



**TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*... A Parent Newsletter for  
Toddlers, Preschoolers and beyond!  
2007 Issue Two**

**TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*...** a learn-at-home parent newsletter created by Penn State Cooperative Extension welcomes you. This newsletter is designed to assist parents, grandparents, caregivers and all adults who care about and for children in all their interactions with children. We will continue to make these issues available on-line as well as in hard copy format.

We hope you will find helpful tips and techniques to improve your family's time together while providing you with information that will enrich your children's learning process. **Contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension office in your county for information on other educational programs of interest to you and your family.**

Ellen Meanix Helfrick, Editor

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**Shake, Rattle and Sing**

Cynthia Pollich, MEd  
Lancaster County

Research shows that music and movement have a positive impact on development for young children. The right hemisphere of the brain (sensing and feeling side) functions through activities such as music, art and creativity. The left hemisphere organizes sequential and logical skills like language and speech. **Both sides of the brain must be developed during the critical learning periods in early childhood.**

Singing songs to children and with them will teach them about beat, tones, and lyrics; vital in developing auditory discrimination. The use of instruments will promote fine motor development and encourage creative development. Creative movement (singing and dancing) helps children learn balance, coordination, and rhythm plus develops self-esteem and body awareness. **Music helps children learn to count, the alphabet, days of the week, their address and phone number.**

Creative movement is a joyful way for children to explore movement through music, develop physical skills, channel energy, stimulate imagination and promote creativity. Creative movement uses body actions to: communicate an image (the wind), communicate an idea (a journey) or communicate a feeling (strength). **Creative movement provides all children, regardless of age, gender, or developmental stage, with noncompetitive, success-oriented and creative experiences.**

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## Shake, Rattle and Sing (Continued)

Music and movement not only touches our souls, it also shapes growing minds. When children sing or play music they become better readers, thinkers and learners.

### Books

**Ah, Music!** Aliki.  
**Aïda** L. Price.  
**Animal Orchestra** I. Orleans.  
**Carnival of the Animals: Classical Music for Kids** (with CD) C. Saint-Saens, with B.C. Turner  
**Charlie Parker Played Be Bop** C. Raschka  
**Hip Cat** J. London.  
**The Jazz Fly** (with CD) M. Gollub  
**John Coltrane's Giant Steps** C. Raschka  
**M Is for Music** K. Krull  
**Max Found Two Sticks** B. Pinkney  
**Meet the Orchestra** A. Hayes.  
**Music, Music for Everyone** B.B. Williams  
**Musical Instruments from A to Z**  
B. Kalman  
**My Family Plays Music** J. Cox.  
**Perfect Harmony: A Musical Journey with the Boys Choir of Harlem** C.R. Smith Jr.  
**Shake, Rattle, and Roll: The Founders of Rock and Roll** H. George-Warren.  
**The Story of the Incredible Orchestra: An Introduction to Musical Instruments and the Symphony Orchestra** B. Koscielniak.  
**A Tisket, A Tasket** E. Fitzgerald.  
**What Instrument Is This?** R. Hausherr.  
**When Marian Sang: True Recital of Marian Anderson** P.M. Ryan.  
**Woody Guthrie: Poet of the People**  
B. Christensen  
**Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin** L. Moss.

## On-line Resources

Sing-Along Songs (Midis and Lyrics)  
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/>  
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/music.htm>

### Preschool Home Activities for Parents and Young Children

Fun activities that parents and young children can easily do. Sing a few familiar songs together with your child as you march.  
[www.preschoolrainbow.org](http://www.preschoolrainbow.org)

### Sharon MacDonald on Using Songs in the Classroom

Even "just for fun" songs can be educational! Songs help young children learn information quickly and accurately.  
<http://www.songsforteaching.com>

### Sensory Play

Rendy L. Knepper, Better Kid Care  
Coordinator, Dauphin County



Playing 'alphabet hide and go seek' will reinforce letter recognition and build vocabulary. Print each letter in both upper and lower case on its own piece of colored paper. Decorate a shoe box. Choose one letter per week to go in the box. Along with the letter, place an item that starts with that letter in the box. Change the item each day until the last day when all six items appear in the box. Have your child check the box each morning, then recite the letter and learn the name of the item. For older children, try touching the item and guessing what it is before looking.



## **Dealing with Public Misbehavior** (part 2)

Karen Bracey, Extension Educator  
Wyoming County

In Issue One, we addressed how to prevent your child from having tantrums in public. However, even if you've done everything you can to prevent tantrums, they still happen. **Your first priority is to deal with your child.** Don't let other people or these situations fluster you; simply deal with your child's behavior calmly and effectively.

If you see your child starting to lose control....**Stay calm!** Do not overreact or yell. Keep your voice soft and calm as you try to determine what your child views as the problem. **Calm parents have a greater chance of preventing a tantrum.** If your child loses control, remember these rules.

**Rule #1: Never, ever give in to a child's tantrum.** We all know this, but sometimes, in public, we just want the scene to end. If you give in, you are setting yourself up for more tantrums in the future, which will be harder and harder to break. A tantrum endangering your child's safety would be the only reason to break this rule.

**Rule #2: Reward, don't bribe.** This can be confusing for parents, but there is a big difference between the two. **A reward is a positive reinforcement for a positive behavior.** *"You were so good on this shopping trip that I'm going to let you have a quarter for the machine."* **A bribe is a positive reinforcement for a negative behavior.** *"If you stop screaming, I'll give you a quarter for the machine."*

**A reward will increase the likelihood of a behavior happening again, so you want to reward good behavior.** Remember the saying: "If you feed it; it will grow".

Be careful of what behaviors you "feed".

**Rule # 3: Remove your child from the situation calmly and quickly.** If nothing else is working, take your child to a more private area. This may mean that you leave a cart of groceries in the store or your dinner on the table. When in a private area, tell your child that you will talk to him when he is quiet. Make sure he is not hurting anyone or anything and then do your best to ignore him. When the tantrum is finished, take a deep breath, get down to his level, and ask him if he is OK and ready to go back. Once your child gains control, praise him for his good behavior and for regaining composure.

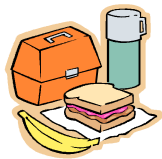
### **Rule # 4: Remember:**

- ✓ to always maintain your sense of humor and your dignity.
- ✓ most people watching have been in this situation themselves.
- ✓ your role as a parent comes first; dinner, shopping trip, or errands come second.
- ✓ that this is an opportunity to teach your child patience and self-control.
- ✓ how cute your child looks tucked into bed, sleeping soundly.
- ✓ that this will be a funny story to tell your grandchildren someday.
- ✓ that this happens to the best of kids and the best of parents.
- ✓ **that you are a good parent, you love your child, and you trust your judgment.**

## Managing Food Allergies

Janice M. Ronan, Extension Educator  
Erie County

Food Allergies are on the rise - learn the difference between food intolerance and a true food allergy. **Food intolerance does not involve the immune system and is usually less severe, more short-lived and more localized.** Common food intolerances are lactose intolerance (when the body lacks enough of a particular enzyme needed to digest milk sugars) and sensitivity to strawberries. Food intolerance reactions, such as gas and bloating, can be similar to symptoms of a food allergy. **A food allergy involves the immune system.** Food allergy symptoms can worsen after each exposure yet they may be outgrown. Eight foods cause 90% of food allergy reactions. **The Big 8 are cow's milk, soy, wheat, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish (bass, flounder, and cod) and crustaceans (shrimp, lobster, and crab).** Allergic reactions can range from minor (skin reactions, runny nose, gastrointestinal problems) to severe (asthma, anaphylactic shock, even death).



### Off to School with Allergies

Plan ahead to prevent food allergy reactions when children are “on their own” at day care and school. You should:

- Teach your child what foods cause a reaction and to avoid them.
- Role-play how to say NO to foods.
- Schedule a meeting with your child’s teachers, nurse, cafeteria personnel and office staff. Bring written instructions from your child’s doctor.

- Keep team members informed of any changes.
- Be sure the school team knows how and when to administer medications.
- Tell your child where medications are kept at school.
- Highlight allergy information in bright ink on all forms sent to school.
- Review plans for activities that may involve food with the teacher so that your child can safely participate.
- Keep a supply of appropriate snacks at school. Check the supply often.

### Reading Labels

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA) has improved labeling for both domestic and imported food products labeled on or after January 1, 2006. Food processors have two options to identify major allergens.

Option 1 is to name the food source in plain English following the usual name in the list of ingredients.

Ingredients: Enriched flour (**wheat** flour, niacin, folic acid), sugar, whey (**milk**). . . . .

Option 2 uses the word “Contains” followed by the food source from which the allergen is derived. This must appear immediately after or adjacent to the ingredient list, in a type size that is not smaller.

Contains **wheat, milk, eggs, and soy.**

An excellent source of information for food allergies is the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN). They can be reached at 800-929-4040 or at [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org).



### **Book Review**

Ellen Meanix Helfrick, Youth Services  
York County Library System

Most public Libraries have a Parent/Teacher section. Toddler Topics Plus... 2007 issues feature a book review designed to send you in search of a great resource that will help make learning fun for the whole family.

### **The Secret Lives of Toddlers**

**A Parent's Guide to the Wonderful, Terrible, Fascinating Behavior of Children Ages 1 to 3 by Jana Murphy, 2004, A Perigee Book**

I think this book will be of great value because each of its 5 parts: The Way We Play, Mealtime Mayhem, So Little Sleep, This Little Body of Mine and In The Mood are set up in chapters that answer the questions that every parent wonders about.

Murphy, with insight from about thirty 'experts' makes you feel like you are sitting down with a wise old 'been there - learned it all' parent. The secrets are passed along by a parent in a relaxed manner without any judgments. After each chapter answers a question, Murphy shares practical tips in the "Now that you know" section.

Check out this book to find out the answers to these questions and more:

- Why do toddlers love to dress up?
- Why do toddlers spit out food?
- Why do toddlers bang their heads?
- Why do toddlers bite?
- Why do toddlers say "No, no, no"?

### **Toilet Training**

Cathy Guffey, Extension Educator  
Bradford County

Young children can and do learn to use the toilet when they are ready. As a parent or caregiver, you can help by being patient and understanding. If you have a positive outlook and do not push the child before he is ready, you will be more successful. Remember, that no two children are the same, even if they are from the same family. **Children are ready to start toilet training at varying ages.** Watch for these readiness indicators:

- Can the child pick up small objects between the thumb and forefinger? This shows the necessary development of nerves and muscle control.

- Can the child walk steadily without assistance? This shows that the child can "voluntarily" control the large muscles necessary for controlling bowel movements.



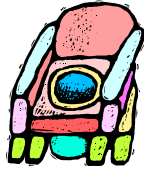
- Does the child understand what you want her to do? Be consistent with the words you use to talk about bowel/bladder control. Make sure the 'training team' use these same words so the child is not confused.

- Does the child want to learn to use the potty/toilet? Let the child see others using the toilet. Imitation is one way young children learn.

Once you decide the child is ready, decide what type of training potty to use. A potty  
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## Toilet Training (Continued)

chair on the floor will encourage independence. You might want to let the child practice sitting on the potty with clothes on to get used to it. As the child gets comfortable with the potty, he can practice without the diaper.



A seat that fits on the top of the regular toilet seat is convenient since you don't have to clean up after each use. Your child may require your help, at least for a time, when using this type of potty seat. This seat may be more comfortable than the adult seat.

Do not insist that the child sit on the toilet until a bowel movement or urination is done. A practical time length ranges from one to five minutes. Positive, fun 'potty songs' can make the toilet training experience more like other aspects of the normal day while they help measure the amount of time sitting. Make up a tune with your child - singing and silliness eliminates pressure to perform.

A child toilet trained in a relaxed manner will seldom backslide. Still, accidents will happen. **Patience and encouragement are two important aspects of parenting, especially during toilet training.**

## Raising a Reader

Office of Commonwealth Libraries.  
Pennsylvania Department of Education.

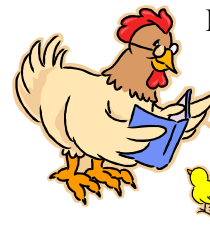
In this issue, we will finish the list of tips from the bookmark publication: **Easy Things You Can Do At Home to Raise Readers...**

Visit your local library on a regular basis and borrow a wide range of books and audio materials. Take part in activities the library provides for young children.

Use words to describe aloud what you are doing or what you see around your house and community.

Learning depends on repetition. It is good when children ask for favorites to be read again and again.

Encourage your child to "read" picture books to you.



Be a good role model by reading for enjoyment and information yourself.

When reading aloud, use lots of expression, different voices and sound effects when appropriate.

Read books that play with language such as poetry, tongue twisters, rhymes and riddles.

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