

Toddler Topics 2005

A series to help you parent your toddler

ISSUE FIVE

Welcome to the **2005 Toddler Topics**, a newsletter for parents of young children. Toddler Topics is created by Penn State Cooperative Extension Family Living Educators and colleagues.

Once again, we are offering Toddler Topics as an electronic newsletter. Camera ready copies are available for individuals who make the request. You may use portions of this newsletter in your own publications as long as the material is not changed and credit is given to the author.

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Contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension Office in your county for additional educational programs of interest to you and your family.

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PARENTING PRINCIPLES

Jeannine Ruth Richlin, Extension Educator
Sullivan County

Below are the final two highlighted principles from the must-read book for all parents: The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting by Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D. Dr. Steinberg condenses the essentials of good parenting into ten basic principles, which apply no matter what the age of your child.

Principle 9: Explain Your Rules and Decisions. Good parents have expectations that they want their child to live up to. But in order for your child to do this, your expectations have to be clear, and they have to be appropriate. Dr. Steinberg explores when and how to reason with your child, how to evolve beyond ‘because I said so’, how to hear your child’s point of view, and how to admit your mistakes.

Principle 10: Treat Your Child with Respect. Many parents worry too much about whether their child respects them and they don’t think enough about whether they treat their child with respect. Dr. Steinberg discusses giving and getting respect, having two-way conversations, eliminating ‘don’t talk back’ from your parenting vocabulary, letting your child act his age, and understanding that children treat others the way their parents treat them.

(A list of all 10 principles is on next page.)

PARENTING PRINCIPLES

Below is the list of the ten items that we have highlighted during these five issues of the 2005 TODDLER TOPICS from the book: The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting by Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D. We're suggesting you read the book. This list will remind you of what you have read. If you have not yet read the book, simply reminding yourself of these principles may keep you centered until you get a chance to experience all of Dr. Steinberg's wisdom.

Principle 1: What You Do Matters.

Principle 2: You Cannot Be Too Loving.

Principle 3: Be Involved in Your Child's Life.

Principle 4: Adapt Your Parenting to Fit Your Child.

Principle 5: Establish Rules and Set Limits.

Principle 6: Help Foster Your Child's Independence.

Principle 7: Be Consistent.

Principle 8: Avoid Harsh Discipline.

Principle 9: Explain Your Rules and Decisions.

Principle 10: Treat Your Child with Respect.

ALLOWANCES: A GREAT LEARNING TOOL?

Jane A. Landis, CED, Family Living and Consumer Science Educator
Dauphin County



You may be asking, "Why even give children an allowance?" Here are some ideas that may help you decide if an allowance is appropriate:

1. It is predictable. When a child has predictable income, he/she can learn how to plan for the future even if it is only two weeks away.

2. It helps them learn to prioritize. A known and limited amount will help them decide what is most important - the gumball candy right now or that fire truck or doll they really want.



3. It lays the foundation for a work ethic – children will soon learn if they really want a special something that they have to work for it and perhaps that may mean doing something extra.

Deciding if a child should have an allowance is a big decision. There are always the questions of when to start and what amount. There are no real concrete answers to those questions, as each family situation will differ.

Naturally, most parents don't buy into the idea of handing out money for no reason; therefore, many households use the allowance as a method to reward "extra" efforts. Try this for a place to start: Children may be expected to clean up their rooms and pick up their toys for no money, but will receive an allowance if they help out with other small chores like setting the table, caring for the family pet, etc...

Allowances can be a good teaching tool if carefully thought through. It is important that parents talk about allowances.

Including:

- 1) why an allowance is given,
- 2) how the money is to be earned,
- 3) the rules on using the allowance,
- 4) why the allowance may be withheld.

Talking about money and its management at an early age sets the foundation for future lessons.

ALL TANTRUMS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL

Denise H. Continenza, Extension Educator
Family Living, Lehigh County

They cry, they kick, they scream. They turn colors ranging from bright pink to eggplant purple. Toddlers and their tantrums! For parents, tantrums can be embarrassing, scary, and frustrating. Parents wonder, “What do I do when this happens?” To answer this, it is helpful for parents to know what is at the root of the child’s meltdown.

Tantrums seem to fit into two categories: behavioral or temperamental. **Behavioral tantrums** usually happen when a child is upset about not getting something he wants. As a parent, once you have stated your limit, it is important not to feed into the tantrum by rationalizing or giving in. As long as the child is in a safe place and not disrupting anything such as a movie or religious service, it is okay to let him carry on.

Temperamental tantrums occur when a child is over-stimulated and simply “cannot take it” anymore. What may seem like a simple event turns into a major ordeal for the child. In this case, the child is asking for help in getting herself under control. Calmly taking the child to a quieter room, holding her, talking softly, but letting him know that screaming is not okay, are ways that parents can deal with a tantrum of this sort.



The best way for parents to know which is which is by observing the child. Ask:

- What happens just before the tantrum occurs?
- What is going on in the environment?
- Is there a pattern to the tantrums?

- Is there something we can do differently to prevent her from having tantrums?

Observation of children is key for parents. Once you know what causes your child to reach the melting point, you can be more prepared to respond appropriately and even prevent tantrums from happening!

‘TIS BETTER TO GIVE

By Tiffany Pezzana, AmeriCorps
Indiana County

The idea of giving to strangers is a difficult topic for young children to understand. However, if they can see the immediate reactions of those they are helping, the children will be able to see what a good thing they are doing. Children are able to read people’s emotions and they change their attitude by copying others. If they can see how happy their contribution has made one person, they will become more interested in doing this act more often.

Teaching children to give can be adjusted for their age level. The younger the child, the more immediate and visible the impact of their actions need to be; and for older children, the impact can be unseen and larger-scale, as long as they understand the purpose for the actions.



Helping younger children understand about giving can be done by:

- Having them gather food, clothes or toys for those in need;
- Volunteering with them at an animal shelter;
- Having them help maintain a park where they play.

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'TIS BETTER TO GIVE

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Older children or families can gain an understanding by:

- Volunteering at a hospital or nursing home;
- Participating in a walkathon or similar group activity;
- By organizing a fundraiser for a worthwhile cause.

Children learn from others, so be conscious of your actions. If you are giving or your time or possessions - tell your child why you are doing this, how it makes you feel, and how the person you are helping will feel. Involve the child in this act of giving, let them determine how it makes them feel and chances are they will be asking to try it again!



References:

Giving New Hampshire -

<http://www.givingnh.org/care/children.html>

National Association for Female Executives

- <http://nafe.com/enews35A.shtml>

CLEAN-UP GAMES

Ellen Meanix Helfrick

Better Kid Care Coordinator, York County

No doubt, clean-up time is not a favorite for either toddler or adult. Rather than fixate on why clean-up time is a struggle, change the way you approach it and make it quick and fun for all!



First think about what children can learn from cleaning up their toys: songs, colors, cooperation, sizes, shapes, problem solving, responsibility, team work, positive self-esteem, creativity, following directions and more!

Next, adapt a few guidelines for clean-up time. Make it fun, warn them when it's coming, keep it simple and age appropriate, solicit input, be enthusiastic, participate, and challenge them.

Popular clean-up games include:

Prop pickup: This game uses almost any item available to facilitate the picking up of toys scattered about the room. Try using trucks and cars to haul blocks, lids from the bins to carry and dump play food, sand shovels of assorted sizes to carry legos, big shirts or aprons to load stuffed animals for transport.

Categories: This game works by sorting the toys by whichever category you choose. The varieties are almost endless and you can alter the game each time you clean up - soon your toddler will want to select the order of clean up. This is a great way to teach sorting. Clean by shapes, colors, sizes, function, location, numbers, etc.

Beat the Clock: This game uses the concept of competition in a variety of ways, the cleaners versus the kitchen timer, you and your child race to be first to pick up a certain area, see if your child can complete a task before you sing the ABC song. Set the pace and expectations to allow for plenty of wins or this game will not motivate.

Songs can add fun and get you and your child in the cleaning mood, try one of these:

"Up and In the Bin"

(tune: *Farmer in the Dell*)

Up and in the bin,
Up and in the bin,
Up and in and up and in
And up and in the bin!

Variations:

Up and on the shelf...
Put the books away...
Joey pick it up...

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CLEAN-UP GAMES

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“Hurry, Hurry Clean the Playroom”

(tune: Barney’s fire truck song)

Hurry, hurry clean the playroom,
Hurry, hurry clean the playroom,
Hurry, hurry clean the playroom,
Clean, clean, clean, clean, clean!

Variations:

Hurry, hurry, pick up blocks
Mary, Mary, clean the playroom
Slowly, slowly, clean the playroom
Hopping, hopping clean the playroom

“Old Mac Donald”

(tune: Old Mac Donald had a farm)

Old Mac Donald had a mess,
E-I-E-I-O
And in his mess he had some blocks,
E-I-E-I-O
With a block, block here
And a block, block, there
Here a block, there a block,
Everywhere a block, block
Old Mac Donald had a mess,
E-I-E-I-O

Variations:

Substitute in other toys, letting your child select the toys, and use names like “Old Mac Ellen had a mess, E-I-E-I-O”

NIGHTY-NIGHT!

Denise H. Continenza, Extension Educator
Family Living, Lehigh County

Here’s one to ponder . . . Do I really want my baby to sleep through the night -- or don’t I?

It sounds like a silly question, but although most parents would agree that they really would like their sleep to not be interrupted, sometimes they actually enjoy this middle of the night interlude with their baby. As a

result, they communicate this to the child who then finds it comforting to beckon Mom or Dad out of their sleep.

Some parents relish this stage of life, the nurturing stage, and perhaps even unconsciously, reinforce the erratic sleep pattern. Especially for employed parents, this could be the golden opportunity to hug and cuddle. By taking the crying baby from the crib right away, the child is learning about cause and effect -- a very powerful concept!

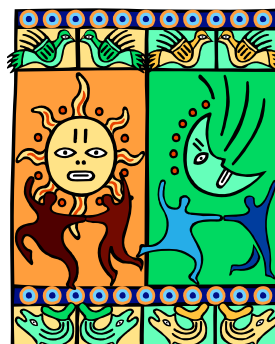
Other parents can’t seem to relax if their child is sound asleep.

They worry that a child who sleeps for any length of time could be in trouble. As a result, it is almost reassuring that the child is okay if she is waking up frequently!



Some parents are simply too exhausted to try to learn any new strategies for helping to solve their child’s sleep problem. It takes time and energy to learn new ways of doing things, and it takes motivation to change in order to make that commitment.

At some point, all children do sleep through the night. Some are just born with easy-going temperaments and regular body rhythms. Others require a lot of work on their parents’ part to get them into a sleep pattern. But before parents decide to try different ways to get their child to sleep, they must become aware of their feelings and attitudes toward their child’s sleep needs, as well as their own.



JUICE ABUSE?

Marcia Weber, Family Living Educator, York County

Ok, your youngster is thirsty, so instead of Pepsi or Coke, you reach for the bottle of 100% Apple juice, fill the sippy cup and off you go. Good choice, right? Let's see...

According to the American Association of Pediatrics toddlers should be getting two 8 ounce servings of milk per day, no more than 6 ounces of 100% fruit juice and the remainder of liquids they are offered should be water.

It has been determined that large amounts of juice and sweetened beverages are linked to the rising incidence of childhood obesity which is now considered a national epidemic in the United States. So how does a parent decide? The old rule of thumb was that 100% juice is better than juice drink, but look at the following list.

Here is how much sugar (natural and added) contained in one serving (8 oz) of the drinks some of us give to our kids. Notice that 100% grape juice (both white and purple is high in natural sugar – probably why it tastes so good!)

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Juicy Juice (100% juice) | 6 ½ teaspoons sugar /serving |
| Apple Juice (100% juice) | 7 teaspoons sugar /serving |
| Strawberry-Kiwi (juice beverage) | 7 teaspoons sugar /serving |
| Grape Drink (juice drink) | 8 ½ teaspoons sugar / serving |
| White Grape Juice (100% juice) | 10 teaspoons sugar /serving |
| Purple Grape Juice (100% juice) | 10 ½ teaspoons sugar /serving |



What to do? One suggestion is to dilute their juice with water. Begin by adding just a little bit of water to your child's cup. Then gradually add more water until you have more water than juice. Soon your child will be happy with just a little juice and more and more water. Don't forget to set a good example and drink plenty of water yourself. Fresh fruit is always a good substitute for juice plus it has the added benefit of fiber and additional nutrients that are lost in the juice processing.

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