, overwrought, or hopeless. This session is designed as a “parents day out,” and group members are encouraged to focus on their feelings and needs, and on strategies for meeting those needs. Participants are introduced to the concept of personal rights and to the importance of affirmations and positive self-talk. A plan for self-care is explored and participants are guided in a “miracle question” exercise (Berg & Miller, 1995) that focuses on a hopeful tomorrow.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome/Session overview	10 minutes
Homework review	15 minutes
Personal rights	20 minutes
Talk nice to yourself	30 minutes
Miracle question	35 minutes
Concluding discussion	05 minutes
Homework	05 minutes
Total Time for Session 7	120 minutes



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:
 - *Personal Rights* (p. 158)
 - *Positive Focus* (p. 159)
 - *Negative Self Talk* (p. 160)
 - *Challenging Negative Self Talk* (p. 161)
 - *Changing Negative Self Talk* (p. 162)
 - *Miracle Question* (p. 163)
 - *The Miracle Method Ready Reference* (p. 164)
 - *Letter From Myself* (p. 165)
 - *Session Seven Evaluation* (p. 166)
 - **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 / SESSION OVERVIEW

1 Welcome participants as they arrive.

2 Introduce the session:

- In today's session, we'll take a slightly different approach to parenting. We've already talked a lot about your child's needs and feelings, and what you can do as a parent to guide and comfort your child. Today we'll ask "and what about you?" How can you pay attention to yourself and your needs?
- One of the most important factors in good parenting is feeling good about yourself. The pain, frustration, and sense of failure we can carry when we don't feel good about ourselves can lead us to choose less-than-effective parenting strategies. When these strategies backfire, they add to the feelings of failure and a vicious cycle is perpetuated. The trick is to break the cycle.
- So today's session is just for you. We'll explore some ideas for feeling good about ourselves, taking care of ourselves, and looking into the future.
- Before we get started, let's review the homework task.



15 Minutes

HOMework REVIEW

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

- The homework assignment was a worksheet that asked you to think about an important quality you would like your child to develop in order to have a successful life. Of course, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer to this kind of question. Whatever your opinion, it's "right." Let's talk about the assignment.

- ? *What quality did you identify?*
- ? *What makes this quality important for a successful life?*
- ? *What does your child do now that exhibits this quality?*
- ? *How do you help your child work on this quality? What works?*
- ? *What did you learn or discover from this exercise?*

4 Thank participants for their willingness to try the assignment. Point out that the quality they identified for their child may be one they themselves possess or would like to possess.



20 Minutes

PERSONAL RIGHTS

5 Introduce the discussion with some of the following ideas:

- When we talk about taking care of ourselves, one good place to start is to think about ways of reducing stress.
- One major contributor to stress is feeling like we have little or no control in our lives. Often, these stressful feelings are based, in part, on how we think about things. We may worry or fret too much, be afraid to speak up, make assumptions about how other people view us, or deny ourselves the right to say “No.” These kinds of thoughts and behaviors are stressful because they ignore some of our basic rights as human beings.
- Let’s begin by reviewing some of our personal rights. A personal right is something that all people possess. You have personal rights, I have personal rights, our friends have personal rights, and our children have personal rights. We have the right to stand up for our personal rights, and we have the responsibility to always be respectful of the personal rights of others.



Handout,
p. 158

6 Distribute *Personal Rights* handout. Read the handout aloud. Review and discuss each of the rights. Discuss how these rights might enhance self-esteem, reduce stress, and help people be more honest and in control of their lives.

7 Ask participants to circle 2 of the rights they believe are most important for them personally. (E.g., “Circle the 2 rights that you value the most or that seem the most important to you.”) Use some of the following questions to lead a discussion:

- ? *What rights did you circle? Why are they important to you?*
- ? *What usually gets in the way of you being able to act on these rights?*
- ? *What about the times you have been able to act on these rights? How did you do it? How did you feel?*
- ? *When we accept these rights for ourselves, what responsibilities do we have to others?*
- ? *How do we balance paying attention to our rights and our role as parents?*
- ? *How can we teach our children about their personal rights?*

8 Thank participants for their input. Conclude with the following points:

- Asserting a right does not mean that others will take heed or respect it. In other words, we all have the right to ask for what we want; however, the answer might be “no.”
- We have the right (theoretically) to be treated with respect, but others still may treat us disrespectfully. If we observe that certain people frequently ignore our personal rights, we may choose not to associate with them.
- Personal rights is an abstract or adult way of thinking about things. It is most helpful as a framework for helping you deal with other adults. Don’t expect your children to completely understand the idea until they are older.
- The best way to teach children about respecting the rights of others is by modeling your own respect for the rights of others. This is one area in which children learn by observing, rather than by simply being told. This also involves respecting your children’s rights as well.



30 Minutes

Worksheet,
p. 159

TALK NICE TO YOURSELF

9 Distribute the *Positive Focus* worksheets. Introduce the discussion with some of the following ideas:

- Most people would agree that people get along better when they remember to talk “nice” to each other. Talking “nice” means being polite, kind, gentle, calm, reasonable, and avoiding insults, put-downs, and “mean” words.
- Have you ever wondered why we may bend over backwards to talk “nice” to people we like, and yet we will talk “mean” to ourselves?
- “Self-talk,” or what we “hear” ourselves saying to ourselves about ourselves inside our heads can be anything but nice sometimes. Negative self-talk, as it’s called, can have disastrous effects on our self-esteem, our self-confidence, our motivation, and our relationships.
- Negative self-talk is not only bad for ourselves, it’s also bad for our children. When we model it too frequently, children may get the idea that they, too, should think negatively about themselves.
- The good news is that we can learn to challenge negative self-talk when we “hear” it, and replace it with self-talk that is more helpful, realistic, and, well – nice!
- One simple way to begin this process is through affirmations.

10 Instruct participants to write 15 positive sentences about themselves on their paper, as follows:

5 things about your body/physical self

5 things about your personality

5 things about your skills, successes, talents

11 Instruct them to begin each sentence with the word “I.” For example, “*I have a good sense of humor,*” “*I like the color of my hair,*” or “*I am very good at helping others learn.*”

12 When everyone has completed the exercise, discuss some of the following questions:

- ? *How did it feel to write positive things about yourself?*
- ? *Was it easy or difficult?*
- ? *Which of the 3 categories was the most difficult?*
- ? *What thoughts came to mind as you wrote?*
- ? *Did you “hear” any negative self-talk trying to break through?*

13 Wrap-up the exercise with some of the following points:

- The sentences you wrote for this exercise are called “affirmations.” We all need affirming messages everyday. It’s nice to get them from others, but we can learn to give them to ourselves, too.
- We often censor our affirmations, because we wrongly believe that such thoughts are vain, egotistical, or conceited. Remember, we all have the right to feel good about ourselves. In fact, we need to feel good about ourselves. Affirmations can help.
- Not only is developing a healthy self-esteem good for us, it’s good for our children as well. Children can learn from us that it is okay to feel good about ourselves, our talents, and our dreams.



Handout,
p. 160

14 Distribute *Negative Self-Talk* handout. Introduce a discussion using some of the following points:

- In addition to affirmations or positive self-talk, it’s also important to pay attention to how frequently we engage in negative self-talk.
- Negative self-talk may involve (1) harsh or condemning thoughts about ourselves, (2) blaming or critical thoughts about others, or (3) thoughts about how awful or unfair life is.
- The end result of these types of thoughts includes low self-esteem and frequent, unwarranted worry, anger, frustration, and disappointment. In other words, lots of stress.

15 Read *Negative Self-Talk* handout aloud and discuss what negative self-talk “sounds” like when we experience it at the level of thought.

Handout,
p. 161

16 **Distribute *Challenging Negative Self-Talk* handout. Review points and discuss ways to manage negative self-talk. Cover the following points:**

- The first step in dealing with our negative self-talk is to become aware of it. Strong, stressful feelings such as anger, frustration, guilt, or resentment may be due to harsh and negative thinking. Ask yourself “Am I putting myself down?” “Am I blaming others?” “Am I demanding that my life should be trouble-free?”
- The next step is a reality-check. Once you’ve identified your self-talk, ask yourself if what you are thinking is really helping you or if it is really good for you. For example, “Is my self-talk helpful?” “Is it helping me feel better or worse?” “Is my self-talk good for my relationships with others?”
- If your self-talk is not helpful and is making you feel bad or angry, then you must change it. Develop positive (or at least neutral) self-talk and substitute it for your negative thoughts. Some simple things to say to yourself might include “Calm down. Take it easy.” “People are not perfect. I can accept that other people have faults.” “This is a difficult situation, but I can handle it.”
- The last tip is to remember to speak up for yourself. If the situation that’s troubling you involves another person, you will need to communicate about it. You can use the skills we discussed earlier in the workshop (I-Messages and listening) to express your feelings and needs, and to request changes.
- For many people, negative self-talk may have become a habit. Patience and practice are the best ways to begin changing the negative self-talk habit.

Worksheet,
p. 162

17 **Distribute *Changing Negative Self-Talk* worksheets and ask participants to complete them. When everyone has finished, ask for volunteers to share how they changed the negative self-talk statements. Provide praise and encouragement. Process the exercise with some of the following questions:**

- ? *Did anything surprise you about this exercise?*
- ? *Was it easy or difficult to change the self-talk?*

- ? *Have there been times before this when you caught negative self-talk and changed it?*
- ? *How did it make you feel?*
- ? *What will you need to do in order to remember to challenge your negative self-talk?*

18 Thank participants for their contributions, and encourage them to pay close attention to their self-talk. Point out that it's important to help children develop a sense of positive self-talk as well. When it comes to self-talk, we can be our own worst enemy, if we are not careful.



35 Minutes

MIRACLE QUESTION

19 Introduce the activity with some of the following points:

- We're going to spend the rest of the session on an activity that may sound a little strange at first. I'm going to ask you to think about how you would like for things to be different in the future and to visualize how it would be.
- In order to help us stay focused on this picture of the future, we'll use a technique called the "miracle question."
- In a moment I'll show you the miracle question and I'll give you a copy on a handout. After we all read the question and feel like we understand it, I'll ask you to relax and concentrate on how you want to answer the question.
- As you'll see, there are not right or wrong answers to the question. It's simply a guide to keep you focused.

20 Lead participants through the exercise using the following steps:

- First, I want you to think of a problem you have been dealing with that you would like to find a solution for.
- Choose a problem that you have the power to solve and that is important to you. Some types of problems won't lend themselves to this activity, and others will.

- Examples of types of problems to consider include your behavior, a problem with your partner or child, a problem in your recovery, a problem with a friend.
- Examples of problems that would not be suitable for this activity include changing someone else's behavior, money or job problems, child custody problems, or legal problems. Not that these aren't legitimate problems, but they are types of problems that often must involve other people's decisions to be solved.
- Take a few minutes to decide on a personal problem you'd like to be able to seriously think about and begin to resolve.



Handout,
p. 163

21 **Distribute copies of the *Miracle Question* handout, and also have it written out on a large piece of flip chart paper or poster board. Read the question aloud and continue with the exercise:**

MIRACLE QUESTION

“If you were to go to sleep tonight, and while you were asleep a “miracle” happened that solved the problem you’ve been thinking about today, when you wake up, what will be the first thing you notice that tells you the problem has been solved? What would be different?”

- The purpose of this exercise is not to suggest that only a miracle can solve your problems. The idea is to help you focus on a vision for the future. In other words, if somehow a problem that troubles you today were solved, what would be different in your life?
- Sometimes people try to put a religious slant on the question because of the word miracle. The question is not really about “faith” but about envisioning change.
- The main idea behind the question is not in a “miraculous” intervention, but in the very last part of the question – what would be different? What would you notice that would let you know the problem was gone?
- As you relax and think of your answer, focus on specific actions, and attitudes that you would notice were different or new when you first realize the problem is gone. In other words, how would you be

acting? What would you be doing? Who else would notice that the problem was gone?

- Here are some other questions to ask yourself to guide your thinking. Relax, concentrate on the questions, and really attempt to see a picture of that future.

22 Present questions slowly so that participants can reflect on them.

- ? *What would you be doing that is different?*
- ? *What would others in the household notice about you?*
- ? *How would you be feeling?*
- ? *What other things might also begin to change once the problem is solved?*
- ? *What would your friends notice about you that would tell them the problem was solved?*

23 Process the exercise by asking for volunteers to share the problem they chose to work on and their vision of what the future might look like when the problem is no more. Work with one person at a time, asking several follow-up questions before moving on to the next volunteer. Use some of the following questions to guide the discussion:

- ? *If the problem disappeared, would that make a difference for you?*
- ? *What will you notice that is different about yourself when the problem is gone?*
- ? *What will others (friends, children, partner) notice that is different about you when this happens?*
- ? *After the “miracle” happens, what will you be able to do that you could not do before?*
- ? *On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being where you are today and 10 being where you’d be the day after the “miracle”, what will be different when you move up the scale to a 2 or 3? How about a 4 or 5?*

- ? *If this miracle that could make your problem disappear were to really happen tomorrow, how would you know it had happened?*
- ? *Who would be the first person (after you) to notice that the miracle had happened? What would that person say that he/she noticed first?*
- ? *Who will be most surprised when your problem is solved?*
- ? *What will that person see you doing that he/she would have never thought possible?*

24 Thank participants for their honesty and their willingness to tackle a new and different way of thinking about problems. Encourage them to reflect on some of the things they thought about and heard. Encourage them to look for pieces of their miracle that are happening now.



5 Minutes

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

25 Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight the following points:

- There are a couple of things to summarize from today's session. The simplest and most important is to encourage you to keep figuring out ideas for self-care and stress reduction. All work and no play makes Jack (or Jill) a dull, tired person. Taking care of yourself and finding ways to feel good about yourself will help you be a better parent.
- Our "miracle" exercise provided an example of a technique you can use (maybe try it with your family) to focus on solutions, changes, and how you want your future to be.
- There's a quote in the AA Big Book that says: "When I focus on what's good today, I have a good day, and when I focus on what's bad, I have a bad day. If I focus on a problem, the problem increases; if I focus on the answer, the answer increases."
- The purpose of the miracle question is to help you stay focused on the answers.



Handout,
p. 164

26 Distribute copies of *The Miracle Method Ready Reference*. Take a moment to read the points aloud.



5 Minutes

HOMework



Worksheet,
p. 165

27 Distribute *Letter from Myself* worksheets and give the following homework suggestion:

- Between now and the next time we meet, write a letter to yourself from the “older and wiser you of the future.” In the letter, let the “you” of the future give you advice about a particular problem that’s been causing you worry.
- Imagine that the “older, wiser you of the future” has your best interests at heart, and has already successfully handled the problems that burden you today.
- The letter doesn’t have to be long or clever. Let your imagination take over. The idea is simple. If you could talk with yourself in the future about coping with the challenges that face you today, what would you tell yourself?

28 Thank group members for coming and for their participation. Invite them to return to the next session.



Session
Evaluation,
p. 166

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





PERSONAL RIGHTS

In order to appreciate myself and have more control in my life, I have the right to...

Ask for what I want.

To say "No" and not feel guilty.

To make mistakes.

To express my ideas and thoughts.

To express my feelings.

To ask questions.

To change my mind.

To say "I don't know."

To think before I act.

To ask for help.

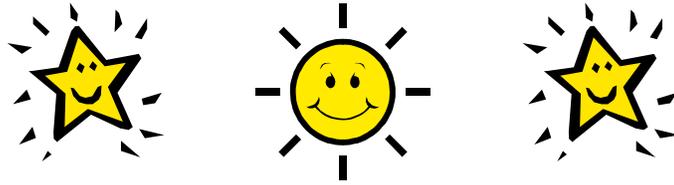
To be treated with respect.

To feel good about myself.

To decide if I want to assert a personal right.

POSITIVE FOCUS

Worksheet



Write some positive sentences about yourself, using the topics below. Begin your sentences with the word "I." For example, "I have a great sense of humor."

Body/Physical

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Personality

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Skills/talents

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Negative Self-Talk

WATCH OUT FOR THESE TYPES OF NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

1. Self-talk that puts you down. This includes harsh, critical, negative thoughts about yourself or thoughts that tell you that you're "no good" or "hopeless."

Everybody thinks I'm stupid.
 I'll never amount to anything.
 I always get it wrong.
 I deserve to be unhappy because of my past.
 If something goes wrong, it's always my fault.
 I'm just no good.

2. Self-talk in which you blame, condemn, resent, or put-down others. This includes thoughts that try to make other people responsible for your problems or mistakes. It may also include thoughts that other people are "no good" or out to get you.

He's really stupid.
 She shouldn't treat me that way.
 If he really loved me, he'd act differently.
 She thinks she's so much better than me.
 He's trying to hurt me on purpose.
 It's all her fault that I'm so upset.

3. Self-talk that keeps you stewing over life's normal ups and downs. This includes thoughts that it is awful, terrible, unfair, or unbearable when you run into problems.

Life should always be fair.
 I shouldn't have to deal with hassles.
 People who disappoint me are awful.
 I just can't cope when things don't go perfectly.
 It's absolutely horrible if I make a mistake.
 People should give me what I want when I want it.



Challenging Negative Self-Talk

Follow these steps

1. **Awareness.** Be aware of the "voice inside your head" and what you hear it saying. When you experience stressful feelings such as anger, frustration, guilt, worry, or resentment, ask yourself:

Is my self-talk putting me down?
Is my self-talk putting others down?
Is my self-talk telling me I should never have problems?

2. **Reality-check.** Once you have identified your self-talk, answer these questions honestly. If the answer to any of them is "No," then start working on positive self-talk:

Is this self-talk helpful?
Is this self-talk helping me feel better?
Is this self-talk good for my relationship with others?
Will this self-talk help me solve my problems?

3. **Develop positive self-talk.** If your self-talk is not helpful or is actually making you feel bad about yourself or others, then replace it. Develop positive self-talk and substitute it for the negative. For example:

Calm down. Take it easy.
Don't be so hard on yourself.
I'm angry, but anger is not going to solve this problem.
People are not perfect. I'm not going to cast stones.
I don't like this situation, but I can handle it.

4. **Communicate.** If the stressful situation involves another person, speak up about your concerns. Talk about your feelings and ask for what you need. Use I-Messages and active listening to help you communicate clearly.



CHANGING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

For each negative self-talk sentence below, rewrite it so that it is more positive.

1. I just can't do anything right!!

2. Nobody cares about me or how I feel.

3. I have too much work to do!!. It's not fair!!

4. How dare that jerk pull out in front of me like that!!

5. I never learn. I just keep making the same mistakes.

6. I know she's thinking that she's so much better than me.

Miracle Question

"If you were to go to sleep tonight, and while you were asleep a "miracle" happened that solved the problem you've been thinking about today, when you wake up, what will be the first thing you notice that tells you the problem has been solved? What would be different?"



The Miracle Method Ready Reference



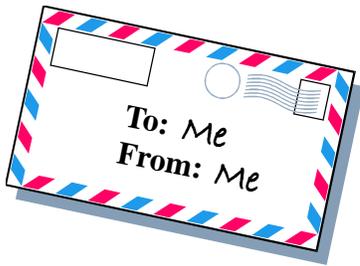
**Finding the door to solution begins with the choice:
I want my life to be different.**

**Opening the door to solution begins with considering
how you want your life to be different once your prob-
lem is solved: Suppose a miracle happened...**

**Unlocking the door to solution is accomplished with six
keys:**

- ❖ **Make sure your miracle is important to you.**
- ❖ **Keep your steps small.**
- ❖ **Make it specific, concrete, behavioral.**
- ❖ **State what you will do rather than what you won't do.**
- ❖ **State how you will start your journey rather than how you will end it.**
- ❖ **Be clear about who, where, and when.**

*Source: The Miracle Method: A Radically New Approach to Problem Drinking. © 1995, Scott Miller & Insoo Kim Berg. Reprinted by permission of author. All rights reserved.
Available from <http://www.norton.com>*



LETTER FROM MYSELF

Pretend you are able to travel into the future. In this future world you meet yourself. You are older and wiser. Part of your wisdom is the knowledge of how you successfully handled the problem that's been troubling you lately.

Instructions:

Write a letter to yourself from your older and wiser self of the future to guide you in dealing with the problem. Use the following questions:

- ***What would your older, wiser self suggest to you to help you resolve the problem?***
- ***What would your older, wiser self ask you to remember?***
- ***What would your older, wiser self tell you to keep doing more of?***
- ***What would your older, wiser self say to comfort you and encourage you?***

Source: Exercise based on an approach originated by Yvonne Dolan, <http://www.solutionmind.com>



Tomorrow and Beyond

Session Length: 2 hours

Objectives

Participants will:

- Explore factors for building resilience in children
- Identify steps in a problem solving model
- Revisit group goals and identify future goals
- Recognize group accomplishment (graduation)

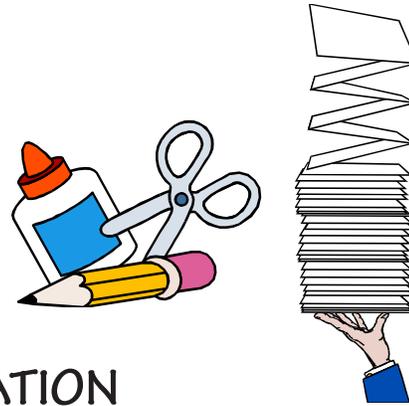
Synopsis

The last structured group is designed to address ways that parents can help guide their children toward resilience. In addition, parents are introduced to a problem solving model for working through future parenting challenges (Crary, 1993). The session also is intended to provide closure by reviewing goals established in the first session, weighing progress, and establishing new goals. Time is allowed for a recognition ceremony to mark “graduation,” and parents are encouraged to continue meeting informally as a support group.

Session Outline



Procedure	Time
Welcome/Session overview	10 minutes
Homework review	15 minutes
Resiliency	20 minutes
Solving problems	25 minutes
Goals then and now	15 minutes
Concluding discussion	10 minutes
Graduation	25 minutes
Total Time for Session 8	120 minutes



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:
 - *Building Resilience in Children* (p. 180)
 - *Problem Solving Checklist* (p. 181)
 - *Problem Solving Worksheet* (p. 182)
 - *Problem Case Studies* (pp. 183–184)
 - *Certificates of Recognition* (p. 185)
 - *Session Eight Evaluation* (p. 186)
 - **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 / SESSION OVERVIEW

1 Welcome participants as they arrive.

2 Introduce the session:

- Today's session will be the last "formal" session of the workshop. Group members often express interest in continuing to meet as a support group to work on parenting and recovery issues. This is an option we'll discuss later.
- We'll save the last part of the group for a recognition ceremony, with certificates for graduation and refreshments.
- Today we'll talk about what parents can do to help their children develop resilience. We'll look at how parents can use many of the parenting skills we've covered in this workshop to help toward that end. We'll also explore a model for using problem solving skills.
- And we'll look back on the group goals developed during the first meeting. This will give us a chance to evaluate progress and set down plans for the future.
- Before we get started, let's review the homework task.



15 Minutes

HOMEWORK REVIEW

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

- The homework assignment was to complete a worksheet by writing a letter to yourself from the "older, wiser you of the future." This older, wiser self of the future was to give you some advice. Let's talk about the assignment.



- ? *What advice did your “older, wiser self” give? What did “that self” suggest that you keep on doing? What words of support/encouragement were given?*
- ? *How are you already putting “your wiser self’s” advice into action? How did you realize that’s what you should be doing?*
- ? *What did you learn or discover from this exercise?*

4 Thank participants for their willingness to try the assignment. Point out that their “stronger, wiser self of the future” is always available for consultation when they need advice or encouragement.



20 Minutes

RESILIENCY

5 Introduce the discussion with some of the following ideas:

- One of the most interesting characteristics that people are capable of having is resiliency. Resilience involves the capacity to bounce back after disappointment, to move forward after a setback, to take life in stride, to forgive, to keep on going, to roll with the punches.
- Children are almost naturally resilient, and there are things parents can pay attention to that help preserve and build resilience in children.



Handout,
p. 180

6 Distribute and review *Building Resilience in Children* handout. Encourage questions and cover some of the following points:

- There are several factors that contribute to children’s resilience on which parents can have a direct impact.
- Self-respect and self-esteem are factors in resiliency. When children like themselves they are better able to show respect for others, develop positive relationships, and accept positive attention. These things provide a “cushion” for children during stressful times and contribute to resilience.

- Independence and self-reliance are factors that contribute to self-esteem and also to resiliency. Confidence and self-discipline in doing tasks, solving problems, and figuring things out help buffer children from feeling hopeless or helpless when faced with difficulties.
- A positive outlook makes resiliency happen. A sense that things have meaning and value, that problems can be solved, that others can help, and that the world is basically a good place can help motivate children to “stick it out” or work harder to solve a problem.
- Sociability or openness to other people is an important resiliency factor. Being open to others helps children develop a support system of people they can count on (family, friends, teachers, neighbors). Social support helps kids recover faster from setbacks and provides them with a source for advice and comfort when they are discouraged.
- A sense of responsibility encourages resilience because, like sociability, it’s related to having a connection to others. When children feel they are a part of something, that their contributions are important, and that they are valued, they are better able to persevere.
- Good relationships with peers is another factor in resiliency. Friendships help children feel understood, accepted, and cared about. Having friends and being able to make new friends gives children a sense of belonging and confidence.

7 Go back over each of the factors associated with resiliency (for example, self-esteem, independence, a positive outlook, openness, etc.) and lead a discussion on strategies parents can use to encourage resiliency in their children. Provide clarification as needed. Include some of the following questions:

- ? What are some things parents can do to help their child develop _____ (resiliency factor)?
- ? What are you already doing to help your child develop _____ ?
- ? How do you make yourself remember to do that for your child?
- ? What skills covered in this group might be most useful in helping your child develop _____ ?



- 8 Repeat this general line of questioning for each of the factors discussed in the handout.
- 9 Thank members for their participation. Encourage them to continue using strategies that help build resilience.



25 Minutes

SOLVING PROBLEMS

- 10 Introduce the utility of using a formal problem-solving process for addressing parenting concerns:

- As children grow and change, strategies for guidance and discipline that worked well during one age may become less effective.
- Another headache faced by many parents is that strategies that worked well with one child fail miserably with another.
- When strategies for parenting fail to produce the results parents want, frustration, anger, and a sense of incompetence or hopelessness may begin to muddy the waters.
- Rather than giving up, a parent's best tactic is to re-group. By identifying the problem (without blaming anyone) and focusing on developing alternative solutions, parents can begin to rethink and regain control of the situation.
- Let's look at the steps in the problem solving process, and examine how they would be used with a couple of very common problems.



Handout,
p. 181

- 11 Distribute *Problem Solving Checklist* handouts. Briefly review each step in the process. Encourage questions and cover some of the following points:

- A problem solving model works because it helps you focus your mental energy on solving the darn problem rather than spinning your wheels, blaming yourself or your child, or giving up and labeling yourself or your child as "bad" or "hopeless." When all you really want is for your child to go to bed peacefully, why waste time and energy on anything other than figuring out how to make that happen.



- When you've tried the things that usually work with your child and there's still a problem, invest some time tapping into your own creativity and inner resources to find a solution.
- Enter this process with a few things in mind.
 - (1) There may be more than one problem. You'll need to assess whether this is the case and be prepared to solve each problem separately.
 - (2) There are no "right" or "wrong" solutions. If it seems like it may work and it is not physically or emotionally harmful to the child or to yourself, go for it.
 - (3) Solutions are not set in stone. Remember, if it works, do more of it. If it doesn't work, try something different.

- Here are some steps to follow:

- ◆ **Describe the problem without blaming.**

Focus on behavior. Describe the behavior that your child is doing that is a problem for you. Avoid labels. For example, "My child is lazy," does not describe the problem well enough to enable you to find a solution; however, "My child refuses to help her sister with her assigned chores," does. The second example is more specific and allows you to address the problem.

- ◆ **Think about the problem.**

Make mental notes about when and where the problem behavior happens.

Does it happen everyday, only on certain days, or only at certain times of day? What sets the problem off, and what have you been doing that hasn't worked? By taking time to just observe the problem behavior, you may get clues about handling the situation.

After gathering information, decide what behavior you want the child to do in place of the problem behavior. You must be specific. It's not realistic to expect the child to "just know" what you want him to do instead of the thing that's driving you nuts. "Don't interrupt me on the phone" might best be



stated as “If you must talk to me while I’m on the phone, I’d like you to touch my arm to get my attention, then wait until I stop talking before you talk.”

◆ **Brainstorm options and possible solutions.**

Let your creative juices flow. As you generate a list of options, think about your child’s strengths and your own. DO NOT censor yourself during this part of the process. Too many potentially good solutions die on the planning table because the parent thinks “Oh, this would never work.” Don’t limit yourself to only practical ideas or solutions. The silly ones often clear the air so the good ones can emerge. If it might address the problem, and if it is not physically or emotionally damaging to you or your child, put it on the list. The following questions may help you organize your thoughts for generating solutions:

● **How can I encourage the behavior I want?**

We’ve covered some of these in this group – for example, praise, rewards, reinforcers, and acknowledging your child’s efforts. Decide on a couple of ways you can encourage or reinforce the behavior you want. For example, you might thank your child for waiting before speaking while you’re on the phone and say: “I like it when you wait quietly until I finish talking. Each time you wait patiently, I’m going to put a big star on your star chart.”

● **Will active listening help with this problem?**

The problem behavior may have its roots in a problem or frustration the child is experiencing. Remember that active listening makes no judgment about the “okayness” of the feeling nor does it attempt to change the child’s feeling. In some cases, just listening to your child for awhile may resolve the problem. For example, “You’re really furious that Mommy went to a movie and you had to stay home.”

● **Are there ways to simply avoid this problem?**

Your options list might include two or three ways to avoid the problem, such as changing the environment, changing schedules, or even changing your expectations. For example, 4-year-

old Billy dawdles in his room while he dresses in the morning (throwing everyone off schedule), so Dad brings Billy's clothes into the kitchen and has him dress there (supervised) while Dad finishes fixing breakfast. Or, Janey and Mom frequently get into a fight over Janey's color choices in clothes (green socks worn with a bright pink skirt). Mom solves the problem by changing her expectations and stops interfering in Janey's clothes choices. In this case, there's an added benefit—letting children choose their own clothes is a good, safe avenue of self-expression.

- **How will I offer my child alternative choices?**

When there is a problem, it is usually because your needs and your child's needs are not the same. On your list of possible solutions, include several alternative choices you might offer the child so he can meet his needs. One way to do this is to ask the child to change the timing, approach, or location of the activity that's causing you a problem. For example, "Please don't interrupt. You may ask your brother for help (suggest new approach) or you can wait until I'm off the phone (suggest new time). Or "I'm trying to read. You may play quietly beside me (activity) or you can go play in your room" (location).

- **What kind of consequences are fair and enforceable if the unacceptable behavior continues?**

Most children will test limits. It's sometimes helpful to tell your child in advance the consequences of testing. Remember, consequences must "fit the crime," must be do-able, and must be stated calmly, kindly, and firmly (not in anger). For example, "If you and your brother continue to fight over that toy, I will put the toy in time-out." Or "I will not listen to whining. If you whine, I will ask you to say it again in a nice, clear voice." As we discussed earlier about applying consequences—you must remember to follow-through every time.

- ◆ **Choose a plan of action.**

Choose an idea and give it a try. When you choose your plan, keep your child's personality and the impact of the plan on you and other family members in mind. Begin by explaining to your child what you have decided. For example, "I want you to speak



more quietly when you're in the house. If you yell, I will send you to time-out." Know ahead of time how you plan to respond if your child tests the limits or ignores a rule. Remember, when you tell a child to do something and don't follow-through, you are inadvertently teaching that child to disregard you and what you say.

When your child ignores a rule, remind her once, then follow-through immediately. For example, "You can walk beside me or ride in the grocery cart," then if she starts running down the aisles, pick her up and put her in the cart.

◆ **Evaluate the plan. If needed, revise it. If not, repeat what works.**

Few parent-child problems are completely resolved on the first try. Track the problem behavior to see if it's improving. If nothing is moving ahead after several days, you'll need to choose another idea. Continue making revisions until the situation is resolved.



Worksheet,
p. 182;
Handout,
pp. 183-184

12 *Distribute Problem Solving Worksheet and Problem Case Studies. Briefly review the case studies to provide concrete examples. Then ask participants to think about a current parenting problem and fill in their worksheets.*

13 *When everyone has finished, ask for volunteers to give a capsule summary of their problem and their plan of action. Make sure each volunteer states the problem behaviorally and makes a specific statement about what she/he wants the child to do, before moving on to the strategies the parent plans to use. Process with some of the following questions:*

- ? *What did you find most helpful about this process?*
- ? *Without realizing it, have you already been using some of these problem solving steps?*
- ? *Which step do you think is the most useful?*
- ? *What did you learn or realize from using this model?*

- 14** Thank participants for their willingness to try something new. Encourage them to use this problem-solving process often. The five major steps—describing the problem, gathering information and describing what you want, generating ideas, making a plan, and revising the plan as needed—can be taught to children to help them work on solutions to their problems.
- 15** Offer extra copies of the *Problem Solving Worksheet* for future use.



15 Minutes

GOALS THEN AND NOW

- 16** Use the allotted time to review the goals the group listed as important during the first session. Display the poster board or flip chart list of goals or provide participants with transcribed copies. Encourage participants to focus on progress. Normalize setbacks (“progress often involves two steps forward and one step back”). Encourage revising important goals, as needed. Use some of the following questions to lead the discussion.
- ? *On which goal(s) do you think you’ve made the most progress? How did you make that happen? What will you do to make sure it keeps on happening?*
 - ? *Which goal has proved to be the most challenging? How are you continuing to work on it?*
 - ? *What goal turned out to be easier than you first thought it would be? What’s made it easy for you to make progress on this goal?*
 - ? *Are there goals that maybe should have been on the list but we didn’t think to put them there?*
 - ? *What 3 goals do you plan to take with you and keep working on? Do you want to revise any of them? What revisions do you think are needed?*
 - ? *What has been the biggest benefit to your child from the goals you have made progress on?*



- 17** Praise participants for their good work in the group, and for having the courage to set goals and work toward them. Thank them for their good ideas and their team spirit.



10 Minutes

CONCLUDING IDEAS

- 18** Provide wrap-up and closure for the session. Highlight the following points:

- Before we move on and enjoy “graduation,” let’s stand for a minute and reflect back over the time that has passed since our first meeting.
- We’ve had a lot of interesting conversation, a few differences of opinion; we’ve learned many new things, and we’ve had some good laughs.
- Let’s take a moment to say “goodbye” to this phase of the group. Those of you who are interested in continuing to meet each week or every other week are invited to stay for a minute after group to formalize how and when you want to meet. Future meetings would focus on practicing what we’ve learned, and more importantly, supporting each other as we take on ever-changing parenting challenges.
- Let’s stand in a circle for a minute. I’d like to go around the circle and have each member share with the group one important thing he/she learned in this group, and one thing he/she will always remember about this group.

- 19** Thank participants again for their contributions to the group. Ask members to complete a *Session Evaluation* form before leaving.



25 Minutes

GRADUATION

- 20** In a manner appropriate for your group and your program, hold a brief graduation or recognition observance for participants. This may include special refreshments and presenting each participant with a certificate or other token. A sample certificate of

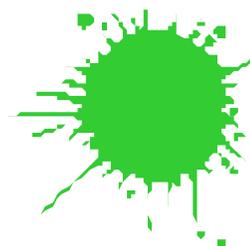


Handout,
p. 185

accomplishment is included in the materials section of this session.

21 The following activities may be incorporated into the graduation protocol, as time and interest allows:

- Have participants redo the *Tower of Strengths* activity (see Session 1, pp. 14-15). Discuss changes in choice and positioning of strength words, compared to how the activity was completed in Session 1. This may be done by comparing the worksheets from Session 1 (if available) or by memory. Encourage discussion and help participants verbalize goals and ways to work on desired strengths.
- Provide poster boards, markers, paints, stickers, and other decorations. Lead participants in constructing “reminder” posters based on skills covered in the workshops. Participants can be encouraged to display their posters on the refrigerator or other convenient place to prompt them to remember to use skills from the workshop. For example, posters may be created that:
 - Highlight guidance and discipline strategies from Sessions 5 and 6 (pp. 101-143).
 - Outline rules and strategies for Family Meetings (p. 119).
 - Highlight key communication strategies discussed in Sessions 3 and 4 (pp. 53-100).
 - Emphasize self-care ideas from Session 7 (pp. 145 – 166).
- Help participants organize an ongoing parenting support group. Participants can discuss and decide on the structure and format of such a group, meeting times and locations, membership, and other related issues. If appropriate, participants can draft an informal charter or agreement for their ongoing support group.





BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN

Resilient Factor	Definition/Demonstration	Building Skills
Self-respect	Children like themselves, show respect for peers, accept positive attention.	Acknowledge achievement by citing specific efforts. Correct behaviors, not personality. Model empathy, responsibility, reliability.
Independence, self-reliance	Children show initiative, self-discipline.	Establish clear procedures and specify consequences. Have children participate in developing family rules. Acknowledge appropriate behaviors. Increase level of performance and offer help and encouragement to reach high goals.
Positive outlook	Children know that their lives have meaning and value. They are optimistic and can ask for help.	Show children they deserve trust and respect. Give examples from the parent's life and from the lives of other adults, children, and historical figures who handled trying circumstances.
Sociability	Children have support systems of teachers, relatives, peers, neighbors. They develop new relationships, pursue academic activities and hobbies.	Help children identify people they can turn to for companionship, guidance, and support.
Sense of responsibility	Children perform family tasks that give them a sense of responsibility and connection to others.	Give children tasks that demand responsible behavior and recognize the accomplishment. Give children a chance to have fun in the home.
Good peer relationships	Children feel understood, accepted by peers; they have close peer relationships and can find and make new friends.	Give children a chance to interact with other peer groups. Help children explore ways to make friends, express affection or displeasure, state needs and stand up for themselves, and say "no" when pressured to do something inappropriate. Participate in a support network, which helps members build self-esteem and a sense of responsibility, fosters positive coping skills, and encourages members to express feelings.



Problem Solving Checklist

-  **Describe the problem without blaming.**
Focus on behavior. Describe the problem behavior, not the child. Say "My child refuses to do her chores" instead of "My child is lazy."
-  **Think about the problem behavior.**
When, where, how often does it happen?
What hasn't worked so far to solve it?
What exactly do I want my child to do? (Desired behavior instead of problem behavior.)
-  **Brainstorm options and possible solutions.**
Consider these questions as you make your plan:
How can I encourage the behavior I want?
Will active listening help me with this problem?
Are there ways to avoid the problem?
How will I offer my child alternative choices?
What consequences would be fair and logical if the problem behavior continues?
-  **Choose a plan of action.**
Explain your decision and your expectations to your child.
Explain consequences.
Follow-through consistently and calmly, every time.
-  **Evaluate.**
If the problem behavior doesn't improve in a few days, modify your plan or try something else.



Problem Solving Worksheet

1. Describe the problem behavior: _____

2. Think about the problem:

How often does it happen? _____

What sets it off? _____

What do you want your child to do (desired behavior)? _____

3. Brainstorm options and solutions:

Ways to encourage desired behavior?

How can I listen, understand child's feelings?

What might help avoid the problem?

What choices might I offer my child?

What consequences are fair and logical?

4. Choose a plan of action:

I'll try this: _____

I'll explain it this way: _____

5. Evaluate:

Did the plan work? _____

How can I modify or change plan? _____

What else might work? _____

Problem Case Studies

Five-year old Gina frequently yells at her baby brother (age 3). She has started "tattling" to you about every move her brother makes. You have been hearing constant cries of "Mommy, he won't sit down," "Mommy, he's picking up dirt," "Mommy, he pulled my hair," "Mommy, he touched my doll." You have tried to reason with her, and have scolded her for annoying you, but she keeps on like a town crier.

Whenever 4-year old Eric wants anything, he starts pulling on your shirt tail and whining. You have tried saying "No," and telling him not to whine, but when Eric gets on a "roll," you eventually give in to get some peace and quiet. Later you feel angry.

Ten-year old Mattie has been talking on the phone to her friends when she should be doing her homework. You've set fair limits about her use of the phone and the amount of time she can be on the phone. But more and more recently, you have caught her "sneaking" extra phone time when she should be studying. You're about to lose your patience.



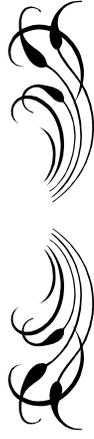
Problem Case Studies

Tyrone (age 7) refuses to help his sister with their assigned chores. He has a way of "disappearing" every Saturday morning when chores are suppose to be done, later saying "he forgot" that he was suppose to help. You've tried talking to him about responsibility and being fair to his sister, but he still "forgets."

No matter how early you start, 6-year old Shauna refuses to get dressed on time. You end up reminding her, scolding her, yelling at her, and sometimes even dressing her yourself in order to get out of the house on time. Yesterday, you got so mad you called her "a baby."

Nine-year old Doug has taken to staying outside playing ball with his friends way beyond the time he's due home for dinner. He's late almost every night. You've tried scolding him, lecturing him, and even going out to the playground to "escort" him home - nothing seems to work.

Certificate of Training



Be It Known That

has successfully completed _____ hours of
Parenting skills training entitled "Partners in Parenting"

Developed by the DATAR and First Choice Projects

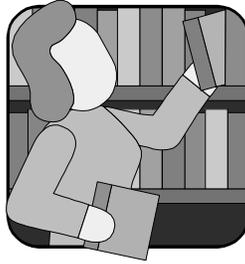
Institute of Behavioral Research

Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas

AWARDED _____ at _____

Training Coordinator

Program Director



Resources for Parenting Education

Videos, Pamphlets, Materials

Health EDCO
Box 21207
Waco, TX 76702
1-800-299-3366 (Catalog Available)

Altchul Group Corporation
1560 Sherman Ave. # 100
Evanston, IL 60201
1-800-421-2363 (Catalog Available)

ETR Associates
Box 1830
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
1-800-321-4407 (Catalog Available)

Krames Communications
1100 Grundy Lane
San Bruno, CA 94066
1-800-333-3032 (Catalog Available)

ChildsWork, ChildsPlay
100 Plaza Dr.
Secaucus, NJ 07094
1-800-962-1141 (Catalog Available)

Films for the Humanities
Box 2053
Princeton, NJ 08543
1-800-257-5126 (Catalog Available)



Parenting Web sites

<http://www.parentsplace.com>

<http://www.wholefamily.com>

<http://www.parentsoup.com>

<http://www.zerotothree.org>

<http://www.parentzchannel.com>

National Organizations

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
Drug Abuse Information Hotline
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Clearinghouse for Child Abuse and Neglect Information
Box 1182
Washington, DC 20013
1-800-394-3366

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20847
1-800-729-6686



ADDITIONAL READING MATERIALS

Brazelton, T. B. (1992). *Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Crary, E. (1990). *Pick Up Your Socks...And Other Skills Growing Children Need!* Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc.

DelCampo, R. L., & DelCampo, D. S. (1995). *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Childhood and Society*. New Mexico State University: Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc.

Eisenberg, A., Murkoff, H. E., & Hathaway, S. E. (1994). *What to Expect: The Toddler Years*. New York: Workman Publishing Co.

Nelsen, J., Erwin, C. & Delzer, C. (1994). *Positive Discipline for Single Parents: A Practical Guide to Raising Children Who Are Responsible, Respectful, and Resourceful*. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing.

Nelson, J., & Glenn H. S. (1992). *Time Out: Abuses and Effective Uses*. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing.

Nelsen, J., Intner, R., & Lott, L. (1995). *Positive Discipline for Parenting in Recovery*. Rocklin, CA: Prima Publishing.

Straus, M. A. (1994). *Beating the Devil Out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Families*. New York: Maxwell Macmillan International.

Partners in Parenting

References

- Berg, I. K. (1994). *Family-Based Services: A Solution-Focused Approach*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Berg, I. K., & Miller, S. D. (1992). *Working With The Problem-Drinker: A Solution-Focused Approach*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Canter, L., & Canter, M. (1985). *Assertive Discipline for Parents*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Crary, E. (1993). *Without Spanking or Spoiling*. Seattle: Parenting Press.
- Crary, E. (1990). *Pick Up Your Socks and Other Skills Growing Children Need*. Seattle: Parenting Press.
- Gordon, T. (1970). *P.E.T.: Parenting Effectiveness Training*. New York: Peter H. Wyden.
- Gordon, T. (1991). *Discipline That Works: Promoting Self-Discipline in Children*. New York: Plume Books.
- Leverington, J. (1996). A solution-focused approach to child abuse. *Family Violence and Sexual Assault Bulletin*, 12(3-4), 25-30.
- Miller, S. D., & Berg, I. K. (1995). *The Miracle Method: A Radically New Approach to Problem Drinking*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Sia, T. L., Czuchry, M. L., Dansereau, D. F., & Blankenship, J. (1999). *Preparation for change: The Tower of Strength and The Weekly Planner*. Lighthouse Institute, Chestnut Health Systems.
- Webster-Stratton, C., & Herbert, M. (1993). "What really happens in parent training?" *Behavior Modification*, 17(4), 407-456.

PARTNERS IN PARENTING -- PRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRE

TO BE COMPLETED BY STAFF:

[FORM 352; CARD 01]

SITE #: __ __	CLIENT ID#: __ __ __ __	TODAY'S DATE: __ __ __ __ __ __	
[6]	[7-10]	MO DAY YR	[11-16]
COUNSELOR ID#: __ __	CIRCLE ONE: 1=Pre-PP 2=Post-PP		
[17-18]			[19]

Instructions: Circle the answer that shows how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

DISAGREE	NOT	AGREE
STRONGLY	SURE	STRONGLY

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1. Rewarding a child's good behavior will help the child learn to do it more often. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [20] |
| 2. Punishing children when they are stubborn teaches them how to listen. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [21] |
| 3. Young children should not be allowed to do things like play with food at mealtime, splash water out of the bathtub, or dump toys out of their containers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [22] |
| 4. It's okay to let children work out their own problems when fighting with other children, as long as they don't hurt each other. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [23] |
| 5. If a preschool child cries or whines, a parent should "lay off" and not discipline the child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [24] |
| 6. Arguing with a child teaches assertive communication skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [25] |
| 7. Parents can listen to their children while they do other things (like clean the kitchen) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [26] |

	<u>DISAGREE</u>			NOT	<u>AGREE</u>			
	<u>STRONGLY</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>SURE</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>.....</u>	<u>STRONGLY</u>	
8. It's okay for a teenager to argue that a rule is not fair.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[27]
9. Children are more likely to do what a parent asks if the parent uses a harsh voice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[28]
10. If a child misbehaves it's okay to let several hours go by before a parent disciplines.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[29]
11. If an infant cries or whines, a parent should respond quickly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[30]
12. Telling a child that she's a "bad girl" helps her understand what she did wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[31]
13. Allowing children to choose their own solution to a problem creates rebellion.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[32]
14. Once you find a good way to deal with a parenting problem, you shouldn't change it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[33]
15. Some types of bad behavior are best handled by ignoring the child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[34]
16. When children feel they are accepted by their parents, they learn to feel good about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[35]
17. It is not necessary to follow-through with discipline if a child apologizes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[36]
18. Telling children what they should do is enough--you shouldn't have to walk them through the motions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	[37]

DISAGREE	NOT	AGREE
STRONGLY	SURE	STRONGLY

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 19. When children are given choices, they learn that they are in control of their behavior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [38] |
| 20. Parents should keep remembering the bad choices they made in the past so they won't repeat them again. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [39] |
| 21. Children who are spanked for misbehaving rarely repeat the behavior again. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [40] |
| 22. Really good parents are able to solve problems quickly without having to ask others for help or spend a lot of time thinking about it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [41] |
| 23. If parents respond calmly when a child misbehaves, the child won't take them seriously. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [42] |
| 24. A new method of discipline doesn't always work at first. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [43] |
| 25. Parents should not let their children make decisions about family rules. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [44] |
| 26. Lecturing (scolding, giving a speech) helps children remember what to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [45] |
| 27. A child will be more influenced by what a parent says than by what a parent does. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [46] |
| 28. A good listener agrees with everything others say | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [47] |

Appendix

List of Supplemental Reading Materials

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 Available: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/ch.htm> Downloaded and printed: 3/21/2000 and 8/6/02.

1-12

Months



By 4 months

Physical development

- weight: 10-18 pounds
- length: 23-27 inches
- sleeps about 6 hours before waking during the night
- sleeps 14-17 hours daily
- lifts head and chest when lying on stomach
- holds both eyes in a fixed position
- follows a moving object or person with eyes
- grasps rattle or finger
- wiggles and kicks with arms and legs
- rolls over (stomach to back)
- sits with support

Mental development

- explores objects with mouth
- plays with fingers, hands, toes
- reacts to sound of voice, rattle, bell
- turns head toward bright colors and lights
- recognizes bottle or breast

AGES & STAGES

Babies learn and grow so quickly. By the end of this year your baby will have almost tripled in size. He or she will be crawling and maybe even taking a timid first step! Try to spend lots of time holding, cuddling, and playing with your little one. You will be richly rewarded with babbles, smiles, and squeals of laughter.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Baby proof everything! Store toxic substances such as dishwasher detergent, make-up, paint, or medicine up high. Put safety latches on cabinets, and covers on electrical outlets. Lower crib mattresses so an older infant can't fall over the rail. Cover sharp corners of tables or shelves that your infant might bump into.
- Provide interesting objects for baby to mouth and explore. Square nylon scarves, plastic measuring cups, large wooden spoons, and colorful washcloths are favorite household toys. Keep easy-to-swallow objects out of infant's reach. Baby should not be allowed to play with anything smaller than a half dollar (about 1 ¼ inch).
- If your baby is bottle fed, be sure to hold him or her while feeding. Even if your baby holds the bottle, being held and cuddled helps develop a strong nurturing parent-child relationship. Do not prop an infant drinking from a bottle as it may cause choking.
- Respect your baby's natural schedule. Most babies will settle into a regular routine for eating, sleeping, and soiling their diapers, but the schedule will vary depending on the baby. Some babies need to eat more frequently than others. Some will sleep through the night early on, others will continue to wake briefly well into their second year.
- Talk to your baby. Face your infant when talking so he or she can see you and smile with you. Talk about what you are doing, familiar objects, or people. You may even want to

(continued on page 3)



(4 months cont.) Social and emotional development

- cries (with tears) to communicate pain, fear, discomfort, or loneliness
- babbles or coos
- loves to be touched and held close
- responds to a shaking rattle or bell
- returns a smile
- responds to peak-a-boo games

By 8 months Physical development

- weight: 14-23 pounds
- length: 25-30 inches
- first teeth begin to appear
- drools, mouths, and chews on objects
- reaches for cup or spoon when being fed
- drinks from a cup with help
- enjoys some finely chopped, solid foods
- closes mouth firmly or turns head when no longer hungry
- may sleep 11-13 hours at night although this varies greatly
- needs 2-3 naps during the day
- develops a rhythm for feeding, eliminating, sleeping, and being awake
- true eye color is established
- rolls from back to stomach and stomach to back
- sits alone without support and holds head erect
- raises up on arms and knees into crawling position; rocks back and forth, but may not move forward

- uses finger and thumb to pick up an object
- transfers objects from one hand to the other
- hair growth begins to cover head

Mental development

- cries in different ways to say he or she is hurt, wet, hungry, or lonely
- makes noises to voice displeasure or satisfaction
- recognizes and looks for familiar voices and sounds
- learns by using senses like smell, taste, touch, sight, hearing
- focuses eyes on small objects and reaches for them
- looks for ball rolled out of sight
- searches for toys hidden under a blanket, basket, or container
- explores objects by touching, shaking, banging, and mouthing
- babbles expressively as if talking
- enjoys dropping objects over edge of chair or crib

Social and emotional development

- responds to own name
- shows fear of falling off high places such as table or stairs
- spends a great deal of time watching and observing
- responds differently to strangers and family members
- shows fearfulness toward strangers; is friendly to family members
- imitates sounds, actions, and facial expressions made by others

- shows distress if toy is taken away
- squeals, laughs, babbles, smiles in response
- likes to be tickled and touched
- smiles at own reflection in mirror
- raises arms as a sign to be held
- recognizes family member names
- responds to distress of others by showing distress or crying
- shows mild to severe stress at separation from parent

By 12 months Physical development

- weight: 17-27 pounds
- length: 27-32 inches
- sleeps 11-13 hours at night; but may still wake up during the night
- takes naps—some babies will stop taking a morning nap, others will continue both morning and afternoon naps
- begins to refuse bottle or wean self from breast during day
- needs at least 3 meals a day with 2 snacks in-between
- enjoys drinking from a cup
- begins to eat finger foods
- continues to explore everything by mouth
- enjoys opening and closing cabinet doors
- crawls well
- pulls self to a standing position
- stands alone holding onto furniture for support
- walks holding onto furniture or with adult help

Mental development

- says first word
- says da-da and ma-ma or equivalent
- “dances” or bounces to music
- interested in picture books
- pays attention to conversations
- claps hands, waves bye, if prompted
- likes to place objects inside one another

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

(continued from page 1)

babble back or echo sounds your baby makes much as you would in a regular conversation. Even though your infant cannot understand everything you say, he or she will be learning many words that will form the basis for language later on.

- Read to your baby. Babies enjoy cuddling on a parent’s lap, looking at colorful picture books, and hearing the rhythm of a parent’s voice. With time they begin to understand that words have meaning and can be used to identify objects.
- Encourage older infants to feed themselves by offering pieces of banana and soft bread. Give your baby a spoon with some mashed potatoes or other sticky food and let him or her practice eating with a spoon. Yes, it will be messy! Be patient. Learning this skill takes lots of practice!
- Play peek-a-boo. Hide your face behind a blanket, then peek out at your baby. Older babies will learn to do this themselves and will enjoy this game for a long time.
- Give your baby the freedom to move around. Young infants enjoy being on their back so they can kick, wiggle, and look around. Older infants need space and time to practice crawling, creeping, pulling up, and walking. Spending too much time in a walker, play pen, or infant swing may inhibit the development of these important skills.
- Help your baby develop a sense of trust and security by responding to baby’s cries. Feeling secure encourages your baby to try new things. Be consistent so your baby knows what to expect.
- Stay with your baby when someone new is around. Encourage strangers to approach slowly. Introduce your infant, and let him or her explore someone new in the safety of your presence.

Social and emotional development

- copies adult actions such as drinking from a cup, talking on phone
- responds to name
- likes to watch self in mirror
- expresses fear or anxiety toward strangers
- wants caregiver or parent to be in constant sight
- offers toys or objects to others, but expects them to be returned
- may become attached to a favorite toy or blanket
- pushes away something he or she does not want

Toys

- pictures on wall
- mobile of bright and contrasting colors
- measuring cups
- crib mirror
- rattles that make a variety of sounds
- musical toys
- xylophone
- bath toys
- spoons
- pounding bench
- balls of different sizes
- stacking rings
- board or cloth books
- large plastic cars, trucks
- soft, washable dolls or animals



BOOKS

Books for parents

- Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development*, T. Berry Brazelton
- The First Twelve Months of Life: Your Baby's Growth Month by Month*, Frank Caplan
- What to Expect the First Year*, Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi Murkoff and Sandy Hathaway
- Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five*, Penelope Leach
- The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two*, William Sears and Martha Sears
- Caring for Your Baby and Child - Birth to Age Five*, American Academy of Pediatrics. Steven P. Shevlov, ed.



Books for children

- Baby's Faces*, Ben Argueta
- The Rock-A-Bye Collection* (audio tape and book), J. Aaron Brown & Associates, Inc.
- Teddy In The House*, Lucy Cousins
- Touch and Feel: Baby Animals*, DK Publishing
- Grow! Babies!*, Penny Gentieu
- Animal Babies*, Harry McNaught
- Hide and Seek Puppies*, Roy Volkman

A word on development

Your child is unique. His or her learning and growth rates differ from other children the same age. If, however, your child is unable to do many of the skills listed for this age group, you may wish to talk to an early childhood specialist. You are the best person to notice developmental problems, if any, because of the time you spend with your child. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

If you have questions about your child's development or want to have your child assessed, contact:

- Your pediatrician or health care professional
- Area Education Agency—Early Childhood Special Education Department
- Iowa Compass 1-800-779-2001.

Contact your county Extension office to obtain other publications about children, parenting, and family life or visit the ISU Extension Web site at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/>.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been compiled from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child's overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.

File: Family life - 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

... and justice for all

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AGES & STAGES

The second year is a delightful time for parents and children. Your baby is developing a personality and rewards your time together with laughter, funny faces, and affectionate hugs. First steps and first words are exciting family events.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

Physical development

- weight: 17-30 pounds
- height: 27-35 inches
- crawls well
- stands alone, sits down
- gestures or points to indicate wants
- likes to push, pull, and dump things
- pulls off hat, socks, and mittens
- turns pages in a book
- stacks 2 blocks
- likes to poke, twist, and squeeze
- enjoys flushing toilets and closing doors
- enjoys carrying small objects while walking, often one in each hand
- holds crayon and scribbles, but with little control
- waves bye-bye and claps hands
- walks without help
- enjoys holding spoon when eating, but experiences difficulty in getting spoon into mouth
- rolls a ball to adult on request

- Enjoy some “floor time” with your child each day. Crawl around together, play peek-a-boo behind the sofa, or roll a ball back and forth. Your child will love having you down on his or her level.
- Review your baby proofing. Your child’s increasing growth and mobility make it possible to reach unsafe heights and play with dangerous material. Get down on your knees in each room and look at things from your child’s perspective. Put toxic items like paint, dishwashing detergent, medicine, and make-up in high cupboards, preferably with a safety cabinet latch.
- Put together a box of items that are fun to feel, poke, and squeeze. You might include plastic margarine tubs, an old sock, tissue paper to crumple, measuring cups of different sizes, a turkey baster, a nylon scarf, an egg carton, and paper cups. Choose items larger than a half-dollar to avoid choking hazards.
- Relax and have fun dancing to music with your child.
- Use bath time to point to some body parts and say them with your baby. Nose, ears, arms, legs, tummy, toes....
- Talk frequently to your child to increase his or her language skills and encourage cooperation. You can make dressing time more fun by pointing to and identifying body parts and clothes. For instance, “See this pretty red shirt? The shirt goes over your head. Your arms go into the sleeves. What shall we put on your legs?”
- Around 18 months your child may begin clinging and become anxious about being separated from you. If possible, reduce separations and be sure that your child is cared for by someone familiar.



Mental development

- says 8-20 words you can understand
- looks at person talking to him or her
- says “Hi” or “Bye” if reminded
- uses expressions like “Oh-oh”
- asks for something by pointing or using one word
- identifies object in a book
- plays peek-a-boo
- looks for objects that are hidden or out of sight
- understands and follows simple one-step directions
- likes to take things apart

Social and emotional development

- becomes upset when separated from parent
- likes to hand objects to others
- plays alone on floor with toys
- recognizes self in mirror or pictures
- enjoys being held and read to
- imitates others especially by coughing, sneezing, or making animal sounds
- enjoys an audience and applause

Toys

- nesting cups
- bath toys, small boat
- soft, huggable dolls (large)
- large animal pictures
- objects to match
- large, plastic blocks
- musical records or tapes
- soft balls of different sizes
- push cart, dump truck
- teddy bear
- plastic jar with lid; lids and containers
- toy telephone

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, ISU Extension family life specialist. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

BOOKS

Books for parents

Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five, Penelope Leach

Caring for Your Baby & Young Child, Birth to Age Five, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shevlov, ed.

Books for children

Baby! Talk!, Penny Gentieu

Baby's Colors, Neil Ricklen

Baby's First Words, Lars Wik

Farm Animals, Phoebe Dunn

Goodnight Moon, Margret Wise Brown

Moo, Baa, La La La, Sandra Boynton



A word on development

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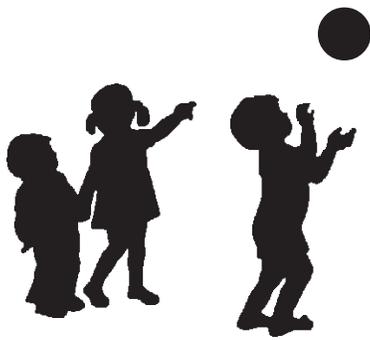
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AGES & STAGES

Welcome to the world of toddlerhood! This stage brings a greater sense of independence to your child as he or she learns to walk, run, and climb with greater skill. Your little one now loves to imitate everything you do. Pretending to talk on the phone is a favorite activity.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

Physical development

- weight: 20-32 pounds
- length: 30-37 inches
- walks well
- likes to run, but can't always stop and turn well
- drinks from a straw
- feeds self with a spoon
- helps wash hands
- stacks 4-6 blocks
- tosses or rolls a large ball
- opens cabinets, drawers, and boxes
- bends over to pick up toy without falling
- walks up steps with help
- takes steps backward
- enjoys sitting on, and moving small-wheeled riding toys
- begins to gain some control of bowels and bladder; complete control may not be achieved until around age 3 (boys often do not complete toilet learning until age 3 1/2)

- Enjoy dancing with your child to music with different rhythms.
- Talk with your child about everyday things. After 18 months, he or she will learn new words at a rapid rate.
- Read simple books with your child every day. Choose books with cardboard or cloth pages and encourage your child to turn pages.
- Make your own scrap book of objects or people he or she knows by using a small photo album.
- Encourage language development by expanding on what your child says. When your child says "kitty" you can say "Yes, the kitty is little and soft."
- Play a simple game of "find." Place three familiar toys in front of your child and say, "Give me the ____." See if he or she tries to find it and hand it to you.
- Encourage your child to play dress-up by providing a full-length mirror on the wall and a "pretend box" filled with caps, scarves, and old shoes.

Mental development

- has a vocabulary of several hundred words, including names of a few toys
- uses two to three word sentences
- echoes single words that are spoken by someone else
- talks to self and "jabbars" expressively
- has "favorite" toys
- likes to choose between two objects
- hums or tries to sing
- listens to short rhymes or fingerplays
- points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked
- uses the words "Please" and "Thank you" if prompted
- enjoys singing familiar songs



Social and emotional development

- likes to imitate others
- begins to show signs of independence; says “no”
- has difficulty sharing
- very possessive
- finds it difficult to wait and wants it *right now!*
- gets angry sometimes and has temper tantrums
- acts shy around strangers
- comforts a distressed friend or parent
- refers to self by name
- uses the words “me” and “mine”
- enjoys looking at picture books
- tries to do many things alone
- enjoys adult attention
- enjoys pretending (wearing hats, talking on phone)
- enjoys exploring; gets into everything, and requires constant supervision
- generally unable to remember rules
- often gets physically aggressive when frustrated — slaps, hits
- shows affection by returning a hug or kiss
- may become attached to a toy or blanket

Toys

- pegboard and pegs, pounding bench, shape sorter
- snap and lock beads, ringstack, plastic jar with lid and containers, beads to string, nesting cups
- soft, huggable dolls (large), teddy bear, soft balls of different sizes
- animal pictures (large), musical records or tapes
- crayon and paper, play dough
- push cart, riding toy, toy telephone

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

BOOKS

Books for parents

Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five, Penelope Leach

Caring for Your Baby & Young Child, Birth to Age Five, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shevlov, ed

Books for children

All About Baby, Stephen Shott

Animal Time, Tom Arma

Bunny and Me, Adele Aron Greenspun

Goodnight Moon, Margret Wise Brown

The Little Quiet Book, Katharine Ross

Trucks, Byron Barton



A word on development

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2-Year-Olds



AGES & STAGES

Two-year-olds like to be independent! Favorite words are “Mine” and “No” and “I do it!” A great deal of time is spent exploring, pushing, pulling, filling, dumping, and touching.

Physical development

- weight: 22-38 pounds
- height: 32-40 inches
- has almost a full set of teeth
- walks up and down stairs by holding onto railing
- feeds self with spoon
- experiments by touching, smelling, and tasting
- likes to push, pull, fill, and dump
- can turn pages of a book
- stacks 2-4 objects
- scribbles with crayons or markers
- many children (but not all) will learn to use toilet
- walks without help
- walks backwards
- tosses or rolls a large ball
- stoops or squats
- opens cabinets, drawers
- can bend over to pick up toy without falling

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Baby proof your house again. Your toddler is now taller and more skillful at opening doors and getting into mischief.
- Read aloud to your child every day. Use books with large pictures and few words.
- Try to expand your child’s words. If Anna wants more juice, let her hear the correct word order, but don’t demand that she imitate you. If she says “more juice,” say “Anna wants more juice.”
- Encourage your child to identify noises like the vacuum, tap water, dogs barking, thunder, airplane, and car.
- Let your child help you with simple chores such as picking up toys, or putting clothes in the laundry basket. Let your child name things you are using.
- Add new information to what your child is saying. “Yes that’s a car, a big, red car.”
- Give toddlers clear and simple choices. “Do you want to drink milk or juice? Do you want to wear green or blue socks?”
- Know how to handle a temper tantrum
 - don’t yell or hit the child,
 - remain calm,
 - talk in a soothing tone,
 - put your hand gently on child’s arm if possible.
- Do not expect toddlers to share or take turns. Right now they are focused on learning how to physically handle themselves and on learning to talk. Learning to share will come later.
- Provide spaces where toddlers can spend time alone. An old cardboard box or a blanket over a card table works great.

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Mental development

- enjoys simple stories, rhymes, and songs
- uses 2-3 word sentences
- says names of toys
- hums or tries to sing
- enjoys looking at books
- points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked
- repeats words

Social and emotional development

- plays alongside others more than with them
- acts shy around strangers
- likes to imitate parents
- easily frustrated
- affectionate—hugs and kisses
- insists on trying to do several tasks without help
- enjoys simple make-believe like talking on phone, putting on hat
- very possessive—offers toys to other children, but then wants them back

Toys

- large blocks, pegboard
- toy telephone
- tricycle, rocking horse
- water and sand toys
- bubbles
- table and chairs, play dishes
- dress-up clothes
- shape sorters, 3-4 piece puzzles
- small and large balls
- doll with bottle and blanket
- cars and trucks (large)
- nursery rhyme tapes, books
- large crayons, blunt scissors
- stuffed animals, wooden animals

BOOKS

Books for parents

- Your Baby and Child, From Birth to age Five*, Penelope Leach
Caring for Your Baby and Child, Birth to Age Five, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shevlov, ed

Books for children

- Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?*, Bill Martin Jr.
Mouse Paint, Ellen Stoll Walsh
The Little Red House, Norma Jean Sawicki
When I Was A Baby, Catherine Anholt
Sounds My Feet Make, Arlene Blanchard
Harold and The Purple Crayon, David Johnson Leisk
Mr. Little's Noisy Truck, Richard Fowler



A word on development

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File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

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3-Year-Olds



AGES & STAGES

The 3-year-old is full of wonder, and spends a lot of time observing and imitating. They love to spend time with parents and enjoy helping out with simple household tasks.

Physical development

- weight: 25-44 pounds
- height: 34-43 inches
- develops a taller, thinner, adult-like appearance
- develops a full set of baby teeth
- sleeps 10-12 hours at night
- sleeps through most nights without wetting the bed (occasional accidents are still quite common)
- uses the toilet with some help (many boys may not be ready for toilet learning until age 3 1/2)
- puts on shoes (but cannot tie laces)
- dresses self with some help (buttons, snaps, zippers)
- feeds self (with some spilling)
- tries to catch a large ball
- throws a ball overhead
- kicks a ball forward
- hops on 1 foot
- walks short distance on tiptoe
- climbs up and down a small slide by self
- pedals a tricycle

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Make brushing teeth a part of your child's daily routine.
- Be patient with toileting — accidents will still happen for a while.
- Purchase easy-to-dress clothing.
- Provide large buttons or old beads to string on a shoe lace.
- Encourage sand and water play.
- Show your child how to throw, catch, and kick a ball.
- Show your child how to hop like a rabbit, tiptoe like a bird, waddle like a duck, slither like a snake, and run like a deer.
- Talk frequently, use short sentences, ask questions, and listen.
- Add new information to your child's sentences. "Yes, that's a flower—it's a tall, red flower and it smells so good."
- Teach your child to memorize his or her first and last name.
- Ask your child to tell you a story during your reading time.
- Sing simple songs with your child.
- Look at baby pictures together and talk about "When you were a baby."
- Talk about colors, numbers, and shapes in your everyday conversation. "We need ONE egg. That's a RED car. The butter is in this SQUARE box."
- Ask for help with simple tasks such as putting the napkins by each plate, socks in the drawer, or stirring the muffin batter.

Mental and language development

- 75-80 percent of speech is understandable; talks in complete sentences of 3-5 words. "Mommy is drinking juice." "There's a big dog."
- stumbles over words sometimes — usually not a sign of stuttering
- listens attentively to short stories; likes familiar stories told without any changes in words



- repeats words and sounds
- enjoys listening to stories and repeating simple rhymes
- able to tell simple stories from pictures or books
- enjoys singing and can carry a simple tune
- understands “now,” “soon,” and “later”
- asks who, what, where, and why questions
- stacks 5-7 blocks
- enjoys playing with clay or play dough (pounds, rolls, and squeezes it)
- puts together a 6-piece puzzle
- draws a circle and square
- recognizes everyday sounds
- matches object and picture
- identifies common colors
- can count 2-3 objects

Social and emotional development

- accepts suggestions and follows simple directions
- sometimes shows preference for one parent (often the parent of the opposite sex)
- enjoys helping with simple household tasks
- can make simple choices between two things
- enjoys making others laugh and being silly
- enjoys playing alone, but near other children
- spends a great deal of time watching and observing
- enjoys playing with other children briefly, but still does not cooperate or share well
- enjoys hearing stories about self, playing “house,” imitating
- can answer the question, “are you a boy or a girl?”

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BOOKS

Books for parents

Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five, Penelope Leach

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, Birth to Age Five, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shevlov, ed

Books for children

Caps For Sale, Esphyr Slobodkina

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle

Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue?, Tana Hoban

All by Myself, Mercer Mayer

I Just Forgot, Mercer Mayer

I'm Sorry, Sam McBratney

A Tree Is Nice, Janice Udry



Toys

- nesting toys, cups that stack, puzzles (3-6 pieces)
- matching games, small pegs, pegboard
- large wheeled toys, tricycle, slide, wagon

- small table and chairs, crayons, felt tip markers, play dough, glue and paper, paint, paint brushes, stickers
- puppets, toy animals, dolls
- balls (different sizes), large blocks

A word on development

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Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

File: Family life 8

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4-Year-Olds



AGES & STAGES

Energetic and imaginative best describes the four-year-old. They are able to learn new words quickly, and use them in chatting with you, telling you jokes and wild stories.

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

Physical development

- weight: 27-50 pounds
- height: 37-46 inches
- uses a spoon, fork, and dinner knife skillfully
- needs 10-12 hours sleep each night
- dresses self without much help
- walks a straight line
- hops on 1 foot
- pedals and steers a tricycle skillfully
- jumps over objects 5-6 inches high
- runs, jumps, hops, skips around obstacles with ease
- stacks 10 or more blocks
- forms shapes and objects out of clay or play dough
- threads small beads on a string
- catches, bounces, and throws a ball easily

- Read aloud each day and encourage your child to help you tell the story.
- Talk about reading. Show your child that words are everywhere: grocery labels, restaurant menus, department store signs, etc.
- Encourage your child to play with words by providing old coupons, junk mail, newspaper ads, and old cereal boxes.
- Ask your child to deliver short messages to family members.
- Say nursery rhymes and fingerplays together.
- Make playdough, play follow the leader.
- Cut out magazine pictures of different shapes, colors, or animals.
- Talk about things being in, on, under, behind, beside, etc.
- Pretend to walk like various animals.
- Sort and count everything in sight like silverware, socks, rocks.
- Teach your child the correct use of the telephone.
- Let your child help you plan activities and make lists for groceries, errands, etc.

Mental development

- can place objects in a line from largest to smallest
- can recognize some letters if taught and may be able to print name
- recognizes familiar words in simple books or signs (STOP sign)
- understands the concepts of tallest, biggest, same, more, on, in, under, and above
- counts 1-7 objects out loud
- understands the order of daily routines (breakfast before lunch, lunch before dinner, dinner before bedtime)



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- speaks fairly complex sentences. “The baby ate the cookie before I could put it on the table.”
- enjoys singing simple songs, rhymes, and nonsense words
- adapts language to listener’s level of understanding. To baby sister: “Daddy go bye bye.” To Mother: “Daddy went to the store to buy food.”
- learns name, address, and phone number if taught
- asks and answers who, what, when, why, where questions
- continues 1 activity for 10-15 minutes
- names 6-8 colors and 3 shapes
- follows two unrelated directions: “Put your milk on the table and get your coat on”

Social and emotional development

- takes turns and shares (most of the time); may still be bossy
- understands and obeys simple rules (most of the time)
- changes the rules of a game as she goes along
- likes to talk and carries on elaborate conversations
- persistently asks why; may name call, tattler freely
- enjoys showing off and bragging about possessions
- fearful of the dark and monsters
- begins to understand danger — at times can become quite fearful
- has difficulty separating make-believe from reality
- lies sometimes to protect self and friends, but doesn’t truly understand the concept of lying — imagination often gets in the way
- likes to shock others by using “forbidden” words
- still throws tantrums over minor frustrations

BOOKS

Books for children

- May I Bring a Friend?*, De Regniefs and Beatrice Schenk
- Blackboard Bear*, Martha Alexander
- Imogene’s Antlers*, David Small
- Bedtime for Frances*, Russell Hoban and Lillian Hoban
- No Ducks in Our Bath tub*, Martha Alexander
- I Want To Paint My Bathroom Blue*, Ruth Kraus
- If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* By Laura Joffe Numeroff
- What Do You Do With A Kangaroo?*, Mercer Mayer



- expresses anger verbally rather than physically (most of the time)
- pretending goes far beyond “playing house” to more elaborate settings like fire station, school, shoe store, ice cream shop
- loves to tell jokes that may not make any sense at all to adults

Toys

- matching games, puzzles 12-15 pieces, board games, dominoes, play money, pretend cash register
- plastic blocks, balls (all sizes)
- glue, crayons, paint, scissors and paper, washable markers, colored chalk, play dough
- trucks and cars, bicycle with training wheels, dress-up clothes
- puppets, books, bean bags, doll with clothes

A word on development

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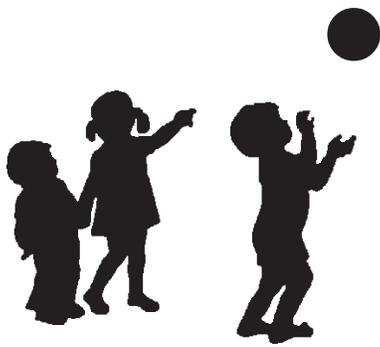
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5-Year-Olds



AGES & STAGES

The 5-year-old is cheerful, energetic, and enthusiastic. Fives enjoy planning and discussing who will do what. A “best friend” is very important, but hard to keep as social skills are not well developed yet.

Physical development

- weight: 31-57 pounds
- height: 39-48 inches
- sleeps 10-11 hours at night
- may begin to lose baby teeth
- able to dress self with little assistance
- learns to skip
- throws ball overhead
- catches bounced balls
- rides a tricycle skillfully, may show interest in riding a bicycle with training wheels
- uses a fork and knife well
- cuts on a line with scissors
- hand dominance is established
- jumps over low objects

Mental development

- knows basic colors like red, yellow, blue, green, orange
- able to memorize address and phone number
- understands that stories have a beginning, middle, and end
- enjoys telling his or her own stories
- understands that books are read from left to right, top to bottom
- enjoys riddles and jokes
- draws pictures that represent animals, people, and objects

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Encourage physical development by playing follow the leader with skipping, galloping, and hopping.
- Help your child learn to use a pair of scissors by asking him or her to help you cut out coupons.
- Stop before the end of a familiar story and ask your child to add his or her own ending.
- Ask your child to tell you a story. Write it down and post it on the wall or refrigerator.
- Ask “what if” questions? What if there were five little pigs instead of three? What if Goldilocks stayed home?
- Involve children in writing “thank you” notes, holiday greeting cards, and letters. If your child likes to copy letters, let him or her dictate a short message and copy it from your writing.
- Give your child opportunities to sort, group, match, count, and sequence with real-life situations such as setting the table, counting the number of turns, and sorting out socks.
- Help children understand and cope with strong feelings by giving them words to use when they are angry. “I can see you are *sad* about going home, *angry* at your friend”
- Observe how your child plays with other children. Teach him or her to request, bargain, negotiate, and apologize.
- Specific praise helps your child understand the true value of his or her actions. Say “I like the way you stacked the toys neatly on the shelf” rather than “You did a good job!”
- Provide a comfortable place to be alone. A large cardboard box makes a wonderful hideaway.



- enjoys tracing or copying letters
- sorts objects by size
- identifies some letters of the alphabet and a few numbers
- understands more, less, and same
- counts up to 10 objects
- understands before and after, above and below
- is project minded—plans buildings, play scenarios, and drawings
- interested in cause and effect

Social and emotional development

- invents games with simple rules
- organizes other children and toys for pretend play
- still confuses fantasy with reality sometimes
- can take turns and share but doesn't always want to
- often excludes other children in play — best friends only
- uses swear words or “bathroom words” to get attention
- can be very bossy sometimes
- likes to try new things and take risks
- likes to make own decisions
- notices when another child is angry or sad—more sensitive to feelings of others
- likes to feel grown up; boasts about self to younger less capable children
- has a very basic understanding of right and wrong
- understands and respects rules—often asks permission
- understands and enjoys both giving and receiving
- enjoys collecting things
- sometimes needs to get away and be alone

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

BOOKS

Books for parents

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, Birth to Age 5, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shevlov, ed.

Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age Five, Penelope Leach

Books for children

Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber

Little Bear, Else Holmelund Minarik

Whistle for Willie, Ezra Jack Keats

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst

Are You My Mother?, Philip D. Eastman

Harry and the Terrible Whatzit, Dick Gackenbach



Toys

- board games, card games, dominoes, puzzles (12 -15 pieces)
- blocks (plastic or wooden); play dough
- glue, scissors, paper, washable markers, crayons, water colors
- puppets; doll, clothes, dollhouse; dress-up clothes
- trucks, cars, large cardboard boxes (large appliance size)
- child-size tools; camping equipment

A word on development

Your child is unique. His or her learning and growth rates differ from other children the same age. If, however, your child is unable to do many of the skills listed for this age group, you may wish to talk to an early childhood specialist. You are the best person to notice developmental problems, if any, because of the time you spend with your child. If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

If you have questions about your child's development or want to have your child assessed, contact:

- Your pediatrician or health care professional
- Area Education Agency—Early Childhood Special Education Department
- Iowa Compass 1-800-779-2001

Contact your county Extension office to obtain other publications about children, parenting, and family life. Also visit the ISU Extension Web site at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/pubs/>.

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6-8 Years



AGES & STAGES

Your school-ager is now ready for a steady pace of growing and learning, one in which real life tasks and activities overtake pretend and fantasy. Equipped with a longer attention span, your child also is ready to delve into projects, solve problems, and resolve arguments!

Physical development

- skilled at using scissors and small tools
- shows development of permanent teeth
- enjoys testing muscle strength and skills
- has good sense of balance
- can tie shoelaces
- enjoys copying designs and shapes, letters and numbers
- may have gawky awkward appearance from long arms and legs

Mental development

- may reverse printed letters (b/d)
- enjoys planning and building
- doubles speaking and listening vocabularies
- may show a stronger interest in reading
- increases problem-solving ability
- has longer attention span
- enjoys creating elaborate collections
- shows ability to learn difference between left and right
- can begin to understand time and the days of the week

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Provide opportunities for active play. Throwing at targets, running, jumping rope, tumbling, and aerobics may be of interest.
- Provide opportunities to develop an understanding of rules by playing simple table games: cards, dominoes, tic-tac-toe.
- Provide opportunities for your child to do noncompetitive team activities such as working a jigsaw puzzle or planting a garden.
- Encourage your child's sense of accomplishment by providing opportunities to build models, cook, make crafts, practice music, or work with wood.
- Encourage collections by allowing your child to make special storage boxes or books.
- Encourage reading and writing by encouraging your child to produce stories with scripts, create music for plays and puppet shows, produce a newspaper, record events, go on field trips, or conduct experiments.
- Help your child explore the world by taking field trips to museums, work places, and other neighborhoods.

Social and emotional development

- being with friends becomes increasingly important
- shows interest in rules and rituals
- wants to play more with similar friends—girls with girls, boys with boys
- may have a “best” friend and “enemy”



- shows strong desire to perform well, do things right
- begins to see things from another child's point of view, but still very self-centered
- finds criticism or failure difficult to handle
- views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground
- seeks a sense of security in groups, organized play, and clubs
- generally enjoys caring for and playing with younger children
- may become upset when behavior or schoolwork is ignored

Toy list

- arts and crafts materials
- musical instruments
- sports equipment
- camping equipment
- construction sets
- electric trains
- bicycles (use helmets)
- models
- board games
- skateboard (use helmets)

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, ISU Extension human development specialist.
Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

BOOKS



Books for parents

Parent's Guide for the Best Books for Children, Eden Ross Lipson

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk, Adele Faber and Elizabeth Mazlish

Caring for Your School-age Child: Ages 5 to 12, American Academy of Pediatrics

Books for children

A Chair for My Mother, Vera Williams

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst

Anna Banana and Me, Lenore Blegvard

Everybody Needs A Rock, Byrd Baylor

The Garden of Abdul Gasazi, Chris Van Allsburg

The Kid Next Door and Other Headaches: Stories About Adam Joshua, Janice Lee Smith

Little House in the Big Woods, Laura Ingalls Wilder

Ramona, Beverly Cleary

A word on development

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- Iowa COMPASS 1-800-779-2001, TTY: 1-877-686-0032

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AGES & STAGES

Friendships and accomplishments are important to older children. Secret codes, made-up languages, and passwords are used to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Be prepared to use all your “patience” skills as your child may tend to think that he or she does not need adult care or supervision.

Physical development

Girls:

- are generally as much as 2 years ahead of boys in physical maturity
- may begin to menstruate

Boys and girls:

- have increased body strength and hand dexterity
- show improved coordination and reaction time
- may begin to grow rapidly at the end of this age period

Mental development

- shows interest in reading fictional stories, magazines, and how-to project books
- may develop special interest in collection or hobbies
- fantasizes and daydreams about the future
- enjoys planning and organizing tasks
- becomes more product and goal oriented
- has great ideas and intentions, but difficulty following through
- enjoys games with more complex rules

IDEAS FOR PARENTS

- Provide opportunities for older school-agers to help out with real skills. Cooking, sewing, and designing dramatic play props are useful ways to use their skills.
- Provide time and space for an older child to be alone. Time to read, daydream, or do school work uninterrupted will be appreciated.
- Encourage your child to make a call to a school friend.
- Encourage your child to participate in an organized club or youth group. Many groups encourage skill development with projects or activities than can be worked on in the home.
- Encourage your older child to help with a younger one but avoid burdening older children with too many adult responsibilities. Allow time for play and relaxation.
- Provide opportunities for older children to play games of strategy. Checkers, chess, and monopoly are favorites.
- Remember to provide plenty of food. Older children have larger appetites than younger children and will need to eat more.



Social and emotional development

- begins to see that parents and authority figures can make mistakes and are not always right
- often likes rituals, rules, secret codes, and made-up languages
- enjoys being a member of a club
- has increased interest in competitive sports
- has better control of anger
- may belittle or defy adult authority
- shows interest in opposite sex by teasing, joking, showing off
- prefers spending more time with friends than with parents
- may sometimes be verbally cruel to classmates with harsh “put downs” and snide remarks
- tends to see things as right or wrong, with no room for difference of opinion

Toys and hobbies

- arts and crafts materials
- musical instruments
- sports equipment
- camping equipment
- construction sets
- electric trains
- bicycles (26-inch wheels for kids 10 and older; use helmets)
- models
- board games
- skates

BOOKS

Books for parents

- Parent's Guide for the Best Books for Children*, Eden Ross Lipson
- How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, Adele Faber and Elizabeth Mazlish
- Caring for Your School-age Child: Ages 5 to 12*, American Academy of Pediatrics

Books for children

- Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, Judy Blume
- Chocolate Fever*, Robert Kimmel Smith
- How It Feels to Be Adopted*, Jill Kremenz
- How To Eat Fried Worms*, Thomas Rockwell
- The Indian in the Cupboard*, Lynn Banks
- Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade*, Barthe DeClements
- The Oxford Book of Poetry for Children*, compiled by Edward Blishen
- Ramona's World*, Beverly Cleary
- Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, Judy Blume



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File: Family Life 8

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Preteen, Young Teen Development

Parents often have concerns as their children approach the teen years, and this time can be uncomfortable for their children, too. Of course, young people vary greatly in when and how quickly they experience the changes of growing up. However, your preteen likely has begun the transition to the teen years, and will continue to show changes in his or her body, thinking, emotions and relations with you and others. This publication will discuss typical changes, as well as individual differences.

Physical changes

Both parents and young people themselves notice physical changes during the pre- and early teen years. Physical growth that occurs during this time is more rapid than at any time since infancy. Besides growing bigger and taller, the maturing child begins to develop bodily characteristics that distinguish the male and female adult. For example, the beginning of breast development in girls may start as early as 9 years and as late as 13. By age 12¾, half of the girls have begun menstruation. In boys, enlargement of the testes is the first sign of puberty and begins from about 9½ to 13½. These changes in sexual development usually happen before rapid increase in height. This sexual maturation also is related to skin changes, which can cause embarrassment for teens, too.

Many pre- and early teens have difficulty adjusting to these physical changes. They may begin to

When your little girl begins to grow up (OR I can't believe how tall she's getting)

John and Linda wonder what's going on with 12-year-old Lisa. Always an easy child, Lisa usually gets along well with her parents. Sometimes she had problems, like fighting with her younger brother, but usually things have gone smoothly with Lisa. Almost overnight, she has become argumentative and gets irritated or angry at the drop of a hat. She spends hours in her room with the door shut or talks on the telephone with her friends. What happened to the happy-go-lucky child Bill and Linda once knew? Is her behavior normal?



feel extremely self-conscious—as if everyone is watching them. Whether the changes occur early, late or at the same time as most youngsters, many young people feel they don't look right. Girls may have concerns about menstruation and boys may need help understanding that “wet dreams” are normal.

It helps for parents to take their children's feelings seriously while, also letting them know these changes are normal. It's important for parents to talk with both boys and girls about physical changes before they begin to experience them.

Emotional changes

The same hormones that cause physical growth and maturation also help create changes in emotions and in relationships with others. Emotional swings can be confusing to both parents and their growing children: the young people may feel wonderful one minute and irritable, angry or sad the next minute. Although adults experience

the same kinds of feelings that pre- and young teens do, the feelings may be more intense and young people typically give in to impulses more than do adults.

It helps for parents to understand that their pre- and young teen may be just as uncomfortable with their intense feelings as are their parents.

Changes in thinking

At the same time that bodies and emotions are changing, the youngster's ability to think in the abstract increases. Beginning at age 11 or 12, youngsters are able to analyze situations and use reason. They are able to think in terms of possibility rather than merely concrete reality. This means that adolescents are able to fantasize, speculate, and think more like an adult than younger children.

These abilities can create problems in the relationship between pre-adolescents and their parents. Now, more than ever, youth are apt to question their parents' rules and

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values. Young people often are quick to feel that something is “unfair.” As a parent, you may find yourself wondering what happened to your happy-go-lucky child, who pretty much went along with things and got along well with you.

Social changes

■ **Importance of friends.** There is a gradual shift during elementary school toward greater reliance and importance of same-age friends. Most children by fourth or fifth grade enjoy spending much of their free time with friends. Friends become even more important during the pre- and early teen years. Parents may worry about peer pressure when, in fact, peers can provide a positive as well as negative influence. Good friends with similar values can help your child gain confidence to meet the changes and adjustments of this phase. Youth at this age typically enjoy hanging around with “the gang” or having “secret clubs” with no adults around. They may enjoy keeping secrets from parents. This is normal unless there are signs of dangerous behavior (See Pm-1547h, another publication in this Parenting series).

Some parents express sadness that children at this age spend less time with the family. While the family continues to be extremely important, preteens and teens do spend more time with their friends. Some youngsters in middle school and junior high actually seem to be embarrassed to be seen with parents. Parents may feel hurt when their child expresses this feeling but it is usually a normal sign of independence. When the young person feels more confidence with friends, the feeling often goes away.

It is important to let your child know that you still want and expect him or her to spend time with the family. At the same time, help your child know growing independence is important. It may be helpful to set aside certain times each week for family activities.

■ **Loss of self-confidence.** Some parents are surprised to find that it's common for pre- or young teens to lose self-confidence. Their youngster may appear self-assured or even cocky, but beneath the surface he or she probably feels less confident. In addition to feeling physically awkward, youth compare themselves to some image of what they should look like and they often have new concerns about getting along with peers. Youth, as well as their parents, often worry about these years: “Will I have enough friends?” “Will I make the team?” “Will my body look the way it's supposed to?”

Individual differences

Physical, emotional, cognitive (thinking) and social changes are typical for pre- and young teens. However, no two young people will experience these changes in exactly the same way. Some start the transition as early as 9 while others may be 13 or older before the changes begin. Also, the child's personality and past behavior must be considered. A child who has always had difficulty with change, or who has had intense feelings as a young child, may have more difficulty with the preteen stage.

It helps to realize that about 80 percent of teens never present serious problems to their families or get into real trouble. Parents need to know that their influence remains strong into the teen years and

adulthood. Research shows that young people typically return to the values of their families in young adulthood.

Parenting tips

The following ideas may help make your child's transition to the teen years easier for both of you.

- Understand that most changes you see in your child are normal.
- Listen to your child and take his or her feelings seriously.
- When problems arise, work together for solutions.
- Talk to parents of older children to get a sense of perspective.
- Schedule time for family fun.
- Realize that your child's growing signs of independence are normal and healthy.

Once you realize that changing bodies, emotions and new ways of thinking and reasoning are normal for pre- and young adolescents, you can relax and worry less about how your child is “turning out.” It helps to realize that one job for preteens and early teens is to test the rules, to challenge authority, and to begin to think for themselves. It's just as normal for pre- and early teens to want to think for themselves and to do more with friends as it is for toddlers to be curious. The job of parents is to have firm expectations and continue to show love and respect for their preteen, even when their preteen challenges their authority, tests the rules and, at times, puts down their parents. This is no easy task! Reading, going to parenting workshops, and talking to other parents can make the job easier and more fun.

Written by Virginia K. Molgaard, ISU Extension family life specialist, and edited by Laura Miller, extension communications. Prepared as part of PROJECT FAMILY at the Social and Behavioral Research Center for Rural Health, Ames, Iowa.

For further reading, get copies of publications in the *Living with your Teenager* series, Pm-944a-d, available at any ISU Extension office.

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Understanding Children

Toys



Fond memories of childhood usually bring to mind a favorite toy. A cuddly doll, colorful crayons, or a special wagon are all childhood favorites.

Toys bring a great deal of joy to children, but they also can be valuable learning tools. Exploring, pretending, and sharing are just a few of the important skills children develop when they play.

Toys don't have to be expensive. After all, cardboard boxes in the backyard and measuring cups in the bathtub are favorite standards. But parents who do wish to purchase toys may find it helpful to know what toys to choose and which to avoid for children of different ages.

■ Infants and toddlers

Infants and toddlers learn about the world through their senses. They are interested in the

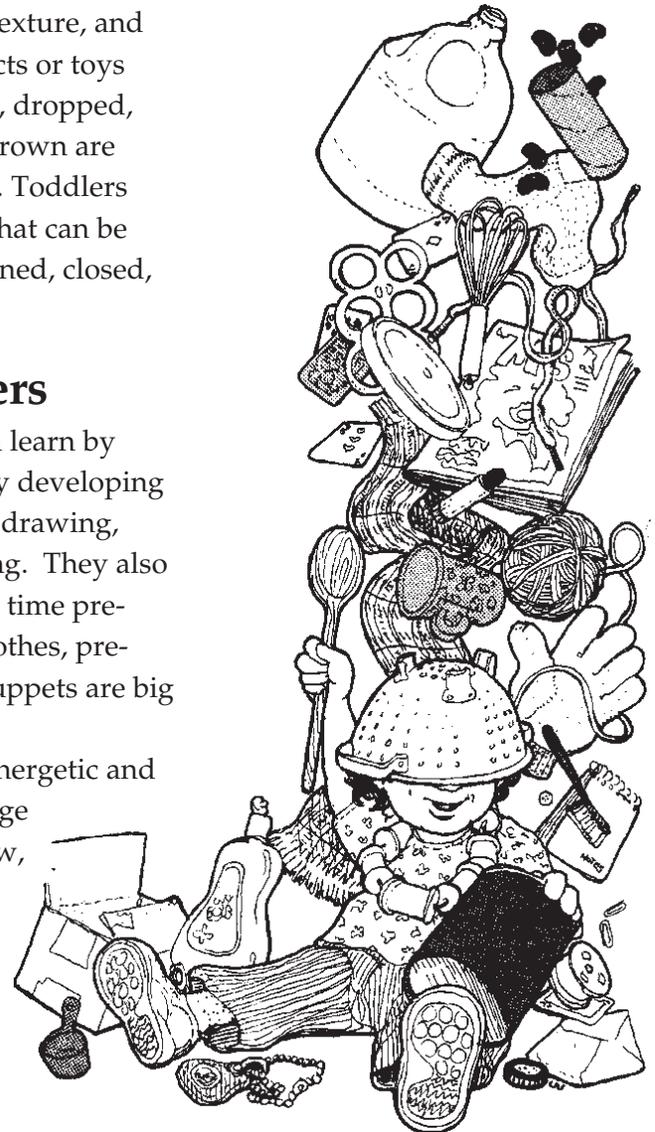
sight, sound, smell, texture, and taste of things. Objects or toys that can be squeezed, dropped, poked, twisted, or thrown are sure to cause delight. Toddlers also enjoy any item that can be stacked, poured, opened, closed, pushed, or pulled.

■ Preschoolers

Preschool children learn by doing. They are busy developing new skills. They like drawing, painting, and building. They also spend a great deal of time pretending. Dress-up clothes, pretend "props," and puppets are big favorites.

Preschoolers are energetic and active. They need large balls to roll and throw, wagons to pull, and tricycles to ride.

(continued on p.4)



Age	Toys to choose	Toys to avoid	Age	Toys to choose	Toys to avoid
Newborn to 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brightly colored objects • pictures within view but out of reach • mobiles that have objects attached with cords less than 12 inches long • unbreakable toys that rattle or squeak • washable dolls or animals with embroidered eyes • stacking ring cones • tapes or records with gentle music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toys with parts smaller than 1 ¼ inch (about the size of a half dollar) • toys with sharp edges • toys with detachable small parts • toys with toxic paint • toys with cords more than 12 inches long • stuffed animals with glass or button eyes • balloons 	2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play dough • large crayons • peg boards with large pieces • low rocking horses • sandbox toys • soft balls of different sizes • cars or wagons to push • simple musical instruments • simple dress-up items like hats, scarves, shoes • sturdy riding toys • books that rhyme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toys with sharp edges • toys with small removable parts • small objects such as beads, coins, or marbles • electrical toys • lead soldiers • tricycles with seats more than 12 inches high • riding toys
1 to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • push and pull toys • books with cloth or stiff pasteboard pages • nonglass mirrors • take-apart toys with large pieces • blocks—foam, plastic, or cardboard • nested boxes or cups • musical and chime toys • floating tub toys • pounding and stacking toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small toys that can be swallowed • toys with small removable parts • stuffed animals with glass or button eyes • toys with sharp edges 	3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dolls with simple clothes • balls, any sizes • nonelectrical trucks, trains • building blocks • toy telephone • dress-up clothes • sturdy tea sets • plastic interlocking blocks • blunt scissors • play dough • washable markers, large crayons • sewing cards • simple board games • books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electrical toys • lead soldiers • flammable costumes • toys with sharp edges or small, removable parts • riding toys used in hilly or inclined driveways

Age	Toys to choose	Toys to avoid	Age	Toys to choose	Toys to avoid
4 to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building blocks • simple construction sets • modeling clay • nonelectrical trains, battery operated toys • puppets and puppet theater • finger paint • stencils • board and card games • simple musical instruments • small sports equipment • bicycles with 20-inch wheels and training wheels (all should wear bike helmets) • books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toxic or oil-based paint sets • flammable costumes or ones that can be easily tripped over • kites made of aluminized polyester film (this material conducts electricity) • electrical toys (unless battery operated) • shooting toys and darts with pointed tips • fireworks of any kind • lawn darts 	6 to 8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction sets • sled, roller skates • sewing materials • simple camera • printing and stamp sets • paints, colored pencils • sketch pads • kites • battery powered electrical toys (Underwriters Laboratory approved) • jigsaw puzzles • dominoes • board games • simple tool sets • dolls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kites made of aluminized polyester film (this material conducts electricity) • shooting toys, and toys with loud noises like cap guns • fireworks of any kind • sharp-edged tools • electrical toys run on household current • bikes or skateboards ridden without helmets
			8 to 12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hobby materials • arts and crafts materials • musical instruments • sports equipment • camping equipment • construction sets • electric trains • bicycles (26-inch wheels for kids ten and older) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fireworks of any kind • air rifles, chemistry sets, darts, skateboards, and arrows (unless used with parental supervision)

■ School-age Children

School-age children feel more grown-up and love activities that lead to “real products” such as jewelry, “designer” T-shirts, or stamp collections. They also develop a keen interest in sports and enjoy having adult-like physical equipment such as softball gloves, tennis rackets, or skates. They have a better understanding of rules and enjoy playing with others. Board games, cards, or



Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Illustration by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

dominoes teach math concepts and problem-solving skills.

Think toy safety

More than 120,000 children are taken to hospital emergency rooms each year for treatment of toy-related injuries. Evaluate toys for your children from the standpoint of safety. The following are some guidelines.

- Choose toys appropriate to the child's age. Some toys intended for children more than 3 years old may contain small parts, which could present a choking hazard for infants and toddlers. Toddlers should never play with anything that is smaller than a half dollar.
- Think BIG when selecting toys, especially for children under age three. Big toys without small parts can be enjoyed by youngsters of different ages. Keep toys intended for older children, such as games with small pieces, marbles, or small balls, away from younger children.
- Keep uninflated balloons out of reach for children under age 6, and discard pieces of broken balloons because of the choking hazard.
- Explain and show your child the proper use of safety equipment such as bicycle

helmets. Studies show that helmets can reduce severe injuries from a fall.

- Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. Damaged toys can be dangerous and should be repaired or thrown away immediately.
- Store toys safely. Teach children to put toys away so they are not tripping hazards. Periodically check toy boxes and shelves for safety.

Store toys safely

Toy safety involves choosing the right toy, checking it regularly for damage, and storing it safely. One of the greatest dangers in toy storage is the toy chest with a free-falling lid. Children are injured when the lid falls on their head, neck, or arms. Upright lids in trunks and footlockers pose this kind of hazard.

Open chests or bins, chests with lightweight removable lids, or chests with sliding doors or panels do not present the hazard of a falling lid.

Low, open shelves where toys can be reached easily and put away are a safer alternative and are often preferred by children. Small items such as building blocks or puzzle pieces can be stored in plastic tubs or boxes.

File: Family Life 8

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Understanding Children

Sibling Rivalry



You have a headache and the dog is barking. You cannot get the sales person off the phone and you can see the long list of chores posted on the refrigerator door. On top of everything else, your kids are fighting like crazy with everything they've got—biting, scratching, and throwing toys.

■ Fighting among young children

Constant fighting, put downs, and arguing among children cause frustration and concern in most parents. Although sibling rivalry can have several reasons, brothers and sisters often fight to get the attention of parents or to show power or superiority over another child.

Some bickering is normal among brothers and sisters. Constant arguing, fighting, and creating potentially dangerous situations, however, are not normal. The following are some ideas to help reduce your frustration over quarrelsome siblings and lessen the fighting too.

■ Let siblings express their feelings about each other

When children complain about each other, parents often try to talk them out of their feelings. ("You shouldn't be mad at your sister," or "Stop complaining. He's the only brother you have.")

Instead, acknowledge their anger or frustration. Let your children know that you understand their anger. That can help them feel better and even treat another child better.

Use this as a tool to lessen sibling rivalry in several ways. Identify the angry child's feelings with words, ("You sound furious! You wish he'd ask before using your things.") and suggest symbolic or creative activity ("Would you like to draw a picture of how mad you feel?").

You may be surprised at how quickly the anger disappears when you let your children know that you're aware of, and understand their frustration.

Jennifer has two sons, Jimmy, 5, and Danny, 4, who had trouble getting along since they were very little. Playing together often ends in grabbing toys, calling each other names, and complaints to Jennifer. At an evening class on parenting, Jennifer heard that kids fight less when the parent describes what the kids might be feeling. It seemed too good to be true, but Jennifer decided to give it a try. The next time Danny came to complain about Jimmy, Jennifer said, "Sounds like you're feeling pretty mad at Jimmy." To her amazement,



Danny looked puzzled for a minute and then said, "Yeah, I am mad at him." She then heard Danny go to another room and play by himself.

■ Don't compare your children

It's natural for parents to notice that one child is more cooperative or better behaved in some ways than another child in the same family. Comparing siblings, however, does not encourage better behavior, but intensifies jealousy and envy. It also is likely that the child you compare unfavorably may want to get even with the child you praise.

Instead of comparing one child unfavorably to another, comment only on the behavior that displeases you. ("I see a brand new jacket on the floor. That bothers me. This

jacket belongs in the closet." instead of "Why can't you hang up your clothes like your brother?")

Also, avoid praising one child at the other's expense. ("You're sure better at picking up your toys than your brother.") The child you're praising may feel sorry for the sibling you are criticizing or the child may feel superior and look down on the other child.

Sherry and John have 3 children — Mark, 6, Julie, 4, and Todd, 1. Sherry, in her concern for Julie as "the middle child," got in the habit of pointing out Julie's good behavior to Mark. For instance, she would say, "Mark, look how Julie is cleaning up her plate. See if you can finish your dinner, too." One day when Sherry asked the kids to pick up toys, she heard Mark say to Julie, "I'm not going to pick up anything. You're the one who does everything right."

Sherry then made a commitment to stop comparing Mark to Julie. The next day when she saw Julie hanging up her jacket and Mark dropping his on the floor, she resisted the urge to compare the children and said to Mark, "I see a coat on the floor that needs hanging up."

■ Treat children individually, not equally

Parents sometimes believe that the best way to avoid arguments and unhappiness among their children is to give equally to each child. New clothing for a child often is matched with something new for the siblings too. Spending time with one child often means trying to spend an equal amount of time with the other.

This practice of attempting to give equally to all the children only encourages comparisons by the children who often feel cheated. No matter how hard you try to make things the same—portions of favorite food, time spent, or gifts given—children are bound to find some way that you're not being fair.

Children feel special and valued when you give to each according to individual need. Instead of telling children that you love them equally, privately point out their special qualities that have nothing to do with others in the family. ("I love spending time with you" or "You're the only one like you in the whole world and I love you.")



■ Don't take sides

Resist the urge to figure out who started the fight. Parents often believe that the older or stronger child started the fight and should be punished. Often it's nearly impossible to tell who started the fighting. Even very young children can start a fight when you're not looking, in the hope that you will punish the older child.

Even if you are sure who started the fight, taking sides only makes things worse. The "victim" may feel pleased to have you on his or her side, but the one who is blamed probably will want to get even with the other child. Avoid frequent blaming of one child for starting fights as it may make the child feel like a "bad apple" who cannot get along. Even if punishing the one who started the fight may stop the behavior temporarily, it may lead to resentment or poor self-esteem in the long run.

Instead of taking sides, comment on the behavior you can observe. ("I see two kids fighting" instead of "Bobby, leave her alone.")

Larry and Sue were concerned about the possibility of 3-year-old Lisa injuring the baby, who was 1 1/2. If the children were in the same room and the baby started crying, Larry assumed that Lisa was picking on him and usually sent her to her room.

When the situation grew worse, Larry talked to his sister. She thought that Larry might be making things worse by punishing Lisa. She suggested separating the children when the baby cried without scolding or punishing Lisa. Next time the baby cried when Lisa was near him, Larry simply moved the baby to a different spot and said nothing to Lisa. After a few weeks of

separating the children without assigning blame, Larry and Sue noticed that Lisa and the baby were getting along better.

■ Let children work it out for themselves

Your children may still argue or bicker. The more you can stay out of their minor fighting, the sooner they will learn to settle their differences themselves. Remember the three B's.

1. **Bear it.** Ignore the fighting as long as you can. Turn on some music and pretend you're not even aware of the bickering.
2. **Beat it.** When you can't ignore it any longer, go to another room where you can't hear it as well. Your children may get the message that you're not going to settle things for them. Some parents try the "bathroom retreat" in which they lock themselves in the bathroom with some reading material for a short time while the fighting continues. Obviously, this option does not work when you are concerned for the safety of an infant or when children are out of control.
3. **Boot 'em out!** Ask the children to take their fighting somewhere else. ("If you two kids need to fight, please do it outside where I don't have to hear it.") When children know you're not going to take sides, the fighting often settles down quickly.

Remember, these ideas only are appropriate when the fighting is minor and does not appear to be dangerous.

Bob and Ellen loved being parents to their two daughters, aged 5 and 6, except for one thing—the fighting

between the girls. Bob had grown up getting along well with his older brother and Ellen was an only child. It was hard for them to accept their daughters' competitiveness and constant fighting. The fighting was so upsetting to Ellen that she would try to settle the arguments the minute they started.

After reading an article in the newspaper on sibling rivalry, Bob suggested to Ellen that they try letting the girls work out their problems themselves. Since both Bob and Ellen worked outside the home, the problem was in the evenings and on weekends. They decided to ignore the fighting as long as they could. When Ellen wanted to settle an argument, she was to get Bob and do something around the house with him to distract herself.

Bob sat down with the girls and explained the new plan. He said, "Mom and I have decided that you two are old enough to settle your own arguments. When you have a problem, we're going to leave it up to you to come up with a solution. Mom and I are going to stay out of it." Things seemed to get worse for a few days, but after a while Bob and Ellen noticed that the fighting was happening less often.

■ Step in when children cannot work it out

Step in during fighting between brothers and sisters in the following situations:

- when the same fights happen over and over with no resolution,
- when the fighting is serious and may be dangerous.

If the children fight over the same issues day in and day out even after you have given opportunities for

them to work it out, you may need to teach conflict resolution skills. Do this when everyone has calmed down and avoid taking sides.

For example, teach children how to use a timer to take turns with a plaything. Teach social skills by showing them how to ask someone nicely rather than grabbing or yelling. Also, ask both children in the situation for their ideas on how to solve the problem between them. Even children as young as 4 or 5 can come up with useful ideas.

■ Stop dangerous fighting

When sibling rivalry turns into real fighting in which one or both children may be injured, parents must step in. A parent's job is to protect children from fighting that could lead to physical or emotional damage. The following steps can help you deal with problem situations without choosing sides.

1. Describe the situation you see. ("I see two sisters who are getting ready to hurt each other.")
2. Separate the children. ("This looks dangerous. Sally, you go to the front yard and Janey, you go to the back.")
3. Wait for a cooling down period.
4. Listen to each child's point of view and acknowledge feelings.
5. Work out a possible solution together for dealing with the problem in the future.

At times, fighting that starts as a play fight turns into a serious fight. Let children know that it's only a play fight when both children agree that it's in fun. When one child is not having fun, the fighting must stop.

Laura was worried about the fighting between her two sons, aged 6 and 4. The fighting got worse after the divorce and had Laura concerned about Joey injuring his younger brother, John. One day she heard John cry out and saw Joey clutching a pair of sharp scissors, ready to use it like a dagger on John. She grabbed the scissors and spanked John, but she knew that it would happen again unless she figured out a better way to handle it.

That night, Laura called her friend, Jeanne, who had three sons of her own, and asked for her advice. Jeanne had seen Laura's boys in dangerous situations before and she gave Laura this advice. "You've got to do something to keep your boys safe, Laura. Spanking and yelling doesn't seem to help. What worked with my boys was to separate them without scolding anyone when the fighting got bad. Then, when they had calmed down, I would talk to them and let them come up with ideas of how to solve the problem that had led to the fighting."

Next day, when Joey was holding John down and pinching him, Laura said, "I see somebody getting hurt. John, you go to the TV room and Joey, you play in the kitchen." She knew the problem wasn't over, but at least she had prevented injury and hadn't made Joey feel like getting even with John later on.

■ Give yourself time

The stories at the end of each section make it sound as if the fighting can stop like magic if only you do the right thing. Realistically, it takes time and persistence for you to learn new ways of treating your children, and for them to learn new ways of getting along. Don't give up. It may even seem like it's getting worse before it gets better.

Learn to let your children express their feelings, avoid comparing them, and treat each child as an individual. Their relationships are bound to improve. It is possible for you to remain neutral and yet teach your children to stop fighting and handle differences. Remember that when you help your children get along better, you are preparing them for important relationships in the future with co-workers, spouses, and even their own children.

■ References:

- Positive Discipline, Jane Nelsen, Prima Publishing, 1989.
- Perilous Rivalry: When Siblings Become Abusive, Vernon Wiehe, McMillan, 1991.
- Siblings Without Rivalry, Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish, W.W. Norton, 1987.

Written by Virginia Molgaard, Ph.D., extension human development specialist. Illustrated by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

File: Family life 8

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Understanding Children

Language development



What could be more exciting than hearing your baby's first word? As that first word grows into a sentence and later into conversation, you will be watching a miracle—the miracle of language development.

As a parent, you are your child's first teacher. When you take time to listen, talk, read, sing, and play games with your child, you help teach important language skills that last a lifetime.

■ Age 0 to 6 months Typical language skills

- Cries in different ways to say, "I'm hurt, wet, hungry, or lonely."
- Makes noises to voice displeasure or satisfaction.
- Babbles.
- Recognizes and looks for familiar voices and sounds.

Nurture your child's language skills

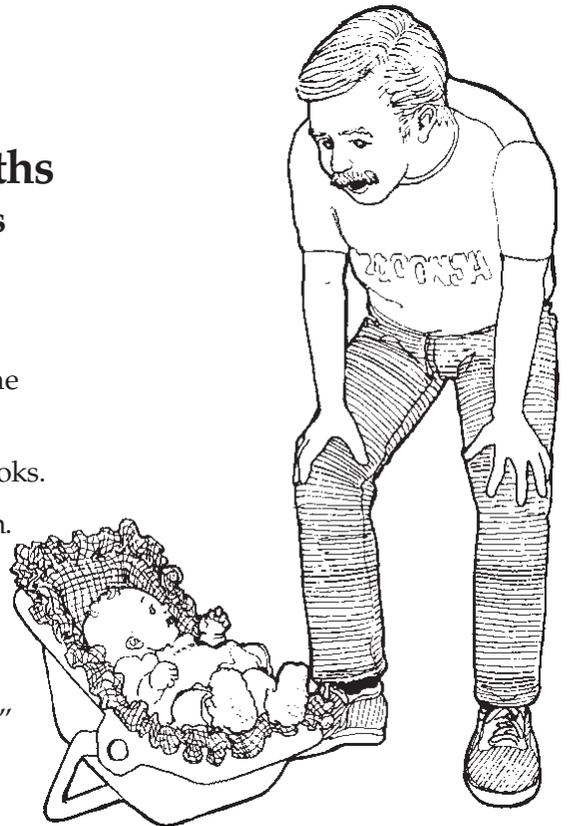
- When babies babble, gurgle, and coo, respond with the same sounds.
- Talk with infants when you feed, dress, or play with them.
- Sing songs.
- Play soft music.

■ Age 6 to 12 months Typical language skills

- Waves bye-bye.
- Responds to name.
- Understands names of some familiar objects.
- Shows interest in picture books.
- Pays attention to conversation.
- Says first word (maybe).
- Babbles expressively as if talking.
- Says "Da-da" and "Ma-ma" (maybe)

Nurture your child's language skills

- Teach babies their names and names of familiar objects.
- Talk to them about what you are doing: "Now I am getting Sara's socks."



- Play peek-a-boo.
- Hold babies in your lap and show them pictures in magazines and books.
- Sing simple songs.

■ Age 12 to 18 months Typical language skills

- Identifies family members and familiar objects.
- Points to a few body parts such as nose, ears.
- Follows simple, one-step instructions.
- Says two or more words.
- Imitates familiar noises like cars, planes, birds.
- Repeats a few words.
- Looks at person talking.
- Says “Hi” or “Bye” if reminded.
- Uses expressions like “Oh-oh.”
- Asks for something by pointing or using one word.
- Identifies an object in a picture book.

Nurture your child’s language skills

- Teach your child names of people, body parts, and objects.
- Teach sounds that different things make.
- Read simple stories.
- Make a scrapbook with bright pictures of familiar objects such as people, flowers, houses, and animals to “read.”

- Speak clearly and simply; “baby talk” confuses children who are learning to talk.

■ Age 18 months to 2 years Typical language skills

- Says about 50 words, but can understand many more.
- Echoes single words that are spoken by someone else.
- Talks to self and jabbbers expressively.
- Says names of toys and familiar objects.
- Uses two to three word sentences like “Daddy bye-bye,” “All gone.”
- Hums or tries to sing simple songs.
- Listens to short rhymes or fingerplays.
- Points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked.
- Uses the words “Bye,” “Hi,” “Please,” and “Thank you” if prompted.

Nurture your child’s language skills

- Read at least one book to your child every day.
- Encourage your child to repeat short sentences.
- Give simple instructions. (“Give the book to Jon.”)
- Read rhymes with interesting sounds, especially those accompanied by actions or pictures.

■ Age 2 to 3 years Typical language skills

- Identifies up to 10 pictures in a book when objects are named.
- Uses simple phrases and sentences.
- Responds when called by name.
- Responds to simple directions.
- Starts to say plural and past tense words.
- Enjoys simple stories, rhymes, and songs.
- Uses two- to three-word sentences.
- Enjoys looking at books.
- Points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked.
- Repeats words spoken by someone else.
- Vocabulary expands up to 500 words.

Nurture your child’s language skills

- Play word games like “This Little Piggy” or “High as a House.”
- Listen, talk, and read with your child every day.
- Teach your child simple songs and nursery rhymes.

■ Age 3 to 4 years Typical language skills

- Talks so 75 to 80 percent of speech is understandable.
- Says own first and last name.
- Understands location words like over, under, on, and in.

- Understands now, soon, and later.
- Asks who, what, where, and why questions.
- Talks in complete sentences of 3 to 5 words: "Mommy is drinking juice." "There's a big dog."
- Stumbles over words sometimes—usually not a sign of stuttering.
- Enjoys repeating words and sounds over and over.
- Listens attentively to short stories and books.
- Likes familiar stories told without any changes in words.
- Enjoys listening to stories and repeating simple rhymes.
- Enjoys telling simple stories from pictures or books.
- Likes to sing and can carry a simple tune.
- Recognizes common everyday sounds.
- Identifies common colors such as red, blue, yellow, green.

Nurture your child's language skills

- Include your child in everyday conversation. Talk about what you are going to do, ask questions, listen.
- Play simple games that teach concepts like over, under, on, and in.
- Read books with poems, songs, and rhymes.
- Encourage your children to repeat favorite stories.

- Give children a few books of their own and show them how to take good care of them.

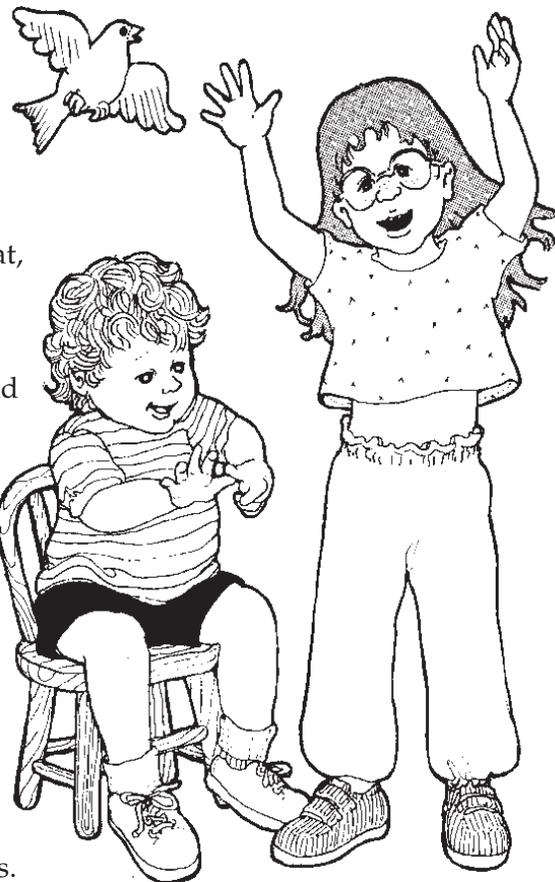
■ Age 4 to 5 years

Typical language skills

- Recognizes some letters if taught and may be able to print own name.
- Recognizes familiar words in simple books or signs (STOP sign, fast food signs).
- Speaks in fairly complex sentences—"The baby ate the cookie before I could put it on the table."
- Enjoys singing simple songs, rhymes, and nonsense words.
- Adapts language to listener's level of understanding. To baby sister: "Daddy go bye-bye." To mother: "Daddy went to the store."
- Learns name, address, and phone number if taught.
- Asks and answers who, what, why, where, and what if questions.
- Names six to eight colors and three shapes.
- Follows two unrelated directions. "Put your milk on the table and get your coat on."
- Likes to talk and carries on elaborate conversations.
- Likes to shock others by using "forbidden" words.
- Loves to tell jokes that may not make any sense to adults.

Nurture your child's language skills

- Visit the public library regularly.
- Play games that encourage counting and color naming.
- Encourage children to tell you stories.
- Help children create their own story books with magazine pictures or post cards.
- Read books with poems and songs.
- Take turns telling jokes.
- Record your child telling a story or singing a song.



■ Age 5 to 6

Typical language skills

- Speaks with correct grammar and word form.
- Expresses self in pretend play.
- Writes first name, some letters, and numbers.
- Reads simple words.

Nurture your child's language skills

- Visit the public library regularly.
- Encourage pretend play. Help children create props from old sheets, cardboard boxes, and household items. Show children how to label their creations with simple signs like "Shoe Store" or "Tickets."
- Encourage children to put on simple plays and shows.
- Let children help you sort coupons and cut ads out of the newspaper.
- Ask your child to help you locate and find grocery items in the grocery store.
- Check how many store signs your child can identify when you are out running errands.

■ Try fingerplays and songs

Can't carry a tune? Don't have a piano? That's not a problem with young children. Kids love to sing!

You may not realize it but you probably know quite a few songs from your own childhood. Some familiar songs you might know are:

- "Hokey Pokey"
 - "Farmer in the Dell"
 - "Mulberry Bush"
 - "Hush Little Baby"
 - "Eensy, Weensy Spider"
 - "If You're Happy and You Know It"
 - "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"
- Children also delight in fingerplays like "This little piggy" and "Eensy, weensy spider." You also might like to try the following.

Old Owl

An owl sat alone on the branch of a tree (use arm as a branch, raise thumb for owl)

She was quiet as quiet as quiet could be

T'was night and her eyes were wide open like this (circle eyes with fingers and look around)

She looked all around; not a thing did she miss.

Some little birds perched on the branch of the tree, (fingers of other hand fly on tree)

And sat there as quiet as quiet could be

The solemn old owl said "Whoo-whooo-whooo," (wave hand away, fluttering fingers behind back)

And jumped at the birds and away they flew.

If you would like to learn more songs and fingerplays check with your local library for children's records and audio-cassette tapes.

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families, ask for the following publications from your county extension office.

Kindergarten Ahead, PM 784 (cost)
Understanding Children—Learning to read and write, PM 1529e
Child's Play - Fingerplays Plus, PM 1770 (cost)

Puppets for Kids, PM 1229 (cost)
Making Toys that Teach, NCR 187 (cost)
So Alive—Three to Five, PM 1431 (cost)

■ Books for Children

The Listening Walk, Paul Showers
The Snowman, Raymond Briggs
Baby's Favorite Things, Marsha Cohen
My First Look at Colors, Stephen Oliver
Gobble, Growl, Grunt, Peter Spier
Push -Pull, Empty -Full, Tana Hoban
Are You My Mother? P. Eastman
Rosie's Walk, Pat Hutchins
Caps for Sale, Esphyr Slobodkina

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal.

File: Family life 8

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Understanding Children

Learning to read and write



Learning to read and write is an exciting adventure for a young child. This adventure can begin in infancy and last a lifetime.

As children learn that books are for reading — not chewing — and that pictures and words are different, they begin to lay the foundation for reading and writing.

■ Reading

Stage one Exploring

Although parents do not always enjoy it, touching, tasting, and even occasional tearing are favorite activities for infants and toddlers as they first discover books. It is never too early to show books or read to your child. Read to infants and toddlers and provide opportunities for them to explore written material.

Snuggling up in a comfortable lap while listening to a story sets the stage for a lifelong love of

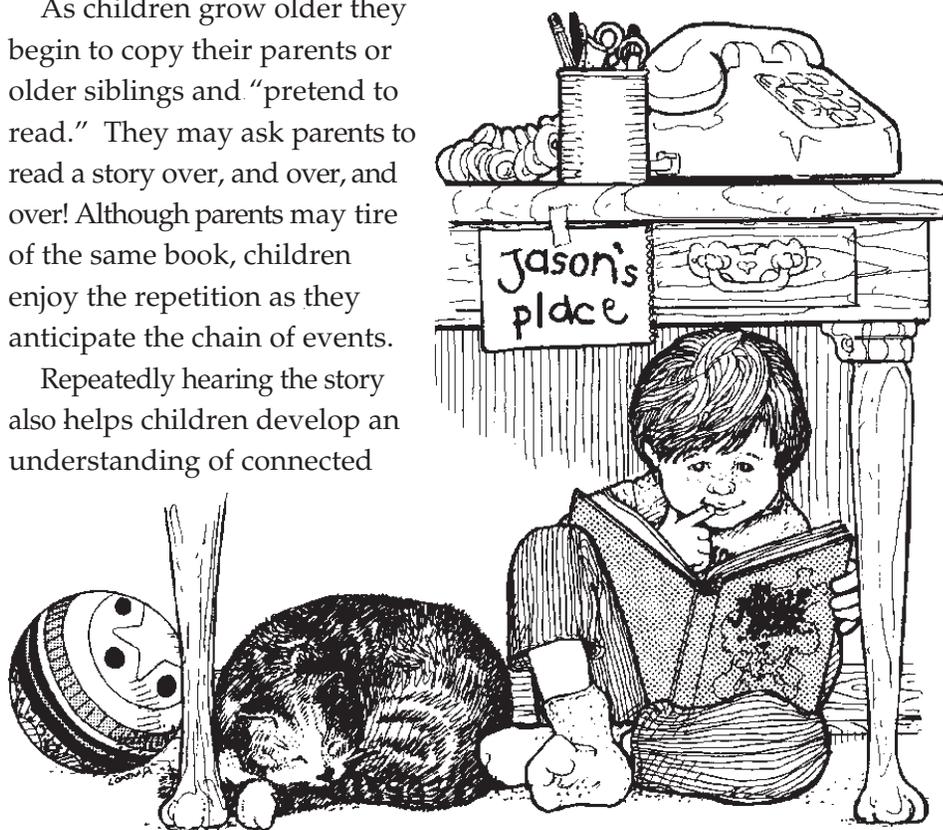
books and learning. Parents also might buy inexpensive cloth books and allow children to play with old magazines.

Stage two Repetition and anticipation

As children grow older they begin to copy their parents or older siblings and “pretend to read.” They may ask parents to read a story over, and over, and over! Although parents may tire of the same book, children enjoy the repetition as they anticipate the chain of events.

Repeatedly hearing the story also helps children develop an understanding of connected

events. As children discover that stories have a beginning, middle, and an end, they learn to memorize and retell stories with amazing accuracy! During this stage children become particularly interested in details; if parents



skip over a sentence or paragraph in a book, children will protest quite loudly!

Stage three

Words as symbols for ideas

During the third stage, children begin to develop a basic understanding that the pictures and words in their book have different purposes. Gradually, they understand that written words are symbols for ideas and thoughts.

Stage four

Identifying and matching words

In the fourth stage children begin to identify and match words. Although they may not really understand the meaning of specific words or sentences, children often will run their fingers along the sentence or point to individual words as the book is

read. Following along with a finger helps children learn that words are placed in sentences from left to right and in a certain order.

Stage five

Focus on meaning

In this final stage of development, children begin to focus on the meaning of words. They may stop the story repeatedly and ask “What does this say?” They begin to recognize simple words from their favorite books in other reading materials or places. The word “STOP” on a corner stop sign can cause great excitement.

Reading, listening, and writing are important skills that parents can foster early in a child’s life. The following are some suggestions for parents to help their children in the fascinating world of words.

- Establish a regular time every day for reading. Reading a story gives children a sense of what reading and writing are all about.

- Get your child a library card and make regular visits to the library. Take advantage of story times and special events sponsored by your library.
- Read to infants and toddlers. They learn to associate reading with the comfort and security of being held and with the wonderful sound of a parent’s voice.
- Preschoolers enjoy hearing the same story over and over again. When reading books that repeat phrases, such as *The House that Jack Built*, give young children an opportunity to participate by letting them read the repetitive parts with you.
- Preschoolers love to “pretend” to read by telling a favorite story they have memorized. Increase your child’s involvement by stopping occasionally to ask questions or talk about what is waiting for them at the turn of a page. Questions help children develop important language skills. Try “How many pigs are there? Let’s count them together,” “Why is the puppy dog sad?” “Can you show me everything in this picture that is red?” “What do you think will happen next?”
- Encourage older children to read aloud to younger siblings, or to read aloud a dramatic piece from a play or a poem. Most children love to put on a good performance.



- Help your child understand the structure of a book by making a “Me” book using a photo album. Collect pictures of family members, friends, favorite animals, toys, etc. Albums with sturdy pages are easy to keep clean and allow you to change pictures easily. You also can use snapshots, post cards, magazines, and catalog pictures.
- Explain the joy and importance of reading regularly. Before children can become readers, they must learn why people read and what people do when they read.
- Invite your children to help you read a recipe as you cook. Read cooking instructions out loud. Point out measurement markings on measuring cups and spoons.
- Show your children how you must read and write when you pay bills. Let them open your junk mail and decide what is to be saved or tossed. Encourage younger children to use junk mail in pretend play.
- Encourage older children to check the weather predictions and read movie commercials or comic strips in the newspaper. You also might want to help your child start a collection of newspaper and magazine stories about sports, nature, science, etc.
- Provide alternative reading materials such as TV schedules, old catalogs, and magazines. When traveling, read out loud traffic signs, road signs, and billboards. Check with your local librarian for a list of magazines written specifically for children.
- Record a favorite book on tape so that your child can read along. Older children frequently enjoy taping books as a gift for a younger child.
- For more information, ask for *Ages and Stages*, PM 1530a-g, at your county extension office.
- Let your child play with an old typewriter (provide a supply of typing paper).
- Write notes to your child about chores and errands and don’t forget to include a thank you. Encourage them to write letters and thank you notes to friends and family members. Take dictation for a child who cannot write and read the letter back for the child’s approval.
- Let children write with colored chalk on a sidewalk or basement floor.
- Give gifts of pens, pencils, stationery, or a crossword puzzle book.

■ Writing

When children write, they begin to focus on the details of written words. The following are some ideas to help you encourage your child’s writing skills.

- Let your children make grocery lists and greeting card lists, record birthdays on the family calendar, and make charts for chores.



- Suggest they write for free pamphlets and samples. Supply them with postcards and stamps.
- Set up a message center at home and let children fill out phone memo pads. Encourage older children to write down messages about their whereabouts or school activities.
- Buy a diary for older children (promise to respect their privacy).

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families, ask for the following publications from your county extension office.

So Alive—Three to Five,
PM-1431 (cost)

Kindergarten Ahead, PM-784 (cost)

Child's Play - Art, PM 1770a(cost)

Child's Play - Fingerplays Plus,
PM 1770b (cost)

Puppets for Kids, PM-1229 (cost)

Understanding Children: Language development, PM-1529f

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Carol Ouverson and Muktha Jost. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.



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Understanding Children

Disciplining your preschooler



Preschoolers are delightful to have around, but at times can be quite a challenge! Learning how to get along with others and follow rules takes lots of practice for preschoolers; learning how to guide and discipline preschoolers takes lots of patience for parents.

■ Understanding preschool children

Preschool children are busy learning about the world around them. They ask lots of questions and they love to imitate adults. They are learning to share and take turns (but don't always want to). Sometimes they want to play with others and sometimes they want to be alone.

Preschoolers also are quite independent. They like to try new things and often take risks. They may try to shock you at times by using "forbidden words." Getting attention is fun, being ignored is not.

Preschoolers like to make decisions for themselves because it makes them feel important. They also are likely to get carried away and become rather bossy.

Preschoolers have lots of energy—sometimes more energy than adults! They play hard, fast, and furious; then they tire suddenly and get cranky and irritable.

Preschoolers spend a lot of time learning how to get along with others. "Best friends" are very important, but such friendships are brief and may last only a few minutes. Hurt feelings (and sometimes swift kicks) are part of the learning process too.

■ Ideas for parents

There is no one right way to discipline. An approach that is successful in one situation may not work in another. Also, different children respond in different ways to disciplining methods. Successful parents often use a

variety of approaches to deal with behavioral problems.

Set up a safe environment

One of the most important things a parent can do is to establish a safe environment.



Preschoolers move quickly and love to climb and explore. Take a close look at your home including the exterior, garage, and yard. You may be able to avoid some accidents. Fix, repair, toss, or lock up anything that might be a danger to your child.

It also is important to be on the look out for dangerous situations while running errands or visiting others with your children. Having a safe place to play and appropriate toys to play with can save you from saying “NO,” making your job as a parent much easier.

Establish a routine

Preschoolers need a consistent routine and reasonable bedtimes. Their small stomachs and high energy levels frequently need nutritious snacks and meals. Establishing consistent times for eating, napping, and playing helps children learn how to pace themselves. Balance the day with active times, quiet times, times to be alone, and times to be with others. Take care of basic needs to help prevent frustrating situations with a cranky and whiny child.

Set a good example

Preschoolers love to imitate adults. Watch your bad habits because your youngster will be sure to copy them! If you want your child to use good manners or pick up his or her room, be sure to demonstrate how to do it. Preschoolers are very interested in “why” we do things; it helps to explain what you are doing in very simple terms.

Time out

Many parents like to use a technique called “time out.” A time out is just that—a time out or cooling off period. When a child is misbehaving or out of control, he or she needs to be removed or isolated for a few minutes. Time out can be used with children ages 3 to 12 and with as many children as you have private places. For young children, however, the time out period needs to be no longer than 5 minutes or they tend to forget the reason for the time out.

A time out gives a child a few minutes to settle down and think about what has happened. Parents need to follow-up by talking with the child about the misbehavior.

Young children do not always understand their misdoings. It helps to explain what happened, what they should not be doing, and what they can do instead. They also need the opportunity to practice the correct behavior. Keep such discussions simple. You might say, “It’s not OK to hit your sister. Instead, tell her with words that you want to play with the blocks, too.”

Active listening

Child: John won’t let me ride in the wagon.

Father: Sounds like you are upset about that.

Child: Yeah, he’s mean!

Father: Hmm. You sound really angry!

Child: Yeah! I had the wagon first.

Father: You were playing with the wagon before John was?

Child: Yeah, then he took it away.

Father: Hmm. Wonder why?

Child: I dunno. Maybe because I wouldn’t let him play.

Father: Wonder how both of you could play with the wagon?

Child: Maybe he could ride and I could pull!

This is an example of active listening in which the father is trying to understand the problem as well as the child’s feelings. The father does not try to end the conversation; instead, he encourages it. With the father’s time and support, the child is able to explore the situation, understand the problem, and even offer a solution.

Sometimes preschoolers do not need an adult to intervene.

Rather, they need someone who will listen and help them work through a problem.

Young children still have very limited problem-solving skills. The child in the above example was 5 years old. With a 3-year-old in the same situation, the father may have needed to be more direct or offer a suggestion. For example:

Father: Maybe you could both sit in the wagon, or maybe one of you can pull and the other one can sit. Which idea do you like best?

Natural or logical consequences

Natural or logical consequences help children understand the connection between their actions and the results of their misbehavior.

Natural consequences are results that would naturally happen after a child’s behavior if the parent did not do anything.

The following examples show how natural consequences work.

- Four-year-old Cara was tossing a quarter around in the car. Her mother asked her to put the quarter in her pocket. Cara continued to toss her money and the quarter flew out the window. She lost her quarter.
- Five-year-old Juan kept forgetting to put the ball in his toy box when he came inside from playing. One afternoon the ball disappeared. Juan lost his ball.

Logical consequences should be used whenever natural consequences are dangerous or unpractical. For example, it would be dangerous for a child to experience the natural consequence of running into the street and getting hit by a car!

Logical consequences happen when a parent helps the child correct the behavior. A logical consequence of a child running into the street could be losing the privilege of playing outside. Dad might comment, "Looks like you will need to play inside. When you can stay out of the street, then you can play outdoors."

The following examples also illustrate the use of logical consequences.

- Four-year-old Alex said "Yuck!" and hurled his muffin across the kitchen. Dad calmly picked up the muffin and put it in the trash. Dad commented, "When you keep your food on your plate, then you can eat." Alex went without a snack.

Watch your language

Use your words carefully to teach children. Focus on what to do rather than what not to do.

Try saying:

- Slow down and walk.
- Come hold my hand.
- Keep your feet on the floor.
- Use your quiet voice inside.

Instead of:

- Stop running.
- Don't touch anything.
- Don't climb on the couch.
- Stop screaming and shouting.

- Five-year-old Dena and four-year-old Peter are fighting. Mom says, "Looks like you two are having trouble getting along. Find something that you can play with together or you'll have to play alone in separate rooms."

Redirection

Often, the problem is not what the child is doing, but the way he or she is doing it. In that case, redirecting or teaching the child a different way to do the same thing can be effective. If the child is drawing on books, remove the books and say, "Books are not for drawing on." Offer a substitute at the same time and say, "If you want to draw on something, draw on this paper." If your child is throwing blocks, you can remove the blocks and offer a ball to throw. If the child wants to dance on the coffee table, help him or her down and ask your child to perform for you on the front porch.

Ignoring the behavior

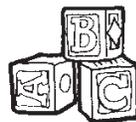
Undesirable behavior can sometimes be stopped by not paying attention to it. In some situations

this can work effectively. Withhold all attention, praise, and support. Eventually, the child quits the unacceptable behavior because it does not bring the desired attention. This works particularly well when a child uses forbidden or swear words to get attention.

When all else fails

Sometimes children have a behavioral problem that seems to happen over and over. When nothing seems to be working, try the who, what, when, where, and how method. Ask yourself, "When does the troublesome behavior seem to happen? What happens just before and after? Where does it happen and with whom? How do I usually respond? How could I prevent the behavior? What other approaches could I use?"

The best method to find a more successful way to cope with behavioral problems is to take the time to think about options.



■ Does spanking work?

Preschoolers often respond well to physical action when you need to discipline them. Touching them on the arm, taking them by the hand, picking them up, holding, or restraining them are all good ways to get their attention.

Spanking also will get their attention, but doesn't do a very good job of teaching children how to behave. In fact, it generally distresses a child so much that he or she can't pay attention to your explanations and directions. It's hard to reason with a screaming, crying child.

Spanking and slapping can quickly get out-of-hand for both parents and children. Most reported cases of abuse involve loving, well-meaning parents who lost control. Studies show that children who experience or witness a great deal of spanking, slapping, or hitting are much more likely to become aggressive themselves. Children who are bullied by older brothers, sisters, or other children often react by bullying others. Children who are spanked frequently often hit younger children.

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

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Preschoolers love to imitate. Most parents find it more successful to focus on teaching a child *what to do* rather than *what not to do*. It may help to think of behavior problems as opportunities to teach your child new skills. After all, the word discipline comes from the word disciple, which means to teach.

■ Taking care of yourself

Parenting preschoolers is challenging and works better when you remember to take care of yourself. Remember to rest, eat well, and relax. Above all else, try to maintain a sense of humor. When you discover your child dumping flour on the floor or finger painting with the sour cream, remember that someday this will be a great story to tell your grandchildren. Grab a camera and take a picture! You will want to remember this. Honest.

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families contact your county extension office and ask for the following.

Is Your Baby Safe at Home, PM 954a-d

Understanding Children: Temper tantrums, PM 1529j

Understanding Children: Toilet training, PM 1529k

Understanding Children: Biting, PM 1529a

Ages & Stages, 1530e-g



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Understanding Children

Disciplining your toddler



No doubt about it, toddlers are a handful! At times, it will seem like they can be in two places at the same time, and be headed for trouble in a third one yet. Many a parent can recite nerve-racking stories of toddlers perched on top of the bookcase, or of a fall that resulted in an emergency room visit.

Setting limits and maintaining some kind of control are difficult tasks with toddlers because they are so independent, yet have so few skills to communicate and solve problems. The key to disciplining your toddler includes love, understanding, and quick thinking!

■ Understanding toddlers

Toddlers are limited in their ability to communicate

Toddlers are interesting little people. Like babies, they still like to be held, talked to, and comforted. And they still often express themselves by crying, shrieking, jabber-

ing, grunting, and pointing. Unlike babies, however, toddlers can say a few words, which can mean many things. "Cup!" may mean "Hand me my cup," "I want more milk," "The cup just fell off the table," or "The dog just stole my cup!" A toddler, with this limited capacity to communicate, is therefore very hard to understand.

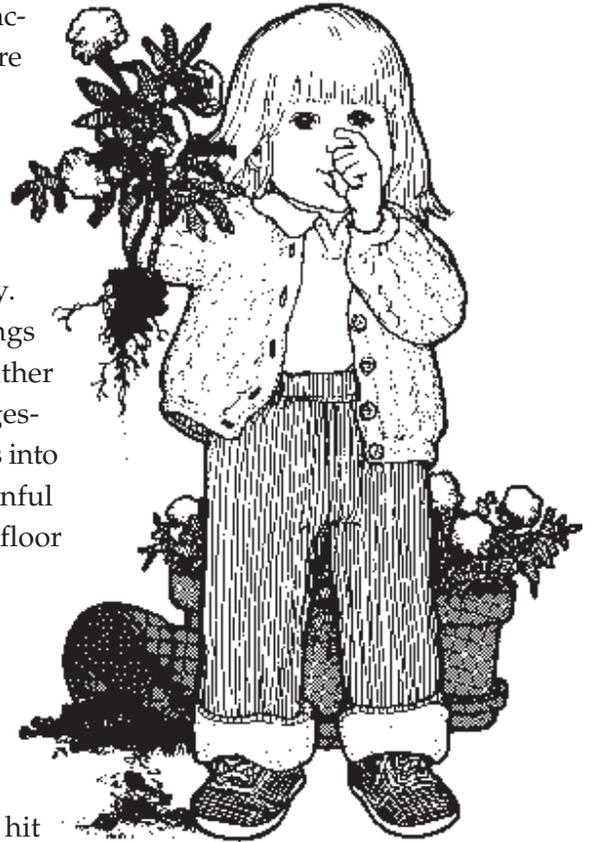
Toddlers can try your patience

Sometimes, toddlers do things that drive parents crazy. They reach out and grab things (like eyeglasses). They are rather clumsy and awkward with gestures; a loving pat often turns into an accidental whack. A spoonful of peas may wind up on the floor rather than in the mouth.

Toddlers cannot share

Toddlers are also very possessive. "No," and "Mine," are favorite words and they are quite willing to hit

or bite to get (or keep) a favorite toy. In fact, toddlers may spend as much time carrying around and protecting toys as they do playing with them.



Toddlers cannot plan their own day

Toddlers are always “on the go” and often play until they “run out of gas.” They have very little skill at pacing themselves and can be happy one minute and cranky the next. Much of this behavior depends on the new skills they are developing. The same toddler who screams for an unreachable cookie may lead or drag you to the jar and point at another time. Learning to do things in a socially acceptable way is a big step for a toddler.

■ How parents can help

Set up a safe environment

One of the most important things a parent can do is to establish a safe environment. “Toddler-proof” your home by locking up dangerous chemicals and medicines, covering electrical outlets, and storing breakable objects up high, especially if your toddler is a climber!

You also may want to take a close look at toys and how your toddler uses them. Getting hit accidentally on the head with a foam block is no big deal, but a “bonk” on the head with a hard wooden block is more serious. A safe place to play and appropriate toys to play with will save you from saying “No” and make your job as parent much easier.

Establish a routine

Toddlers need naps and reasonable bedtimes. Small stomachs need nutritious snacks and meals frequently. Growing bodies need time to run, jump, and play every day. Riding around all day in a car seat, sleeping in a stroller, and eating fast food is OK once in a while, but if it’s happening often you may want to rethink your schedule. Taking care of basic needs can go a long way in preventing a cranky, whiny child.

Remove or isolate

When a child is running out into the street or about to get into the household bleach, there is no time for negotiation. Parents MUST remove a child from a dangerous situation. Picking up, holding, or putting a child in the crib for a few minutes until things can be made safe is perfectly OK. Your child may protest loudly, but your primary responsibility is to keep him or her safe.

Distract

This works especially well with very young children. When a child is doing something unacceptable, try to call attention to another activity—perhaps playing with another toy or reading a book together. The goal is to temporarily distract the child from the current problem. For example, if a child wants to play with break-



able knickknacks at a friend’s home, perhaps you can distract him or her with a stuffed toy. Since young children’s attention spans are so short, distraction is often effective.

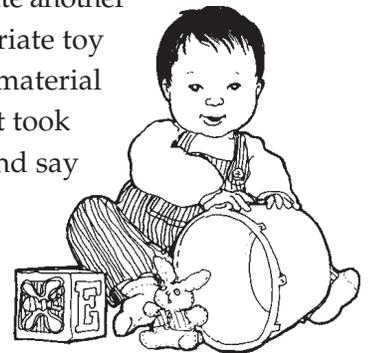
Redirect

If your toddler is throwing blocks, hammering on tables, or drawing on books, remove the materials while saying something like “Blocks are for building, not throwing.” At the same time substitute another

appropriate toy for the material you just took away and say

“If you want to throw something,

throw the bean bag into the basket.” By redirecting the activity into a more acceptable situation, you let children know you accept them and their play, and you channel a problem activity into a more acceptable activity.

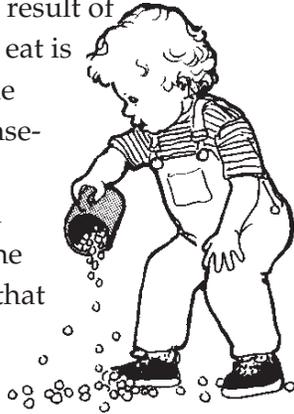


Ignore

The goal in this strategy is to have the child stop the undesirable behavior by not paying attention to it. This can be effective in some situations with older toddlers. Withhold all attention, praise, and support. Without the desired attention, children eventually quit whatever they’re doing. This takes patience.

Use natural or logical consequences

Natural consequences are results that naturally happen after a child's behavior. For example, the natural result of refusing to eat is hunger. The natural consequence of dropping a cookie in the bathtub is that it becomes soggy.



Natural consequences can be very effective for teaching children what happens when they do certain things.

Logical consequences should be used whenever natural consequences are dangerous or impractical. For example, it would be dangerous for a child to experience the natural consequence of running in to the street and being hit by a car! Logical consequences should be logically connected to a child's behavior and should teach responsible behavior.

For example, if a child persistently flings peas across the kitchen or spills milk over the edge of the table, you may want to use logical consequences. First remove the peas or milk until they can be used in an appropriate manner. Second, provide an opportunity for your toddler to "clean-up." Peas that are dropped must be picked up; milk that is spilled must be wiped up. Using

logical consequences teaches toddlers to help with the cleaning and to understand that cleaning up our mess is a part of growing up.

Set a good example

Toddlers love to imitate their parents. If you want your toddler to treat the dog kindly or have good eating habits, be sure to demonstrate how to do it. Remember also to talk about what you do. Even though toddlers may not fully understand everything you say, they will begin to understand that there are reasons for doing things a certain way.

Help your toddler understand "sharing"

As was mentioned earlier, sharing is not something that toddlers do very well. They aren't able to understand the process yet. Toddlers do enjoy playing next to other children, but are not very good at playing with other children.

If you have several young children, it is better (and easier) to provide several similar toys than to require sharing. Two toy telephones can prevent many squabbles and may even encourage children to cooperate and communicate better.

Toddlers usually find it difficult to share because they don't really understand what ownership means. They may think sharing a toy is the same as giving it away.

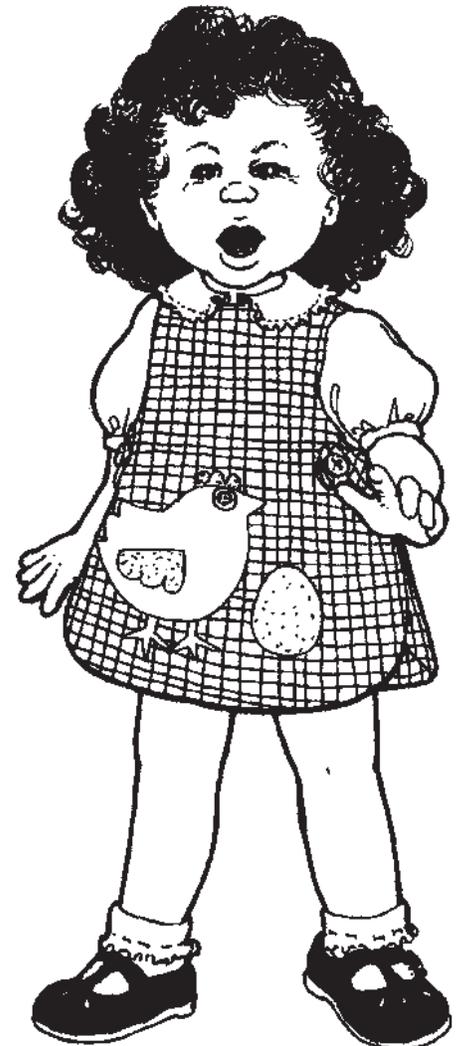
It is very common for a toddler to give someone a toy, but expect it to be given right back. Older

brothers and sisters sometimes have trouble understanding this. Sometimes it helps to explain that your toddler is just "showing" her brother the toy. If your toddler does share, give praise, but respect the need to protect treasures.

Is it ever OK to spank?

Toddlers often respond well to physical action when you need to discipline them. Touching them on the arm, taking them by the hand, picking them up, holding, or restraining them are all good ways to get their attention.

Spanking will also get their attention, but doesn't do a very



good job of teaching them how to behave. In fact, it generally distresses children so much that they can't pay attention to your explanations or directions. It's hard to reason with a screaming, crying child.

Some parents who frequently slap a toddler's hand are dismayed to find their toddler slapping back. Or worse yet, slapping and hitting others.

Spanking and slapping can quickly get out-of-hand for both parents and children. Most reported cases of abuse involve loving, well-meaning parents who just lost control. Studies show that children who experience or witness a great deal of spanking, slapping, or hitting are much more likely to become physically aggressive themselves.

Toddlers love to imitate. Most parents find it more successful to teach a child *what to do* rather than *what not to do*. It may help to think of behavior problems as opportunities to teach your child new skills. After all, the word discipline comes from the word disciple, which means "to teach."

■ A final note

Disciplining toddlers is not easy. And you won't always feel good about how you handled a situation. It's important to recognize that you are human. After all, it's hard to be calm when your toddler tries to drown the cat with orange juice or smack you in the face with a banana. You can respond quickly when your

toddler needs guidance if you understand the reasons for his or her behavior and know your options. Good luck!

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families contact your county extension office and ask for the following.

Is Your Baby Safe At Home,

PM 954a-d

Understanding Children: Temper tantrums, PM 1529j

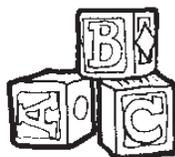
Understanding Children: Toilet Teaching, PM 1529k

Understanding Children: Biting, PM 1529a

Understanding Children: Fears, PM 1529d

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

File: Family life 8



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Understanding Children

Fears



To many parents, children's fears make no sense at all. Nevertheless, to children, monsters lurking in the dark or scary noises coming from the attic are quite real.

Around your child's second birthday, he or she may become frightened by things that did not cause fear before—the neighbor's dog, the dark, the bathtub drain, and loud noises.

Several factors contribute to a child developing fears by age 2. Children between the ages of 2 and 6 have experienced real fear or pain from being lost, injured, or bitten. They also have vivid imaginations and struggle with the idea of cause and effect. A toddler knows something about size and shape, but not enough to be sure that he or she won't be sucked down into the bathtub drain or into a flushing toilet. Older children also are aware of dangers that they hear about or see on TV. It's hard to know what is real and what is not.

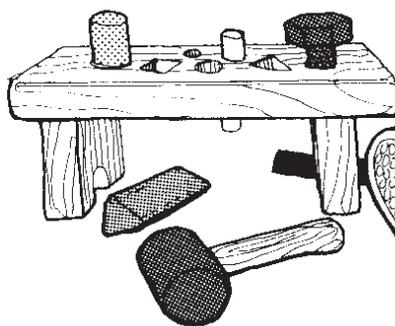
Common fears

Fear of separation

Toddlers' anxiety about separation is an indication of growth. Before your toddler turned 2, he or she forgot you after you left, and settled down quickly. Now your child worries about and puzzles over your departure.

Always tell your child that you are leaving. Sneaking out decreases trust. It may help to get your child absorbed in an activity before you leave. An elaborate ritual of waving bye-bye and blowing good-bye kisses also may help.

Preschoolers are more self-assured than toddlers, but occasionally experience fears about being separated from a parent when starting a new school or child care arrangement, staying overnight with a relative, or moving to a new home. Ease into new situations gradually. Visiting the new school several times before the first day, or staying with your child for the first day or two can make a big difference.



Fear of baths

Many young children worry about going down the drain with the water. No amount of logical talk will change this. Avoid letting the water drain out while your child is still in the tub or even in the bathroom. If your child seems fearful of water, you might try letting him or her play first with a pan of water, then in the sink, and finally over the edge of the tub (don't leave a child alone in the bathroom).



Fear of dogs

Dogs are often loud, fast moving, and unpredictable. Many children fear them. Respect your child's fear of strange dogs; a child's instincts may be right. If you wish to introduce your child to a friendly dog, first try sharing pictures of the dog with your child. Next watch the dog from a distance, and finally approach the dog together. You may want to demonstrate how to pet the dog, but don't force your child to pet the dog, too. If he or she refuses, you can try again later.

Fear of loud noises

Although your toddler loves to pound on a toy drum, the loud noise from a vacuum cleaner or a hair dryer may be very frightening. Even preschoolers can develop fear of loud noises. Try letting your child look at and eventually touch things in your home before you turn them on. If the fear seems intense, save "loud noise jobs" for times when your child is rested and in a good mood, or better yet, when he or she is not around.

Fear of the dark

Parents often sheepishly admit that their child sleeps with a night light (or the room light) on. Children can sleep with lights on without damaging their health. Many children sleep with a night light well into the school-age years.

Fear of the dark is usually one of the last childhood fears to be conquered. Younger

children fear monsters and snakes that lurk in the bedroom shadows. Older children may fear burglars and thieves. It is not at all uncommon for children who are 10 and 11 to still use a night light. A gradual reduction of light works for many families, while some children decide on their own to turn lights off. It is important not to rush your child.

School-age children have fears too

During the school-age years, imaginary monsters disappear, but other fears begin to surface. School-age children often have to deal with bullies, the fear of rejection or embarrassment, and sometimes the reality of being home alone after school. School-agers also are aware of TV and news events that showcase murder, drug abuse, kidnappings, and burglaries.

About one-third of school-age children experience fears that re-occur. Often these children develop strategies that help them cope. One common strategy children use is to turn the TV on when they arrive home so they don't hear scary noises. Other strategies include hiding under beds or in closets, turning all the lights on in the house, and using the phone for comfort and companionship. Older kids often feel embarrassed about feeling afraid and are reluctant to share their feelings. Asking specific questions like "Do you have a special hiding place? Do you walk home a certain way? When you come home do

you check the doors?" will help parents identify concerns that their children might have. A very elaborate plan for self protection may indicate that the child is feeling threatened and very afraid.

■ How parents can help

Your child's fears depend on his or her level of anxiety, past experience, and imagination. If any fears persist, give your child more time and try to avoid events and situations that can trigger them. Your child may be better equipped emotionally to deal with his or her fears in a few months.

- Avoid lectures. It is not helpful to ridicule, coerce, ignore, or use logic. Think back to your own childhood. How often did you hear phrases like: "There is no such thing as a monster," "Don't be such a baby," "There are no lions or bears for miles and miles from here," or "Pet the nice doggie, he won't hurt you." Did statements such as these really make you feel any better?



- Accept your child's fears as valid. Support your child any time he or she is frightened. Use a matter-of-fact attitude and some reassuring words. It's OK to explain that monsters don't really live under the bed, but don't expect your child to believe it. Remember that some fear is good. Children should have a healthy sense of caution. Strange dogs and strange people can be dangerous. As children grow older, they begin to have a better understanding of cause and effect, and reality versus fantasy. They also may gain some first-hand experience with the object of their fear and discover ways to control potentially dangerous situations. Eventually, most fears will be overcome or at least brought under control.
- Show your child how to cope. Young children can learn some coping skills that will help them feel like they have more control of their fear. Learning how to take deep breaths, using their imagination to turn a scary monster into a funny monster, or keeping a flashlight by the bed after lights are turned off are all good examples of coping skills. Reading children's books about scary situations such as going to bed in the dark or having an operation in the hospital also can



be helpful. It is best not to force a child into fearful situations all at once. Often the "shock" method will backfire and intensify the fear. A small dose at a time is the best way to help a child overcome fear.

■ A note about nightmares and night terrors

One out of every four children between the ages of 3 and 8 experiences either **night terrors** or **nightmares**. Both of these situations can be unnerving, but are generally short-lived.

Night terrors generally occur within an hour of falling asleep. The child awakens suddenly from a state of deep sleep in a state of panic. He or she may scream, sit up in bed, breathe quickly, and stare "glassy eyed." The child also may seem confused, disoriented, and incoherent. Each episode can last from 5 to 30 minutes. A child who experiences night terrors is not aware of any scary thoughts

or dreams and is usually able to go back to sleep quickly. In the morning, the child usually doesn't remember waking at all. Night terrors may occur for several years. Generally they go away with time and are not an indication of any underlying emotional problems.

Nightmares generally occur in the early morning hours. Children who experience nightmares can often recall the vivid details of their scary dream and may have difficulty going back to sleep. Nightmares will often center on a specific problem or life event that is troubling the child.

Parents can help by remaining calm. Hold your child close and talk in a soft, soothing voice. Comfort and reassure your child. If possible, stay close by until he or she falls asleep. Calm, consistent handling of nightmares or terrors will help your child feel safe and secure.

■ Books for children

Are You My Mother? P. Eastman
How Many Kisses Goodnight? Jean Monrad
The Runaway Bunny, Margaret Wise Brown
Goodnight Moon, Margaret Wise Brown
Bedtime for Francis, Lilian Hoban
Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waler

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families contact your county extension office and ask for the following publications.
Zero to One (a newsletter series for the first year of life), Pm-984
1-2-3 Grow (a newsletter series for toddler years), Pm-1071 (cost)
So Alive—Three to Five, (a newsletter series for preschool years), Pm-1431 (cost)
Understanding Children: Disciplining your toddler, Pm-1529c
Understanding Children: Disciplining your preschooler, Pm-1529b
Understanding Children: Self-esteem, Pm-1529h
Growing into Middle Childhood: 5-to 8-year-olds, Pm-1174 (cost)

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Some material adapted from *1-2-3 Grow* by Pauline Davey Zeece and Randy Wiegel. Edited by Muktha Jost. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

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Understanding Children



Self-esteem

Do you sometimes wish you could slip your child a dose of healthy self-esteem that would last a life time? A great idea, but hard to do!

The development of self-esteem is a lifelong task. From our first breath to the last, we are all developing, refining, and changing our sense of self-worth and identity.

Self-esteem involves developing a sense of self-worth by feeling lovable and capable. Children tackle this task differently at different developmental ages.

■ Ages and stages

Infants

Self-esteem for infants is nourished by attending to basic needs and building a sense of trust. When infants cry, they are telling you that they are hungry, sleepy, cold, wet, or lonely. The way you respond to those needs tells your baby a lot. Babies need to be held and cuddled. They need adults to

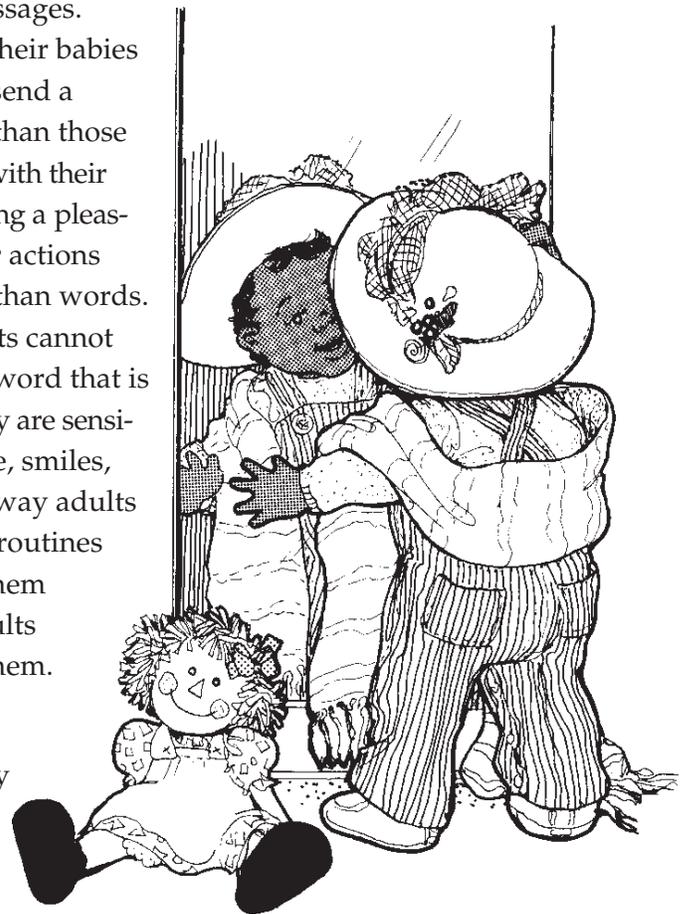
talk, sing, and play with them. When basic needs are met, babies develop a strong sense of trust and security.

The manner in which needs are met also sends messages. Parents who feed their babies just to quiet them send a different message than those who also interact with their babies to make eating a pleasant experience. Our actions often speak louder than words. Even though infants cannot understand every word that is spoken to them, they are sensitive to tone of voice, smiles, and laughter. The way adults conduct everyday routines with infants tells them whether or not adults enjoy being with them.

Toddlers

The first step away from babyhood is a step toward independence.

Toddlers establish a sense of self by learning to do things for themselves and by touching, tasting, and feeling everything in sight (even when it is forbidden).



At times this new-found independence can make a toddler seem a bit bossy. “No,” “Mine,” and “Me do it,” are favorite words.

Creating a safe environment and letting a toddler explore fosters this sense of independence. When Billy’s parents encourage him to help by pulling off socks or wiping the table (even if it takes longer), they are letting him develop important skills and a stronger sense of self.

Preschoolers

Preschoolers sometimes seem grown-up. They can feed and dress themselves, they love to imitate adults, and they are eager to please. Self-esteem is tied significantly with learning new skills. As they develop from an energetic 3-year-old into a more

competent 5-year-old, they begin to develop an awareness of their own personal interests and skills.

For example, most 3-year-olds are not critical of their art projects. They are more process oriented than product oriented. When they use play dough, they care more about the experience of squeezing, pounding, rolling, and squishing than what they actually produce.

On the other hand, 5-year-olds are much more aware of details and pay more attention to the work of other children. They learn by comparing their work to the world around them. As they strive to polish their drawing skills, it is not uncommon to hear them express a great deal of dissatisfaction. They want their drawing to look like a “real bird” or “real truck.” This dissatisfaction doesn’t necessarily mean that they have poor self-esteem. It just means that they are beginning to learn more about themselves and their personal skills.

School-agers

As children enter school-age they are very optimistic about their abilities. Often, they also have very high expectations about doing well in school. Such a positive attitude is wonderful. It is helpful, however, to remember that young children have not had

many opportunities to discover their strengths and weaknesses in an academic setting.

It is not uncommon for school-age children to set standards that are frustratingly high or low. Children this age have not had much experience in setting and achieving goals. Also, they do not have the capacity to measure their own strengths and weaknesses.

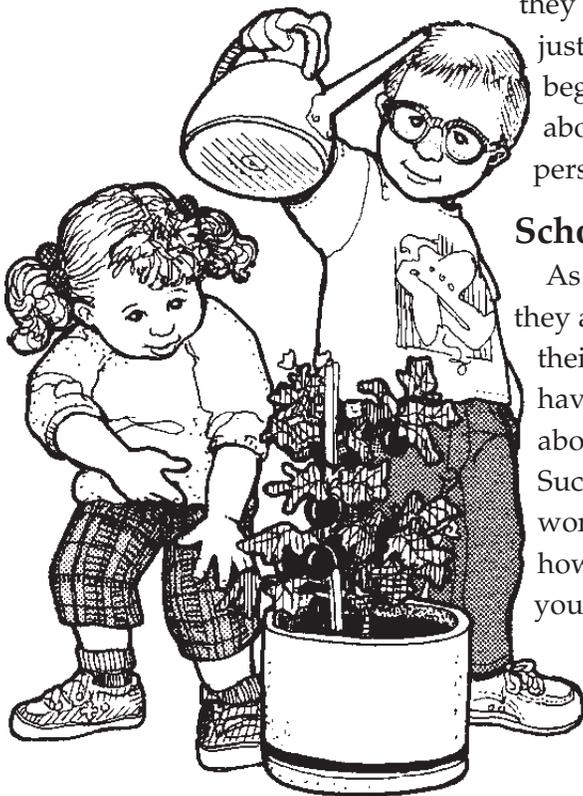
Adults can help by providing experiences that are challenging, yet achievable. Progressively learning new skills and becoming competent in those skills are sure ways to achieve a strong sense of identity and self-worth.

■ Tips for parents

Help your child feel lovable and capable

The two key ingredients of self-esteem are feeling loved and capable. Billy’s parents can foster this in many little ways every day. It is important to Billy that they listen, take his feelings seriously, and spend time alone with him. You also can show your respect and support by allowing your child to make decisions, respecting your child’s possessions, and expressing love with words and hugs.

As children grow older, they begin to discover that they have special talents and interests. Parents can help by providing opportunities for children to



experiment with different activities. Children who enjoy sports might be encouraged to try out a variety of activities such as soccer, basketball, softball, or swimming. An interest in music might lead to piano lessons or church choir. A nature buff might wish to join Scouts or 4-H. Remember, the focus is to explore a variety of interests. Try not to push or overdo any one thing at a particular time. Childhood should be a relaxed, stress-free time for discovery and experimentation.

One of your most important roles is as a teacher

Billy's parents take time every day to teach him a new skill. Everyday life skills are so important. Billy learns how to set the table, to cook with Mom and Dad in the kitchen, and to spray and wash the car windows. Look carefully for your child's hidden talents and abilities and nurture them.

Be a coach more than a cheerleader

A cheerleader just cheers. A coach uses praise to foster behavioral growth and to instill self-worth.

Happygrams, stickers, ribbons, and behavioral charts with smiley faces are fun to receive, but they often give children an incomplete message. A better approach would

be to use specific praise. For example, when your child sets the table, you might say "You did such a good job! You put the spoons and forks in the right place and remembered the napkins!" When you notice your child reading to a younger sister you might say, "When you growled you sounded just like a bear! It must be nice for Sara to have a brother who is such a good storyteller." Specific praise means more to a child than a brief "You are great" or a smiley face sticker.

Low self-esteem can be good sometimes

It's OK for children to feel badly about themselves at times, especially when their actions make them feel ashamed or guilty. For example, if Billy steals a piece of candy from a store it is usually healthy for him to feel bad about himself. Feeling guilty can stimulate a child to make

amends. Confessing, returning the candy, paying for the candy, and resolving never to steal again can help bring Billy's feelings of self-worth back into balance.

Set a good example

Taking responsibility for your own self-esteem is important too. Children learn so much by watching and imitating their parents. Talk out loud about your feelings and the ways that you cope with life's problems. For example, a comment such as, "I'm feeling sad today because someone at work said some mean things. I think I'll take a walk after dinner to feel better," shows a child that individuals can have control over how they feel and think about themselves.



■ A final note

Positive self-esteem is possible for everyone, but it doesn't happen overnight. True self-worth is developed over a lifetime and most of us will experience many highs and lows as we journey through life. A parent's role is to help children feel loved and to teach them the skills they need to feel capable when faced with life's many challenges.



Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Carol Ouverson and Muktha Jost. Illustrated by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

■ Children's books

The Important Book, Margaret Wise Brown
I Know What I Like, N. Simon.
Harold and the Purple Crayon, David Johnson Liesk
Just the Thing for Geraldine, Ellen Conford
Howie Helps Himself, Joan Fassler
Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, Judith Viorst

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families contact your county extension office and request the following.
Ages and Stages, PM-1530a-g
Understanding Children: Disciplining your preschooler, PM-1529b
Understanding Children: Disciplining your toddler, PM-1529d
Growing up Fit: Preschoolers in motion, PM-1359a (cost)
Growing into Middle Childhood: 5- to 8-year-olds, PM-1174a

File: Family life 8



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Understanding Children



Moving to a new home

Although moving has become a common event for American families, it is a “moving” experience in more ways than one. No matter how often families change residence, moving brings with it a variety of emotions and situations.

One out of five American families moves each year, and most of those moves are within the same community or to a neighboring state.

Moving can be an exciting adventure for families as they look forward to new places, friends, and neighbors. Many families find that the experience of moving often brings them closer.

The general sense of confusion and disorder can make moving both physically and emotionally stressful. While packing, moving, dusting, and sorting take a toll on energy and attention, short tempers and chaos drain the emotions.

There is also an element of grief. No matter how eager you are to

move there will be places, things, and people you will miss. When moving is brought about by a death, divorce, or job loss, the sense of loss and sadness is more acute.

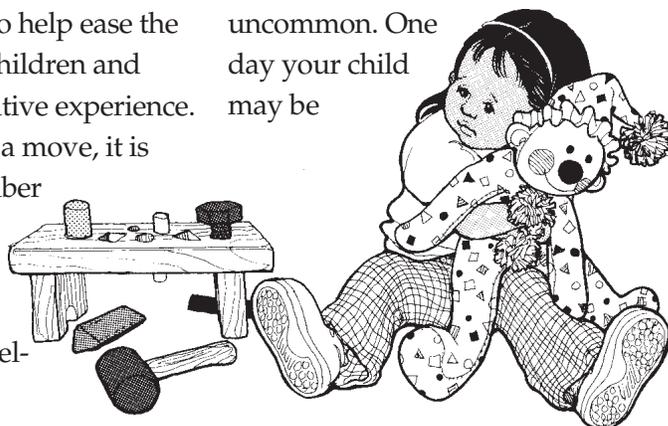
Sometimes, a combination of the exciting prospect of moving and the sense of loss that the same change could bring produces a seesaw of emotions. Many family members experience emotional ups and downs.

Moving is a challenging and difficult experience for a family, especially for children. It is natural, therefore, for parents to be concerned about the effect of the move. Parents often wish to help ease the transition for their children and make moving a positive experience.

When faced with a move, it is important to remember that reactions from children will vary depending on their personality and developmental age.

The personality of the child is important because it influences the time a child may take to adjust to the move. Some children are naturally outgoing and will be able to make friends immediately while some other children may take months.

Some aspects of the child’s personality may tend to get more pronounced. For instance, if your child tends to worry and get nervous, you are likely to see more of this behavior until the child begins to feel more comfortable in the new surroundings. Roller coaster emotions are not uncommon. One day your child may be



thrilled and excited, then blue and depressed the next.

■ Ages and stages

Moving and your infant or toddler

Generally, infants and toddlers make the transition quite well. They may, however, pick up on your anxiety and stress level, and seem particularly fussy and demanding in the few weeks before and immediately after your move. If your child is being cared for by a caregiver other than yourself, he or she may go through a sense of loss and not be well able to express it. Older toddlers who have just begun to

understand a few basic household rules like “Don’t climb on the counter tops or scribble on the wall” may need to relearn the rules all over again in the new house.

What you can do

Your time and attention are especially important now. Remember to take a break during the rush to hold or play with your child. Be sure to keep any security objects such as a favorite teddy bear or blanket close by. Keep your routine as normal as possible. Regular eating and nap times are important.

Moving and your preschooler

Often, preschoolers will express a great deal of excitement over a move, but may not really understand everything that is going on. The details of moving inevitably frustrate parents, and preschoolers tend to think that the chaos and frustration may somehow be their fault.

Preschoolers also find it hard to understand what will go with them and what will stay behind. They may not realize that you are taking furniture and toys with you, and often develop great fears for their personal belongings and

toys. Also, they may not realize that close friends and neighbors will not make the move.

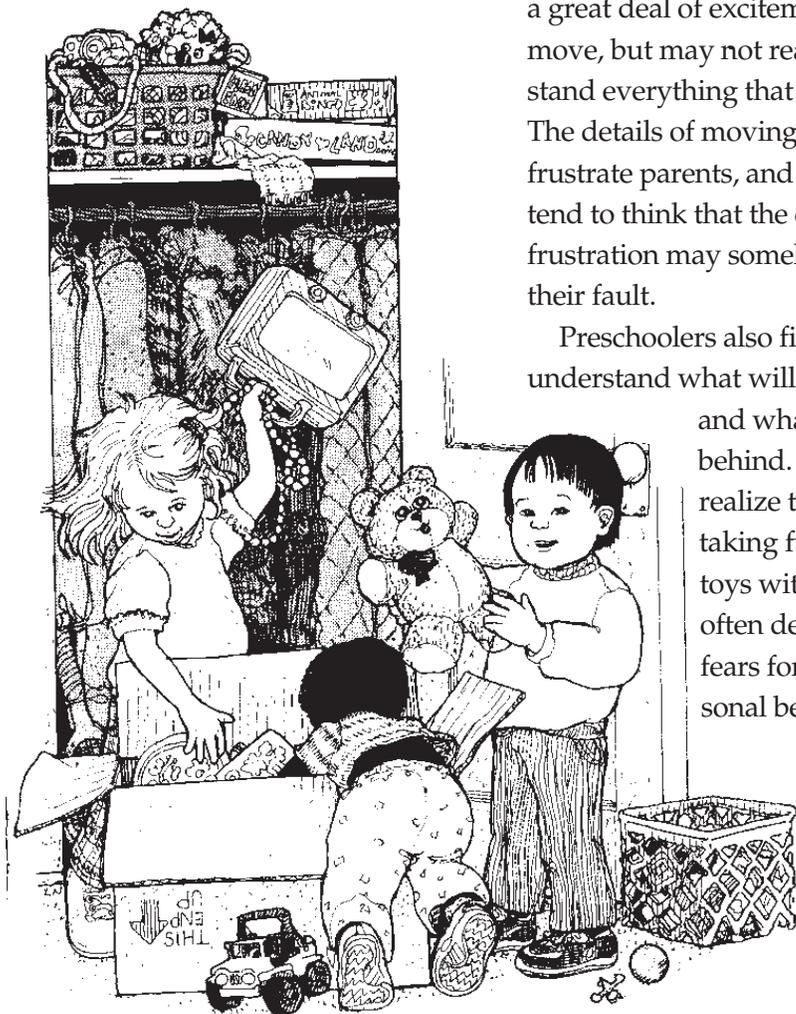
What you can do

Try to pack children’s things last and include your preschooler in on the packing process. Do not assume that your child understands the process of moving. Explain the move to your child and give reasons for the way you are doing things. Children’s books on moving are listed in this publication. Take the time to read aloud one or two to help your child understand the moving process. As with infants and toddlers, keep your routine as normal and predictable as possible.

Moving and your school-age child

School-age children often are quite excited about a family move and love to become involved in the planning process. School-age children love to develop lists and are very project oriented. Use their enthusiasm and energy to help you get some of your moving tasks done.

Relationships with peers are very important for school-agers, and they can understand the effect of the move on their relationships with friends and neighbors. Although they can understand the separation from friends and neighbors that is about to happen, they may not have the maturity to deal with their emotions.



Most school-agers are quite positive before and even immediately after the move. A month or so after the move, however, they may become quite angry about the move, especially if they have not had much success forming a group of friends. School-agers still have a very active imagination and may have imagined that the move would somehow make their lives wonderful. When reality sets in, therefore, they may experience a great deal of confusion, frustration, and anger.

What you can do

Scope out the neighborhood before you move. Are there other children your child can play with? If not, where can your child go to meet friends? Is there a community center or club such as 4-H, Scouts, or Campfire nearby?

Arrange to visit the school before enrolling your child. Be sure to point out familiar places like the school cafeteria, library, and restrooms. Kids worry about being able to find their way around.

Take pictures of your child, new home, and community and encourage your child to share them with others. A farewell party is also a good idea. A farewell party can help ease the pain of goodbyes, make the move a concrete event, and help the child accept reality.

Moving and your teenager

No doubt about it, moving is difficult for most adolescents.

Teenagers are generally very involved in social relationships. Your teen is focused on learning how to develop more long-term relationships. Most teens feel that friendships and romantic relationships are unnecessarily interrupted by a move. Although teenagers have the maturity to understand reasons for moving, they may not be prepared emotionally.

What you can do

Parents need to give teens time and space when preparing for a move. Many parents postpone telling kids about the move, hoping that it will make things easier. Generally it is best to tell them right away. The “grief work” of breaking relationships and saying goodbyes takes time, and is best done before the move.

Even though teens seem much more advanced in their social skills, they may worry a lot about making friends and fitting in. Be sure to visit their school and check out local activities and employment opportunities for young people.

Communities have their own culture and way of doing things, and this is often reflected in the way teens dress. How they look is very important to teens. Before spending money on a new school wardrobe you and your teen may want to do some quiet observation or visiting with neighbors to see what is “in.” Purchasing a “special” outfit can often help a teen feel more comfortable.

Parents also can help teens by paying sincere attention to their feelings. Accept your teen’s feelings without getting defensive or lecturing. If a teen can express feelings openly and work through the “sense of loss” with parental support, he or she will be much less likely to express anger and depression in a harmful manner.

■ How long will your child take to adjust to the move?

Researchers tell us that adults and children need time to adjust—often as long as 16 months. For some families, the most stressful time is two weeks before and two weeks after the move. For many families, however, the time of the move is one when everyone pitches in and works together as a team. It



is only a month or so after the move that the reality of friends and places left behind begins to sink in. Frustration, anger, and confusion are common emotions at this time. Moving is stressful for adults and is particularly stressful for children as they have limited coping skills.

Other events associated with the move effect how children cope with a move. Financial problems, a death, or divorce can sometimes make the problem worse and children's coping skills are stretched to the limit. Parents may then wish to seek short-term counseling for their children.

Strategies to help children adjust to moving.

- **Be understanding.** Acknowledge both positive and negative feelings. Let children know that it's OK and normal to feel anxiety. Watch out for verbal and nonverbal communication.
- **Provide continuity.** Much of the stress associated with moving comes from the "newness" and "difference" of things. Try to keep routines and other daily living habits as normal as possible. This is *not* the time to make a lot of major changes in your family life.
- **Be patient.** New adjustments take time. Individuals handle things differently. Some children will ease into a new situation,

some will dive in head first. Allow for personality differences.

- **Be a good model.** Children need to see and hear adults express their feelings and work through problems. A parent who feels comfortable with saying "Gee, sometimes I sure feel lonely," or "Today I told myself that I was going to meet at least one new person!" can provide a lot of support for children.
- **Promote peer interaction.** Hook into the community quickly. Ask a neighbor if he or she will introduce your child to neighborhood children. Link up with familiar organizations such as Scouts, Campfire, 4-H, and church youth groups.
- **Use children's literature.** Books can help children prepare for and understand difficult situations. Story characters who model successful coping strategies are an excellent resource for children.

Children's books about moving

Dear Phoebe, S. Alexander
We Are Best Friends, Aliko
It's Your Move: Picking up, packing up and settling in, L. Bourke
I Don't Live Here!, P. Conrad
I'm Moving, M. W. Hickman
My Friend William Moved Away, M. W. Hickman

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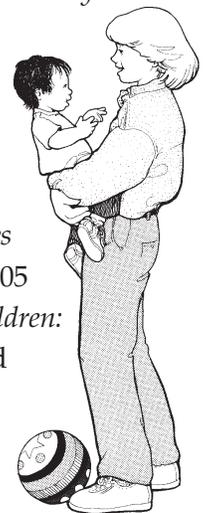
Moving Molly, S. Hughes
I'm Not Moving!, P. Jones
Maggie and the Goodbye Gift, S. Milord & J. Milord
A New Boy in Kindergarten, J.B. Moncure
Mitchell is Moving, M. W. Sharmat,
The Monster in the Third Dresser Drawer and Other Stories About Adam Joshua, J. I. Smith
Moving Day, T. Tobias
Moving, W. Watson

Read more about it!

For more information about children and families contact your county extension office and ask for the following.

Zero to One (a newsletter for the first year of life), Pm-984
1-2-3 Grow (a newsletter for the toddler years), Pm-1071 (cost)
So Alive—Three to Five (a newsletter for the preschool years), Pm-1431 (cost)
Simple Snacks for Kids, Pm-1264
Balancing Work and Family:

Coming home, making the transition, Pm-1404f
Grandparenting: More than cookies and milk, Pm-1405
Understanding Children: Fears, Pm-1529d



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File: Family Life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Illustration by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.



Understanding Children

Temper tantrums



Temper tantrums—just the thought of one is enough to make you cringe. Most parents agree that there is nothing quite like dealing with a kicking, screaming child. It can bring out the worst in all of us and it is always difficult to handle.

Temper tantrums are a normal part of growing up. All children have them. Often they happen for different reasons at different ages. Sometimes they take you by surprise and sometimes they are predictable. There are no magic cures, but there are some successful techniques that can help.

■ Ages and stages Infants

Infants may cry a lot, but they don't really have tantrums. They cry because they are wet, hungry, cold, or lonely. Crying is their only way of letting adults know that they need something. Sometimes infants have colic. They seem to cry endlessly for no

apparent reason. Studies show that infants who have their needs met quickly and who are held and comforted when they cry, develop a strong sense of security and well-being and may actually cry much less later on.

Toddlers

Toddlers throw tantrums for many reasons—some big, some small. A square block won't fit in a round hole. Shoes feel funny and socks don't seem to come off right. To make matters worse, you won't let them climb on top of the kitchen table. Toddlers have tantrums because they get frustrated very easily. Most toddlers still do not talk much. They have trouble asking for things and expressing their feelings. Toddlers also have very few problem-solving skills. Tantrums are most likely to happen when toddlers are hungry, exhausted, or overexcited.

Preschoolers

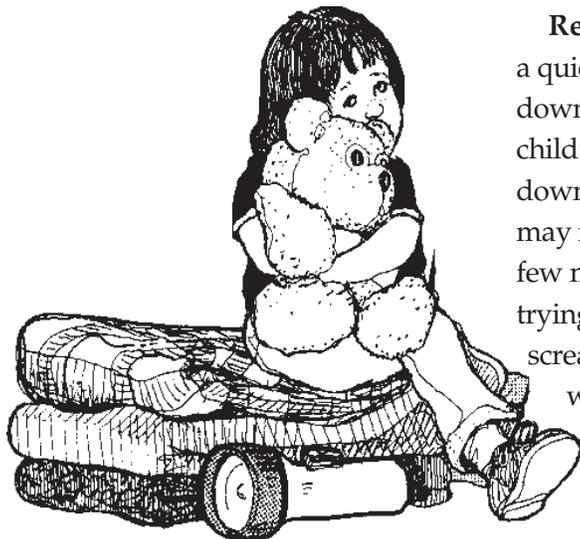
Preschoolers are less likely to throw tantrums. They have developed more coping skills and are able to communicate better. Still, when dinner is late or when



things get frustrating, your preschooler may begin to behave more like a 2-year-old! Some children learn at this age that tantrums can be used to get something they want. If parents give in to demands, tantrums may begin to occur with greater frequency.

School-agers

Older children are typically more tolerant of frustrating situations, but they too get overly tired, hungry, and irritable. Although school-age children have developed stronger problem-solving skills, they are faced with increasingly complex social situations, and need to refine their problem-solving skills. Learning to get along with friends, work as part of a team, or compete in a sport requires skills that many older kids haven't fully developed yet. Kids who have limited problem-solving skills or difficulty expressing themselves with words are more likely to have temper tantrums or fits of anger.



Older children *can* learn to recognize when they are feeling upset or frustrated. Also, they can learn acceptable ways to deal with their anger.

■ How to handle a tantrum

1. Try to remain calm. Shaking, spanking, or screaming at your child tends to make the tantrum worse instead of better. Set a positive example for your child by remaining in control of yourself and your emotions.
2. Pause before you act. Take at least 30 seconds to decide how you will handle the tantrum. Four possible ways to deal with a tantrum include:

Distract—Try to get your child's attention focused on something else. If your child screams when you take away something unsafe (like mommy's purse) offer something else to play with. This technique works well with toddlers.

Remove—Take your child to a quiet, private place to calm down. At home this may be the child's room or a special "cooling down" place. Out in public it may mean sitting outside for a few minutes or in the car. Avoid trying to talk or reason with a screaming child. It doesn't work! Stay nearby until your child calms down. Then you can talk and return to whatever you were doing.

Ignore—Older children will sometimes throw tantrums to get attention. Try ignoring the tantrum and go about your business as usual. If staying in the same room with a screaming child makes you uncomfortable, leave the room. If necessary, turn on the radio and lock yourself in the bathroom for a few minutes.

Hold—Physically restrain children if they are "out of control" (may harm themselves and others). You also might say something like: "I can see you are angry right now and I am going to hold you until you calm down. I won't let you hurt me or anyone else." Often this approach can be comforting to a child. Children don't like to be out of control. It scares them. An adult who is able to take charge of the situation, remain calm and in control, can be very reassuring.

3. Wait until your child calms down before talking about the situation. It's difficult to reason with a screaming child. Insist on a cooling down period and follow-up with a discussion about behavior. Use this opportunity to teach your child acceptable ways to handle anger and difficult situations. With practice, preschoolers and school-agers can learn:
 - How to ask for help,
 - When to go somewhere to cool down,
 - How to try a more successful way of doing something, and

- How to express their feelings and emotions in words (rather than hitting, kicking, or screaming).

4. Comfort and reassure your child. Tantrums scare most kids. They often are not able to understand the reason for their anger and generally feel shaken when it is all over. They need to know that you do not approve of their behavior, but that you still love them.

■ An ounce of prevention

Tantrums are a normal part of growing up. All children will have them sometime. If tantrums seem to be happening often, you might consider the following suggestions.

- Study your child's tantrums. When and where do they occur? Who is generally involved? What happens before, after, and during a tantrum? Often, looking for patterns can give you clues about conditions or situations that bring out the tantrum in your child.
- Set realistic limits and help children stick to a regular routine. Predictable mealtimes and bedtimes are particularly important.

- Offer real choices. Don't say, "Would you like to take your nap?" unless you are prepared to honor your child's choice not to nap. Instead try, "It's nap time now."
- Choose your battles carefully. Say "No" to things that are *really* important. Avoid fighting over little things.
- Give your child a few minutes warning before you end an activity. Saying "We are going to leave the park and go home in a few minutes," or "I wonder what we can cook for supper when we get home," helps your child get ready for change.
- Help children not to "get in over their heads." Children need challenging activities, but not so challenging that they experience overwhelming frustration and failure.

■ Read more about it!

For more information on helping children deal with anger and learn self-control see extension publications:

Getting Along series, PM 1650 - 1653

Understanding Children: Disciplining preschoolers, PM 1529b

Understanding Children: Disciplining your toddler, PM 1529c

Growing into Middle Childhood: 5- to 8-year-olds, PM 1174a (cost)

Growing out of Middle Childhood: 9- to 12-year-olds, PM 1174b (cost)

Balancing Work and Family: Avoiding the morning rush, PM 404a

Balancing Work and Family: Coming home and making the transition, PM 1404f

Ages and Stages: 2-year-olds, PM 1530d



Tantrums—A Plan of Action

When do tantrums occur?

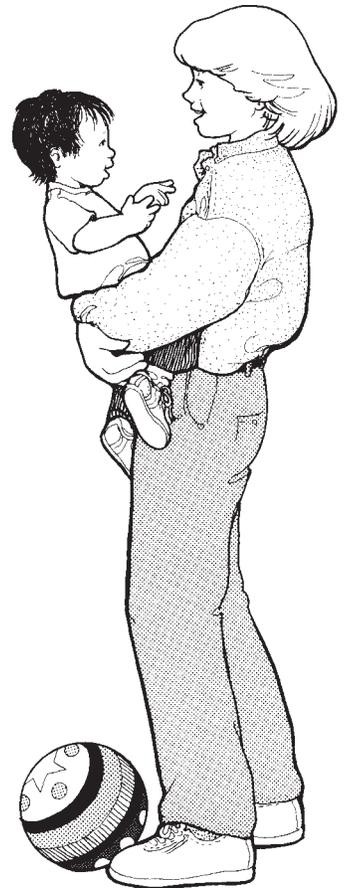
Where do tantrums happen?

Who is generally included?

What happens before, after, and during a tantrum?

Things I can do to prevent a tantrum from occurring.

Ways that I can handle the tantrum when it occurs.



Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

File: Family life 8

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Understanding Children

Biting



You've just discovered that you have a pint-sized biter on your hands.

Isn't it amazing how those tiny teeth that once caused so much excitement and celebration can now cause so much fear and frustration?

Biting, however, is quite common among young children. It happens for different reasons with different children and under different circumstances. Understanding the reason for your child's biting is the first step to changing his or her behavior.

■ Why children bite

Exploration

Infants and toddlers learn by touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting. If an infant is given a toy, one of the first places the infant puts it is in the mouth. Tasting or "mouthing" things is something that all children do. Children this

age do not always understand the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting someone.

Teething

Children generally begin teething about age 4 to 7 months. Swelling gums can be tender and can cause a great deal of discomfort. Infants sometimes find relief from this discomfort by chewing on something. Sometimes the object they chomp on is a real person! Children this age may not understand the difference between chewing on a person or a toy.

Cause and effect

About age 12 months infants become interested in finding out what happens when they do something. When they bang a spoon on the table, they discover that it makes a loud sound. When they drop a toy from their crib, they discover



that it falls. They also may discover that when they bite someone, they get a loud scream of protest!

Attention

Older toddlers may bite to get attention. When children are in situations in which they do not receive enough positive attention and daily interaction, they often find a way to make others sit up and take notice. Being ignored is not fun. Biting

is a quick way to become the center of attention, even if it is negative attention.

Imitation

Older toddlers love to imitate others and find it a great way to learn new things. Sometimes children see others bite and decide to try it themselves. When an adult bites a child back in punishment, it generally does not stop the biting, but rather teaches the child that biting is OK.

Independence

Toddlers are trying hard to be independent. "Mine" and "Me do it" are favorite words. Learning to do things without help, making choices, and needing control over a situation are part of growing up. Biting is a powerful way to control others. If you want a toy or want a playmate to leave you alone or move out of your way, biting helps you get what you want.



Biting—What's really happening?

	1st Incident	2nd Incident	3rd Incident
Where did the biting incident happen?			
Who was involved?			
When did the biting happen?			
What happened before the biting incident?			
What happened after? How was the situation handled?			
Why do you think the biting might be happening? (You may want to review ideas in this publication.)			

What will be your plan of action?

Prevention ideas: _____

Teaching new behavior: _____

Try your action plan for at least a few weeks. Good luck!

Frustration

Young children often experience frustration. Growing up is a real struggle. Drinking from a cup is great, yet nursing or sucking from a bottle is also wonderful. Sometimes it would be nice to remain a baby. Toddlers don't have good control over their bodies yet. A loving pat sometimes turns into a push or a whack. Toddlers also don't talk well yet. They have trouble asking for things or requesting help. They haven't learned how to play with others. When you don't have words to express your feelings, sometimes you show others by hitting, pushing, or biting.

Stress

A child's world can be stressful at times. A lack of daily routine, interesting things to do, or adult interaction are stressful situations for children. Events like death, divorce, or a move to a new home also cause stress for children. Biting is one way to express feelings and relieve tension.

■ What parents can do

What is really happening?

Use the who, what, when, where, and how method to discover what is really happening. When does the biting occur? Who is involved? Where does it happen? What happens before or afterward? How was the situation handled?

Try prevention

If you determine that the biting occurs as the result of exploration or teething, you may want to provide the child with a cloth or teething ring to gnaw on. If your child seems to bite when tired or hungry, you may want to look at your daily routine to be sure that he or she is getting enough sleep and nourishment.

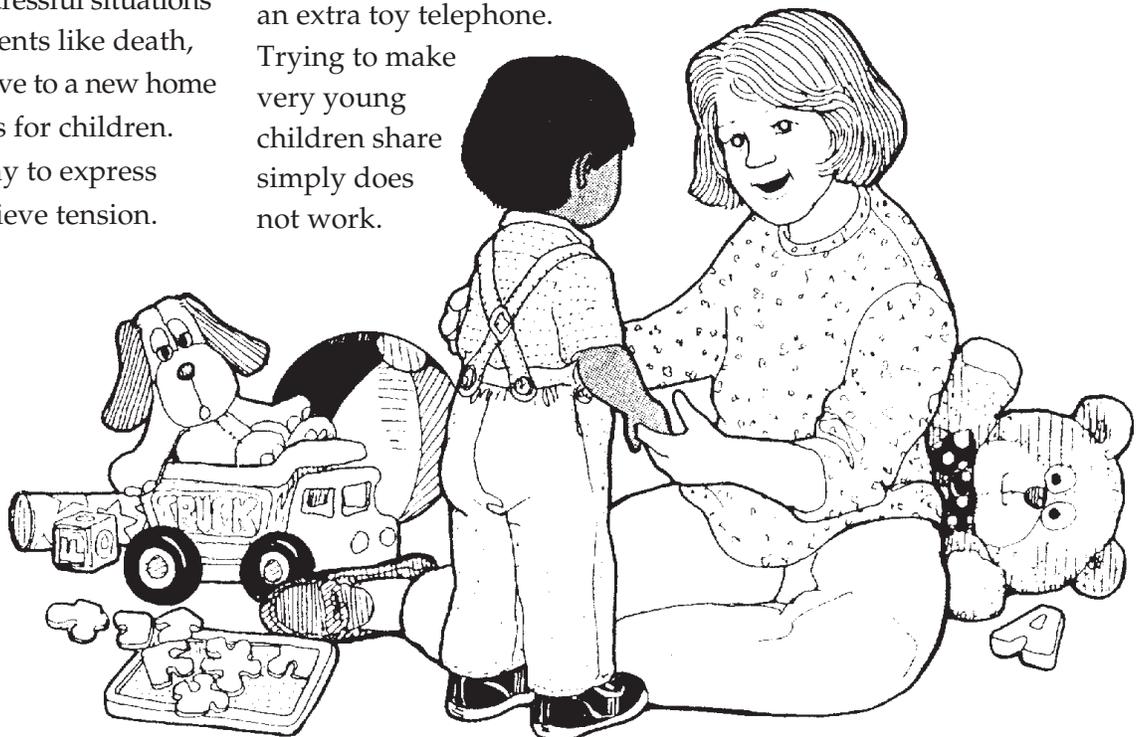
If biting happens when two children fight over a toy telephone, you may want to purchase an extra toy telephone.

Trying to make very young children share simply does not work.

Toddlers don't have the skills or understanding to negotiate or understand another child's point of view.

If attention seems to be the main cause for biting, try to spend time with your child when he or she is doing more positive things. Snuggle up and read a book together or roll a ball back and forth. This is much more fun than giving or receiving a scolding.

If the child is experiencing a stressful situation, make life as supportive and normal as possible. Predictable meals and bedtimes, and extra time with a loving adult can help. Some activities can actually relieve tension. Examples are rolling, squishing, and pounding play



dough, or relaxing and splashing in the bathtub. It takes time and patience, however, for healing to occur in painful situations like divorce or death.

Teach new behavior

When a child bites, use your voice and facial expressions to show that biting is unacceptable. Speak firmly and look directly into the child's eyes. For example, you might say "Sara, it's not OK to bite. It hurts Jon when you bite him. He's crying. If you need to bite, you can bite this (cloth, toy, food, etc.), but I won't let you bite Jon or another child." If the child is able to talk, you also might say, "You can tell Jon with your words that you need him to move instead of biting him. Say 'Move, Jon.'"

You also may want the biter to help wash, bandage, and comfort the victim. Making the biter a part of the comforting process is a good way to teach nurturing behavior.

Whenever the biter is out of control, you will need to restrain or isolate the child until he or she calms down. Insist on a "time out" or "cooling-off period." Wait a few minutes until the child is under control and then talk to the toddler about his or her behavior.

■ A final note

Biting is a difficult and uncomfortable issue to deal with for parents. If your child is the victim, you may feel angry and outraged. If your child is the biter, you may feel embarrassed and frustrated.

Take heart! Most toddlers who bite do so only a short while. Paying close attention to the reasons will help you come up with some useful solutions. Soon your toddler will have learned important new skills for communicating and getting along with others.

■ Read more about it!

For more information about children and families ask for the following publications from your county extension office.

1-2-3 Grow (newsletter series for toddler years), PM 1071a-h (cost)

Understanding Children: Disciplining your toddler, PM 1529c

Child's Play - Art, PM 1770a (cost)

Understanding Children: Language development, PM 1529f

Child's Play - Fingerplays Plus, PM 1770b (cost)

Ages and Stages, PM 1530a-i

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.



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Understanding Children

Toilet training



■ Ready or not?

Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life—a sure sign of growing up. Most children are eager about learning how to use the “potty” and are quite proud of their achievement.

Toilet teaching is easiest when children are physically and emotionally ready, which happens between the ages of 2 and 3 years. Girls usually gain physical control over their bowel and bladder muscles before boys do. On the average, most girls are potty-trained by age 2 ½ and most boys around the age of 3. But don't be alarmed if your child doesn't follow this pattern closely; individual children mature physically at different rates.

The secret to success is patience and timing. Emotional readiness is also important. Many bright, normal, and healthy 3-year-olds may not be

interested in learning to use the toilet. Learning new things is a full-time job for most toddlers and toilet learning may not be as important as learning to climb, jump, run, and talk. A toddler who resists toilet training now may be ready in 3 to 6 months, then often learns almost overnight.

■ How do you tell if your child is ready?

Ask yourself the following questions:

Can my child:

- ___ follow simple directions?
- ___ remain dry at least 2 hours at a time during the day?
- ___ walk to and from the bathroom, pull down pants, pull pants up?

Does my child:

- ___ remain dry during nap time?
- ___ seem uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers?

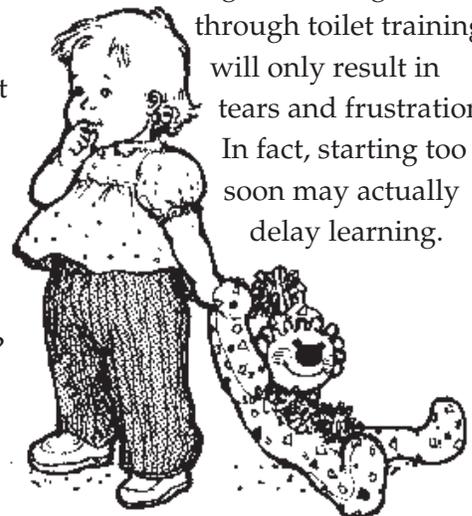
___ show interest in the toilet or potty chair?

___ Are bowel movements regular and predictable? (Some children move their bowels two to three times a day; others may go 2 to 3 days without a bowel movement.)

___ Has your toddler asked to wear grown-up underwear?

If you answered “yes” to most of the questions, you may want to introduce your child to toilet training. If you answered “no” to many questions, wait a while

longer. Rushing a child through toilet training will only result in tears and frustration. In fact, starting too soon may actually delay learning.



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When a child is truly ready, toilet training will seem much easier.

■ Ten steps to toilet learning

Step 1

Relax! A calm, easygoing approach to toilet training seems to work best. Remember that learning to use the toilet takes time and that each child is different. If you find that one of your children learns to use the toilet at age 2 and another learns at age 3 1/2, rest assured that you are not alone.

Step 2

Show children what they are to do in the bathroom. Toddlers love to imitate adults or older children. Next time your toddler follows you into the bathroom, talk about what you do when you

use the toilet. If you are comfortable with the idea, it may be a good idea to let the child watch you use the toilet. Ideally, fathers should set an example for sons and mothers should set an example for daughters. Children also can learn about bathroom practices from older brothers, sisters, or relatives.

Step 3

Teach your toddler the words your family uses for body parts, urine, and bowel movements. Make sure it's a word you feel comfortable with because others are sure to hear it. There is nothing quite like a toddler loudly announcing in the check-out lane of the grocery store that it's time to go "Poo Poo!"

Step 4

Help your child recognize when he or she is urinating or having a bowel movement. Most children will grunt, squat, turn red in the face, or simply stop playing for a moment. Children need to be aware that they are urinating or having a bowel movement before they can do anything about it. For most children, bowel movements are generally easier to recognize.

Step 5

Borrow or purchase a potty chair or a potty attachment for the toilet. If you purchase a potty attachment, be sure to get one with a footrest. This will allow your child to sit more comfortably

and make it easier for the child to "push" during a bowel movement. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that parents avoid urine deflectors because they can cut a child who is climbing on or off a potty chair. You may want to let your child practice sitting on the potty fully clothed just to get used to the idea.

Step 6

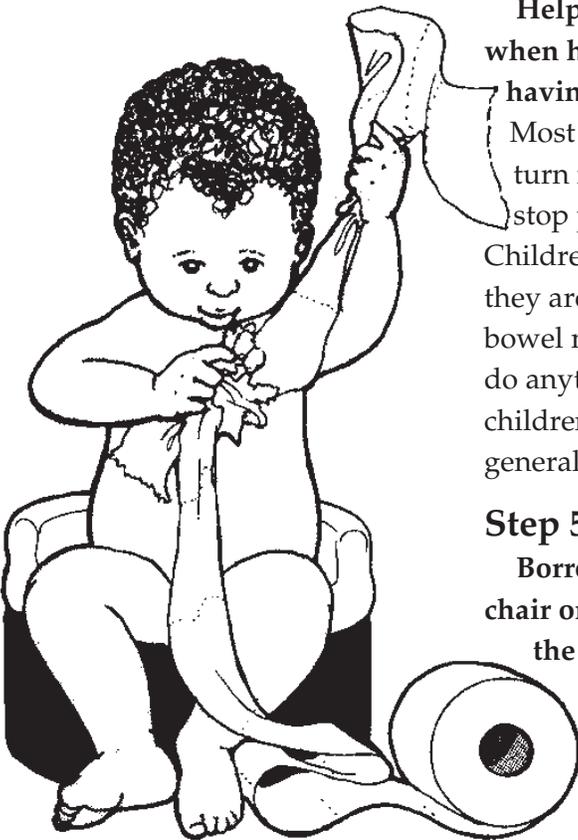
Begin reading potty books to your child. There are many wonderful books about learning to use the potty at your local library or bookstore. Reading a book together helps children understand the general process and that other children also learn to use the potty. Book suggestions are listed later on in this publication.

Step 7

Purchase training pants and easy-to-remove clothing. Just getting to the potty on time is a major task for most children. You can help make the job easier by letting them wear pants that are easy to pull down, and by being around to assist. Avoid snaps, buttons, zippers, and belts. Some parents prefer to use diapers at first and then switch to training pants when their child is urinating in the potty several times a day.

Step 8

When your child tells you that he or she needs to use the potty, help with clothing and sit the child on the potty for a few minutes. Stay with your child. It's a good idea to keep a few books



close by. Reading a book together makes the time go by easier and takes the pressure off for an immediate result.

Step 9

After 4 to 5 minutes, help your child off the potty. Reward with hugs and praise if your child's efforts have been successful. Say that he or she can try again later if the child wasn't successful. Don't be surprised if your child has a bowel movement or urinates right after being taken off the toilet. This is not unusual. Accidents and near misses are generally not an act of stubbornness. It simply takes time to learn this new skill. If accidents seem to be frequent, it may be best to hold off and try toilet training a few months later.

Step 10

Wipe your child carefully.

Wipe girls from front to back to prevent infection. Teach your child to *always* wash hands with soap and water after using the potty.

More ideas

- If possible, plan to devote at least 3 to 4 days to begin toilet training. Maintaining the same routine for 3 to 4 weeks also helps.
- Some parents find it helpful to establish a routine by putting a child on the toilet for 3 to 4 minutes right after he or she gets up in the morning, before naps, after naps, after meals, and before bedtime. Realize however, that your child will not always use the potty.

- If you are anticipating a new baby, moving to a new home, or another major life event, you may want to wait a few months. Toilet training is easiest when both parent and child can give it their full attention.

- Remember that it's OK to keep your child in diapers or disposable training pants for sleeping. Nighttime control generally comes many months after daytime control.

- It may be helpful to use a plastic mattress cover, tablecloth, or shower curtain between the sheet and mattress until children gain nighttime control.

- Treat accidents casually. Avoid punishing, scolding, or shaming. Give your child support by keeping an upbeat, positive attitude.

Cleaning up

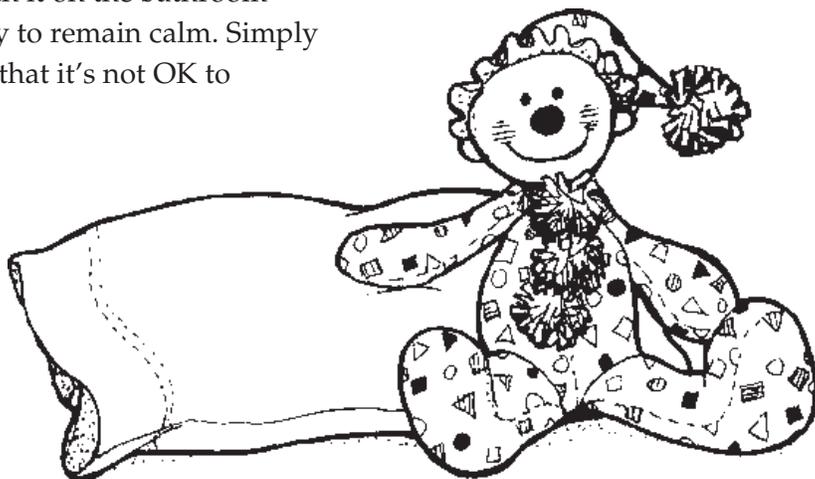
Children often are quite curious about bowel movements. If you find your child trying to remove fecal material from the toilet, or worse yet "finger painting" with it on the bathroom floor, try to remain calm. Simply explain that it's not OK to

play with feces or urine; help your child clean up the mess. Then you both can wash your hands with soap and water. It is generally a good idea to help with clean-up and flushing during much of the toilet training process.

The big flush

Children often have one of two reactions to flushing. Either they are fascinated by it (and would be willing to do it for hours) or they are quite fearful. Children who enjoy flushing will often delight in emptying the potty chair into the toilet, waving bye-bye, and watching everything "flush away."

Children who are fearful prefer that parents take charge of this process. Before flushing the toilet, make sure the child is off the potty attachment. Many children are not only fearful of the noise and swirling water, but also may think that they will be flushed down too. Reassure your child that only body wastes and toilet paper will be flushed away.



■ A note about bedwetting

Bedwetting is common in children under age 7. Remember that learning to control the bladder generally comes after bowel control. Many children who have mastered the toileting process during the day may not be able to stay dry at night for many months. Most children will achieve nighttime dryness by age 5, but one out of four children may continue to wet the bed for several more years.

Bedwetting appears to be related to the size of the bladder, the amount of liquid consumed before bedtime, and how soundly the child sleeps. Bedwetting also is more likely to occur when a child is ill, excited, or when a routine is upset.

For children who tend to wet the bed, it may help to wake them once during the night to use the toilet. An easy time to do this is just before parents go to bed. Persistent bedwetting, particularly after age 7, may be caused by an infection and a physician should be consulted.

File: Family life 8

Written by Lesia Oesterreich, extension family life specialist. Edited by Muktha Jost. Illustrations by Lonna Nachtigal. Graphic design by Valerie Dittmer King.

■ Books for children

No More Diapers, J.G. Brooks—

A popular book with toddlers. Toilet training is illustrated through two stories. The first story is about Johnny and the second is about Susie. The text is simple and drawings are in black, white, and orange.

Your New Potty, Joanna Cole—

This book tells the story of two children, Ben and Steffie, who are learning to use their new potties. Illustrated by colorful photographs. Information for parents is included in the introduction. Uses adult terms for elimination.

Once Upon a Potty, Alona

Frankel—Simple text with cartoon-like illustrations.

Available in both a boy's and girl's version as well as a book and toy package, complete with an anatomically correct doll and toy potty.

All By Myself, Anna Grossnickle

Hines—One of the few books that talks about nighttime dryness. Josie, like most children, has successfully mastered daytime control, but at night still needs help from her mother to get to the bathroom. In time she learns how to manage by herself.

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Going to the Potty, Fred Rogers—

Part of the Mister Rogers Neighborhood First Experience series, this colorful book discusses toilet training. Photographs show children of all sizes, ages, and ethnic groups.

KoKo Bear's New Potty, Vicki

Lansky—A "read together" book with cartoon bear illustrations. A useful companion to Vicki Lansky's *Practical Parenting: Toilet Training*.

■ Books for parents

Parents Book of Toilet Teaching,

Joanna Cole

Practical Parenting: Toilet Training,

Vicki Lansky

Toilet Learning, Alison Mack

■ Read more about it!

For more information about infants and toddlers, ask for these publications at your county extension office.

1-2-3 Grow (newsletter series for toddler years), Pm-1071a-h (cost)

Understanding Children: Disciplining your toddler, Pm-1529c

A Parent's Guide to Children's Weight, NCR-374

Understanding Children: Fears, Pm-1529d

Ages and Stages, Pm-1530

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Children and Sleep

Children have amazing amounts of energy. They can play for hours and don't want to miss out on anything going on around them. In fact, if adults don't intervene, most children will bypass naps and put off bedtime for as long as possible.

However, regular rest and sleep are necessary. Just as food is needed for energy and growth, sleep allows the body to relax and refuel for the next burst of energy. Children who do not learn how to rest and relax at naptime often become overly tired and have trouble going to sleep at night.

Parents/caregivers also need a chance to relax and have some "down time." After a respite during naptime or a well-deserved night's sleep, adults will be better prepared to interact with children.

Sleep Needs

Young children need lots of sleep. They can't get by on a few hours like adults tend to do. It is not realistic to expect children to operate on the same sleep schedule as adults.

Newborn babies will sleep about 16 hours a day at first. But remember each baby requires a different amount of sleep. Parents/caregivers will soon learn what is "normal" for a particular child. Babies don't know the difference between night and day and will sometimes get them mixed up, sleeping more during the day and less at night.

Place healthy babies on their backs when putting them down to sleep. Research indicates this action can reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Do not put babies to sleep on soft surfaces or

with pillows or stuffed toys. These could cover a child's airway.

Babies in the first year still sleep a lot. They need at least two naps a day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, each lasting from one to three hours.

Toddlers between ages two and three may sleep 9 to 13 hours a day. Many toddlers will take one long nap around lunchtime. Or, they may take two shorter naps.

Preschoolers, ages four and five, need at least 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night. Some will take naps but others will resist going to sleep.

Routines

Routines are important for children. Knowing what to expect helps them feel more secure. Routines help children develop self-control, independence, responsibility, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.

Naptime and bedtime routines should be a positive time for both adults and children. A set sleeping routine can help lessen sleeping problems.

An important concept to consider is the difference between putting a child to bed and putting a child to sleep. It is the adult's responsibility to put a child to bed. Then the child has a choice to either rest or sleep. No one can make a child sleep.

There are several things a parent/caregiver can do to establish a calming naptime/bedtime routine. Although each child and family situation is unique, the following ideas may be helpful.

- Give children some transition time. Say, “it’s naptime in 10 minutes” or “after I read you a story, it will be time to go to sleep.” It may help to use a timer or set the alarm on a clock so children will know when time is up.
- Set rules about number of stories, drinks of water, popping out of bed, etc.
- Plan a wind-down or calming activity. Read a story, turn down the lights, play quiet music, or just talk. TV, movies, roughhousing, or active games are not good choices prior to naptime or bedtime.
- Allow children to have some security – favorite stuffed animals, blankie, night light, the door open, flashlight by the bed.
- Talk about fears and anxieties. Do a “monster check” if that seems to be a concern.
- Avoid activities that compete with resting or going to sleep. Have adults and older children observe similar quiet time. This will encourage the little ones to go to sleep. Remember, they don’t want to miss out on anything exciting.
- Decide on a regular bedtime that is approximately 10 to 12 hours before the child needs to get up. If a child is getting up too early, he may be going to bed too soon. On the other hand, if a child is grumpy or drowsy, he may not be getting to bed early enough.
- Adjust daytime naps to support the bedtime schedule. Remember naptime is a time for rest and relaxing. Children may or may not actually sleep during naptime.

As children grow and develop, their sleep patterns and needs will probably change. Other situations also can cause a disruption. These include a new bed; a new room or sleeping arrangement; moving to a new home; disruption in family relationships (new baby, divorce, death, marriage); absence of a family member or pet; or a change in daytime schedule.

Common Problems

Children often wake and call for a parent/caregiver while sleeping. When this happens, give the child some time to go back to sleep. If crying or calling persists, check on the child. Reassure the child that everything is all right and then leave. Sleeping with the child, giving treats, taking the child to parents’ bed, etc. will only reward the child and start habits that will be difficult to break.

Night terrors and nightmares are a fairly common occurrence in children. Children having night terrors will wake up suddenly soon after falling asleep. Children may scream, sit up in bed, breathe quickly, be glassy eyed, and also be confused. This can last up to 30 minutes. Children will fall back to sleep quickly and will wake in the morning not remembering anything.

Children having nightmares can remember the scary details and have trouble going back to sleep. Nightmares usually happen in the early morning hours. Nightmares are often the result of events, situations, or images that trouble a child. Children will have nightmares more often when anxious or under stress.

Parents/caregivers should remain calm when children have night terrors or nightmares. Hold the child and talk in a soothing voice. Stay with the child until he/she falls asleep because he/she needs to feel safe and secure.

***Learning how to rest and relax is a valuable skill.
Balancing active and quiet times helps people stay well both physically and emotionally.***

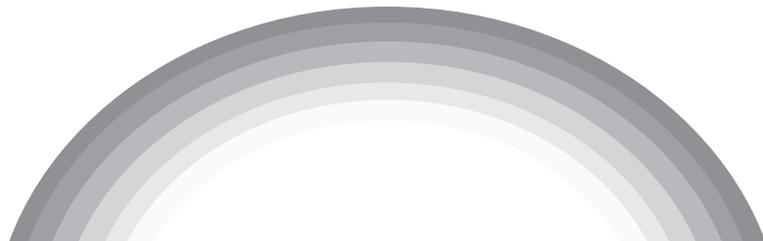
Prepared by Donna K. Donald, Field Specialist/Family Life, Iowa State University Extension.

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Disaster Recovery



Childhood stress—what parents can do

All families experience stress or crisis at some time or another. Natural disasters, death, divorce, illness, and financial hardships sometimes are especially difficult to deal with when you have young children. The following suggestions may help.

Spend time each day with your child

You have a tremendous influence on the growth and development of your child. Even if everything else is falling apart around you, find time to spend at least a few minutes each day with your child. A few loving words, a hug, and a kiss can work wonders.

Be consistent in what you ask your child to do

Children have little control over life. They need to know that you are predictable and that they can depend on you. Children can settle down after a crisis more easily if you establish some daily routines as quickly as possible. Even though the routine is not the same as before, it's good to find a regular time for meals and bedtime.

Get to know your child's teacher or caregiver

Share information about the family and daily routines with your child's teacher or caregiver. Let this person know what difficulties and problems your child is facing. This will help a teacher or caregiver know how to help your child in daily tasks and in learning new skills and behaviors.

Ease the transition from home to school

Children will feel more comfortable and secure at care centers and schools if small reminders of their child care or school life are placed in the home. Perhaps you can hang some pictures your child drew at school. You might take some snapshots of your child's classmates and teachers and display them at home. Ask your child's teacher if he or she could bring a favorite toy or familiar object from home to school.

Take care of yourself

Stressful times can bring major changes in life. Just when you most need to relax, you feel so many demands that you think you can't take the time. You may be so used to physical work and mental tension that you are unable to sleep. The key to successful relaxation is that it be enjoyable and easy. You also must feel that it's OK to relax. It is! In order for you to perform well under pressure, your mind and body must have time for renewal. Take 20 minutes a day for a restful activity—you might walk, lose yourself in a book, draw mental pictures, or just sit comfortably in uninterrupted quiet. When you feel fatigued, give in to the need to sleep. Even though you think you can't stop in the middle of work—you should stop. Forcing yourself to continue when the body needs to sleep can lead to insomnia.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

Someone else may need your help later on. You'll be in a better position to offer help to them if you can reach out for help now. Most communities have resources to provide your family with food, clothing, shelter, counseling, job referral, and training. Friends and relatives can be a big support, if you let them know what you need. Children begin to relax and feel secure when they sense an easing of tension in their parents.

Prepared by extension specialists at Iowa State University.

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Resources & References

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Appendix