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Building Strong Families: Helping Kids Behave, Training Manual

MSU Extension

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Economics

1992

32 pages

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Building Strong Families!

PARENTING YOUNG CHILDREN



Helping Kids Behave *Training Manual*

*Developed and produced by
Extension Home Economics
Cooperative Extension Service
Michigan State University*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This training manual was developed
by Extension Home Economics at
Michigan State University
Cooperative Extension Service to
accompany the
**Building Strong Families:
Parenting Young Children,
Helping Kids Behave**
educational flipchart

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NOTES

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Gail L. Imig, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

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**Building Strong Families
Parenting Young Children
"Helping Kids Behave"**

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HELPING KIDS BEHAVE

TRAINING MANUAL

Introduction

Discipline means to teach, to train and to guide, not to punish. Parents have the responsibility of guiding and directing their children so that they can gain inner or self-control and learn to be self-disciplined. Parents' major goal is to teach children to learn to live without them when they become adults. This process begins at birth. Parents can learn the skills they need to help their children learn self-control and self-acceptance, set standards for themselves and develop healthy, functioning consciences.

Negative ways to make children obey or behave include force, fear and punishment.

Force works because the adult is bigger and stronger than the child. However, it tends to make the child angry, resentful, fearful and dependent on force, and it does not lead to inner control.

Fear may work for very young children because they are so trusting. They are afraid not to obey and will work hard not to displease their parent. Fear can immobilize the child and encourage bizarre behavior. It does not help the child know what it is that the adult wants done.

Punishment can destroy trust and respect between the parent and child. It blocks communication and lowers the child's self-esteem. It also leads to hostility, anger and physically aggressive behavior by the child.

All three of these methods imply that the parent is superior and should overpower the child. They are aimed at "breaking the spirit" of the child. They attempt to dominate and control to make the child compliant and submissive. These methods may have quick results and encourage instant obedience in the young child, but they become less effective as the child gets older. As the child matures, he loses respect for the parent and will avoid him or her.

A better way to discipline is to provide a nurturing environment for the child in which he or she is treated with respect. The parents "tune into" the

child's distress and quickly comfort him or her. Children are more likely to obey if they have a positive, loving relationship with their parents. Treating a child with respect creates a loving bond between parent and child and causes each to identify emotionally with the other.

According to Diana Baumrind (1977), parents who discipline their children in an **authoritative** manner are more likely to promote positive social behavior in their children. Techniques used by authoritative parents include applying firm direction for a child's overall activities but allowing considerable freedom within reasonable limits. Parental control is not rigid, punitive, intrusive or unnecessarily restrictive. Reasons are given for policies and rules. Parents engage in a verbal give-and-take with the child while responding to the child's wishes and needs. Children of authoritative parents tend to be self-reliant, self-controlled, explorative and contented. They tend to collaborate with others to achieve goals, are more likely to share and are sympathetic when other children need help.

Authoritarian parents use withdrawal of love, use forceful discipline, stress obedience, discourage give-and-take and are punitive. They tend to have children who are less likely to act helpfully, generously or sympathetically. These children are often discontented, withdrawn and distrustful. They may be obedient but seldom take the initiative to do something unless it is dictated.

Children of **permissive** parents are the least likely to be self-reliant, explorative and self-controlled. They are more self-indulgent. Permissive parents provide a non-punitive, accepting and affirmative environment in which the children control and regulate their own behavior as much as possible. They make few demands on their children to take on household responsibility or behavior in an orderly manner. Neither the authoritarian or the permissive style encourages empathy or positive actions that may not result in tangible rewards. (Baumrind, D., 1971. Current patterns of parental

authority. Developmental Psychology, 4, Monograph I, 1-103.)

Parents tend to use one parenting style predominantly but occasionally assume another parenting style in certain circumstances or situations. For example, authoritative or permissive parents may become authoritarian in their instructions if they are rushed trying to get to work or finish a task,-- “Do that now!” “Put that away, now!”

We all want our children to grow up feeling loved and accepted. Getting them to that point is not easy. Parents can learn skills that will guide their children in ways that will control “naughty” behavior and at the same time help their children feel good about themselves. A child’s self-confidence and self-esteem are based on the verbal and non-verbal messages we send. We need to practice patience and show we are interested in the child. We need to avoid put-downs and negative criticisms. A young child who lives with criticism and constant put-downs can begin to feel hopeless and no good, and may eventually stop trying to cooperate.

When children misbehave, they need to be stopped, they need to know what they have done wrong and they need to be told why it is wrong.

They also need to be taught the right thing to do. The aim of punishing children is to make them suffer physically or emotionally to “pay” for the wrongdoing. Punishment will temporarily stop the unwanted behavior, but it will cause more long-term problems. It will cause children to fight back with aggressive or more naughty behavior. It may teach them that they can do what they want as long as they are willing to “pay the price” of punishment. They may begin to feel unloved and unlovable and may give up trying to please their parents. Finally, punishment does not help a child know what he should do, only what he should not do. It does not guide or teach. It does not help build responsibility or self-control.

Children need a lot of attention to grow and thrive. They need caring adults who will offer guidance and set limits. They need to feel loved and secure to become competent, healthy adults. They need a parent or parents who provide a loving environment. Being attentive and close for a short period of time can mean more than hours of empty togetherness.

Everyday family routines can encourage closeness through conversation, physical nearness, eye contact and touching. At bedtime, the parent who sits at bed time and has a friendly chat or reads a story, then tucks her child in with a kiss is providing closeness. On the other hand, a parent who merely yells “good night” to the child as he/she goes to bed is not achieving closeness. Parents need to recognize opportunities for closeness in their daily routine.



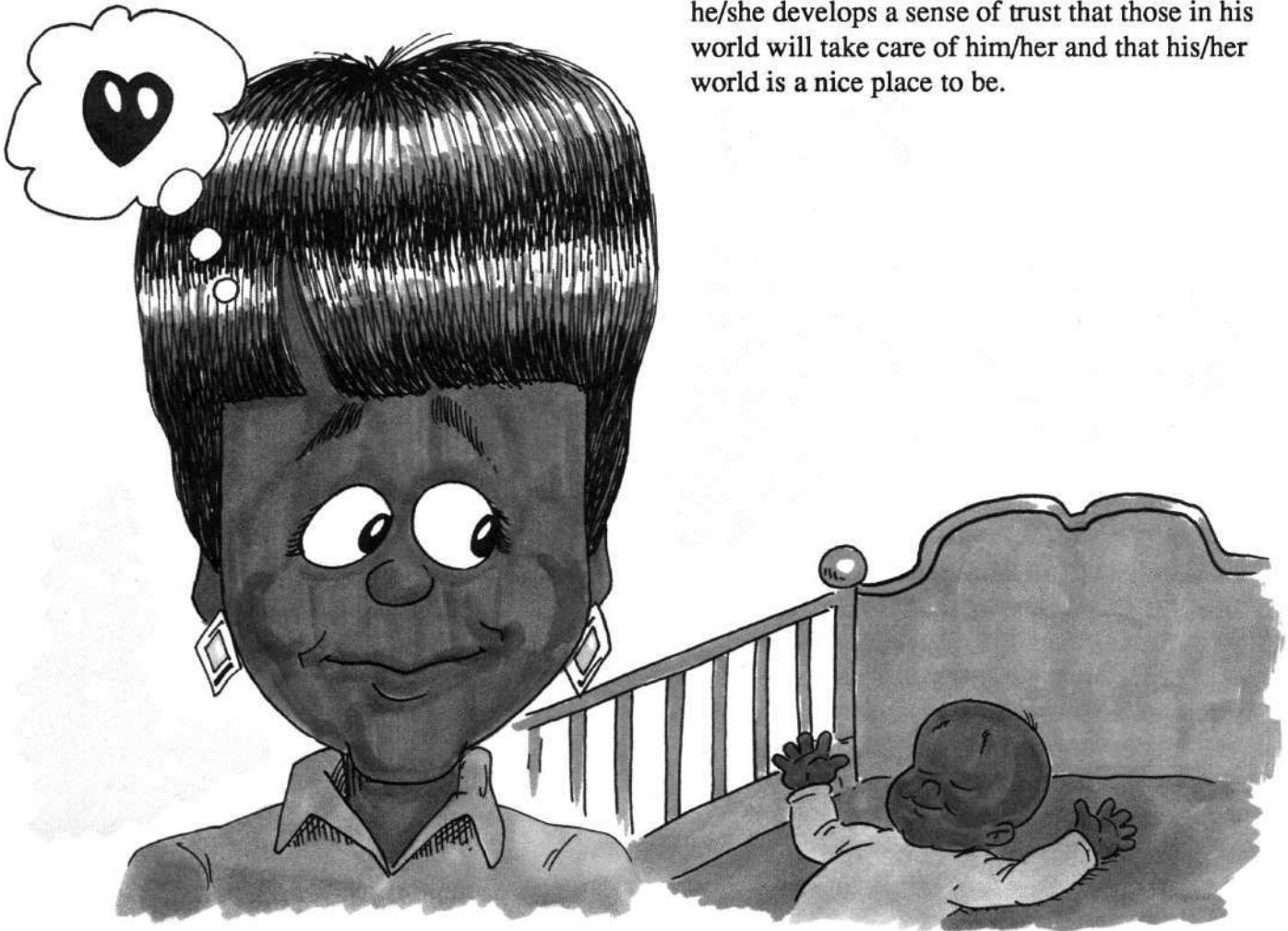
Newborn to 6 months: Introduction

The first six months of a baby's life are different from any other period in his or her lifetime. If the infant is taken care of during these months of development and provided love, attention and physical care, nature will take care of the rest.

To achieve a happy, healthy baby during the first six months, parents' goals should include:

- giving him or her a feeling of being loved and cared for,
- helping him or her develop specific skills -- for example, to sit up or reach out and grasp, and
- encouraging his or her interest in the outside world by stimulating his or her curiosity (White, Burton (1975) *The First Three Years of Life.*)

When a child has parents who work for these goals he/she develops a sense of trust that those in his world will take care of him/her and that his/her world is a nice place to be.



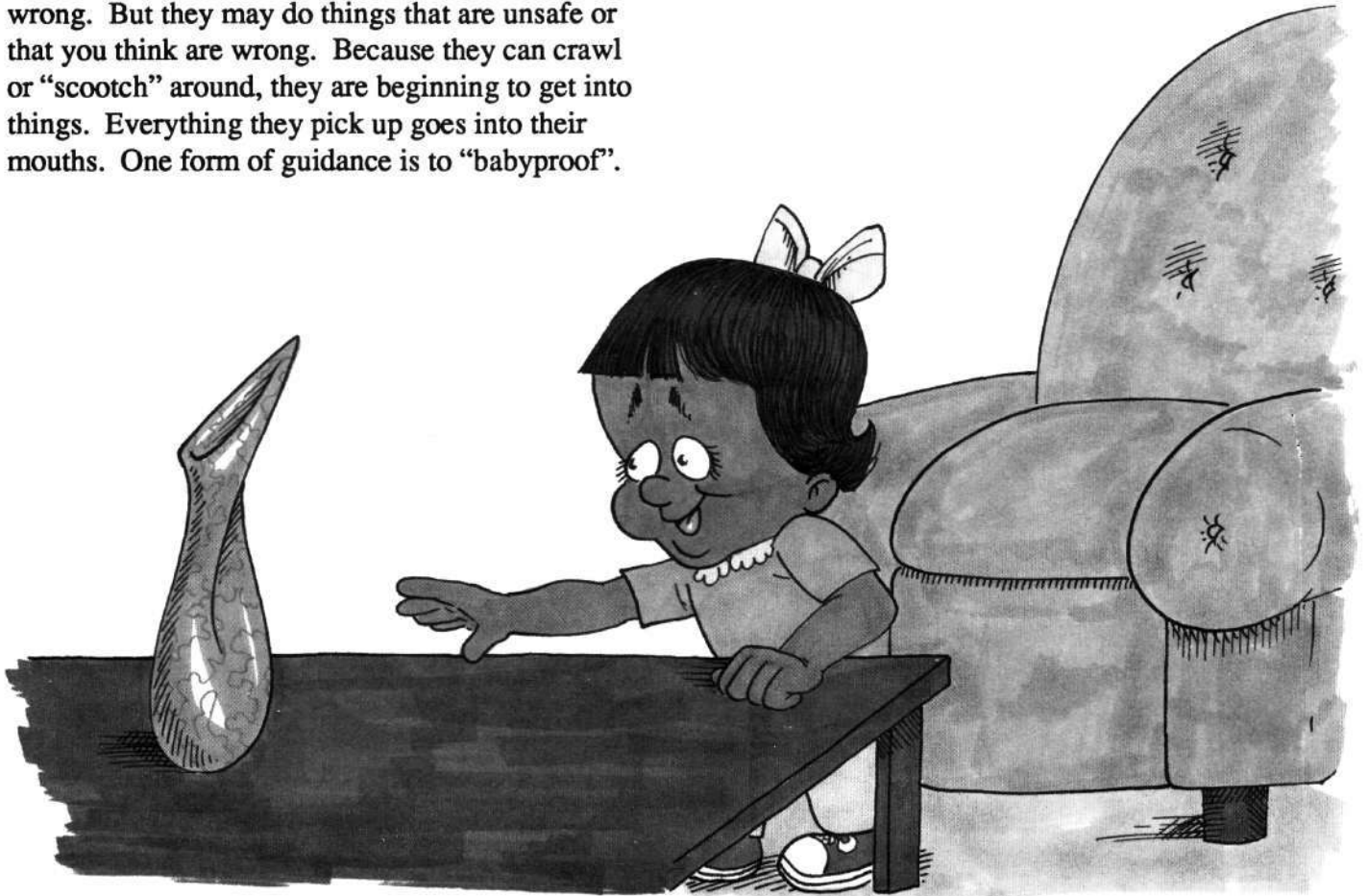
7 to 12 months: Introduction

For babies under a year old, discipline can be simple: it is teaching limits through loving care and guidance. The key is reward. Many new parents pay attention to their children's behavior only if it is bad and it upsets them. This teaches the baby that he can get attention only when he does something bad. A parent's attention is a baby's best reward. It should be given for good behavior, not bad behavior. When the baby plays nicely with the cat or dog or makes sounds and tries to talk, give him a smile or talk to him. When he touches something he should not have, distract him by giving him a toy or point out something else to him. Ignore behavior that bugs you but is not dangerous. Save "nos" for times when his safety is in danger. Infants at this age do not deliberately obey or disobey. Their brains have not developed enough for them to know the difference between right and wrong. But they may do things that are unsafe or that you think are wrong. Because they can crawl or "scootch" around, they are beginning to get into things. Everything they pick up goes into their mouths. One form of guidance is to "babyproof".

This prevents them from hurting themselves or breaking things. Infants need to explore. It is better to babyproof than to follow them around saying "no" to everything they do.

Researchers found that babies who hear "no" and "don't" all of the time grow up less intelligent than other babies. Smart babies need to be able to explore and experiment. If you find you say "no" a lot, try to babyproof the places where the baby spends time.

Sometimes your baby will not like what you want him to do. Do not give in. Keep in mind that limits are important for his safety. You can set limits while giving him freedom to explore.



7 to 12 months: What can you do to help a baby this age behave?

Ideas for parents:

***REDIRECT** by moving the baby away from a hazard to a safe area.

***SUBSTITUTE** by getting the baby interested in things he can play with, then quietly remove the thing that you do not want him to have.

***DON'T** slap the baby's hands or yell at him. He cannot control his behavior yet, and hitting him only teaches him that it is okay to hit.

***IGNORE** behavior when it is not harmful (such as spitting food). Do not look at, smile at or scold him. Pretend he is not there until the behavior stops. If he does something dangerous, pick him up and move him to somewhere safe (that is, redirect him). Remember to praise your baby for doing something that is okay after you have ignored or redirected him.

KEYS TO DISCIPLINE:

***Prevent** your baby from doing something you do not like by changing the environment. For example, move the ashtray to a higher place.

***Ignore** behavior that is not harmful but bugs you. If you make a big deal out of it, it teaches her to misbehave to get attention.

***Distract or redirect** your baby from a thing you do not want her to have or to do. Get her interested in something else rather than to grab the object from her.

***Reward** her with loving attention when she is playing nicely. Notice the good things she does and give her a smile, a laugh or a hug. Your attention is your baby's most important reward—use it to encourage behavior you like.

***Give your baby freedom within limits.** Your baby should have a chance to explore within limits. She should not be kept in a playpen all of the time. She needs some "floor freedom" to explore.



7 to 12 months: What things are dangerous to your baby?

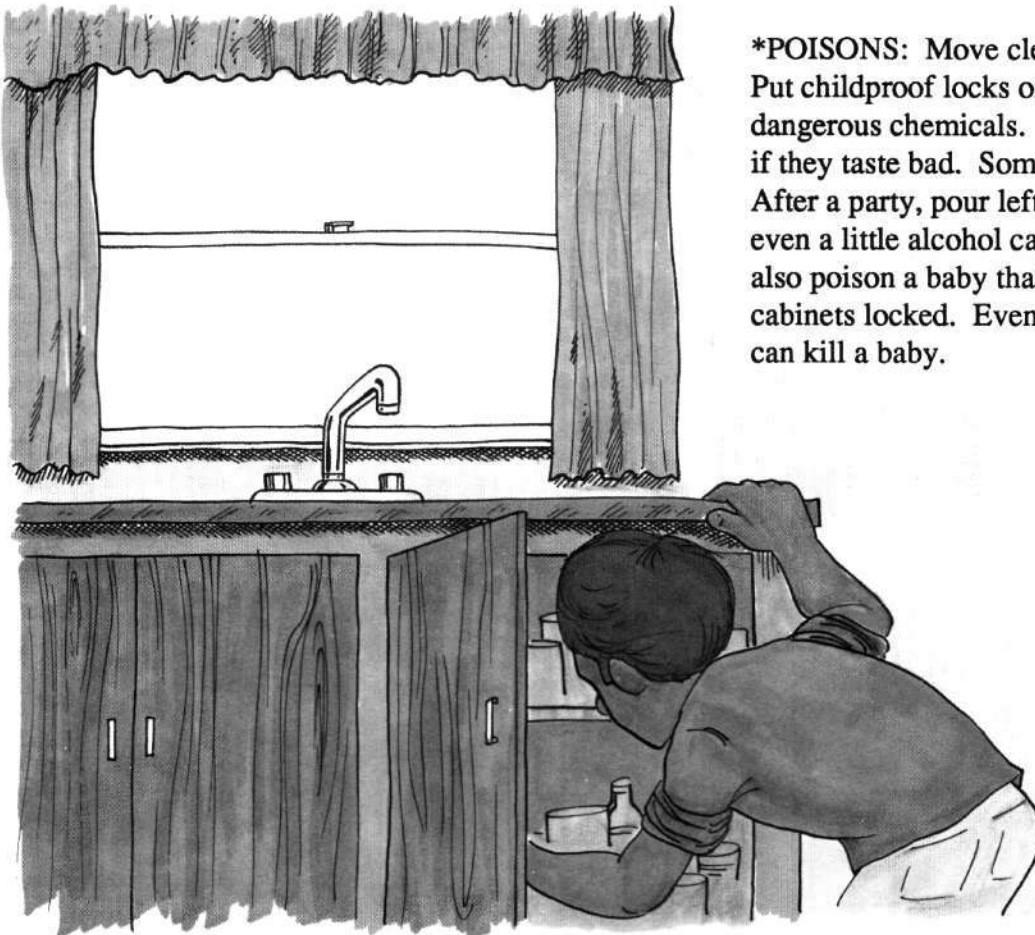
Accidents are the greatest single threat to the lives of small children. More than 300 infants in the United States die each month from accidents. Babies are curious and like to explore. At this age, babies are crawling and getting around more. When a baby can stand, he can reach farther and higher. He can reach things that were out of his way before. He also picks up things and puts them in his mouth. You can make sure your house is safe. Babyproofing helps to stop accidents. Look at each room in your home for new possible problems he could get into. Get on your knees and look around your home from a baby's eye view.

Watch out for:

***SMALL OR SHARP THINGS:** A baby will put anything in his mouth. Make sure money, cigarettes, paper clips, staples, dust balls and anything else smaller than 1 1/2 inches is off of the floor and out of reach. If your TV or stereo knobs come off easily and are small enough to choke on, put them on a higher shelf until you want to use them. Keep knives, scissors, razor blades, broken glass and any other sharp objects out of reach.

***ELECTRIC THINGS:** Cover electrical outlets with plastic plugs you can buy from the hardware store. Keep lamp cords out of sight. Keep fans out of reach. In the kitchen, do not leave cords dangling. Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.

***POISONS:** Move cleaning supplies to a high place. Put childproof locks on cupboards that have dangerous chemicals. Children will drink things even if they taste bad. Some house plants are poisonous. After a party, pour leftover drinks down the sink-- even a little alcohol can poison a baby. Cigarettes can also poison a baby that eats them. Keep medicine cabinets locked. Even aspirin, Tylenol and vitamins can kill a baby.



***PLASTIC BAGS:** Thin plastic bags that come with groceries and dry cleaning are very dangerous. If a bag covers a baby's mouth and nose, he could suffocate. Balloons can also choke babies. Throw broken balloons away immediately.

***STAIRS:** Put safety gates across stairways and make sure they are fastened when your baby is around.

***LEAD PAINT:** Babies chew on anything. Check to make sure your baby's furniture and your furniture was not painted with lead paint.

***WOBBLY FURNITURE:** When he uses furniture to pull himself up, he can pull things over. A wobbly table that could tip should be taken out of the room. If book cases are unsteady, fasten them to the wall.

***CRIBS:** Set the crib mattress at the lowest level. Take out bumper pads and large stuffed animals that he could step on to climb out.

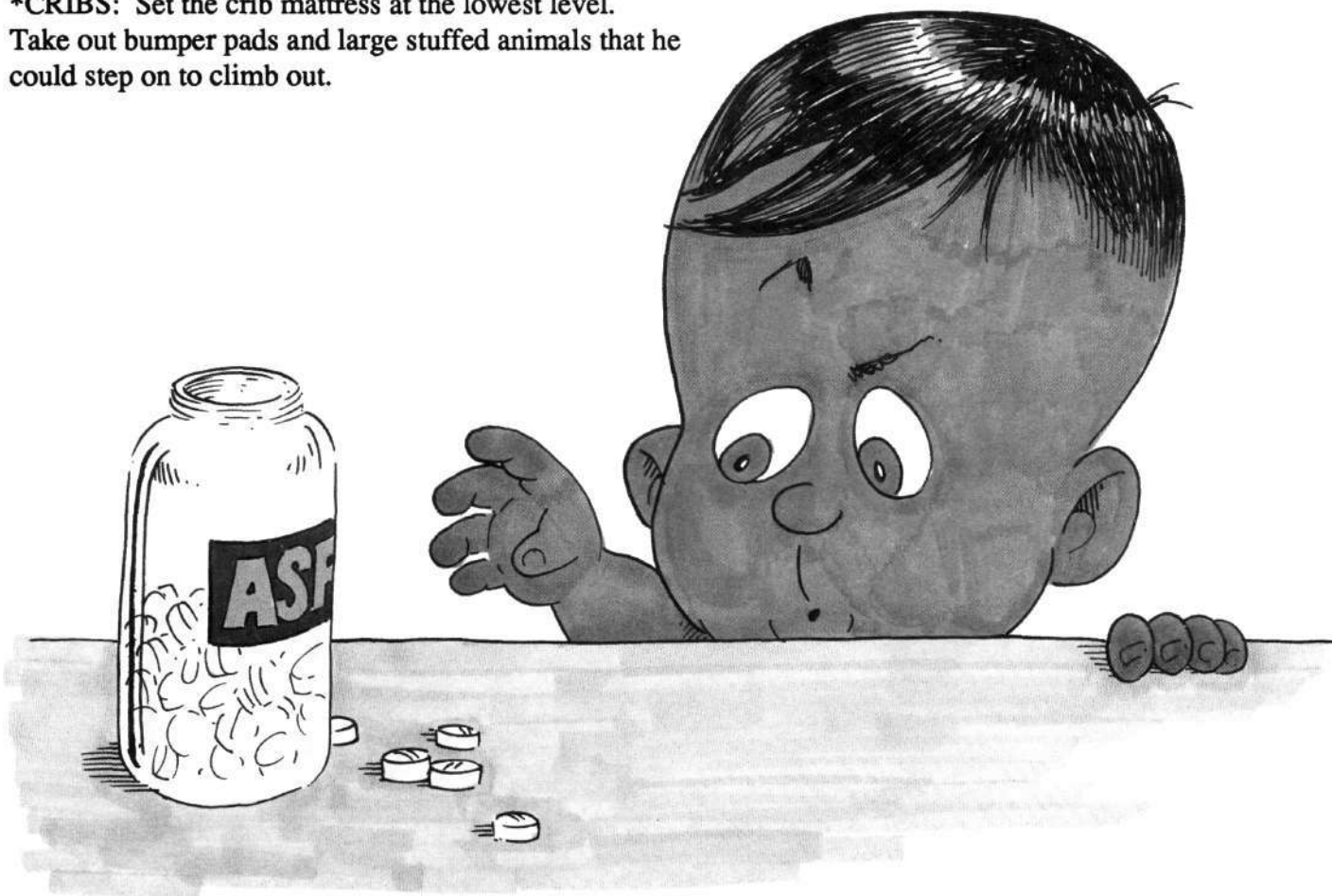
***WATER:** Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees in case he turns the hot water on while he is in the tub. Never leave your baby alone in or near water, even for a minute.

***GROCERY STORE:** In the grocery store, do not let your baby stand up in the grocery cart. Use the safety strap to keep him seated.

***STOVE:** Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.

***HIGH CHAIR:** Do not let him stand up in his high chair.

***INFANT SEAT:** Use a safe infant seat in your car.

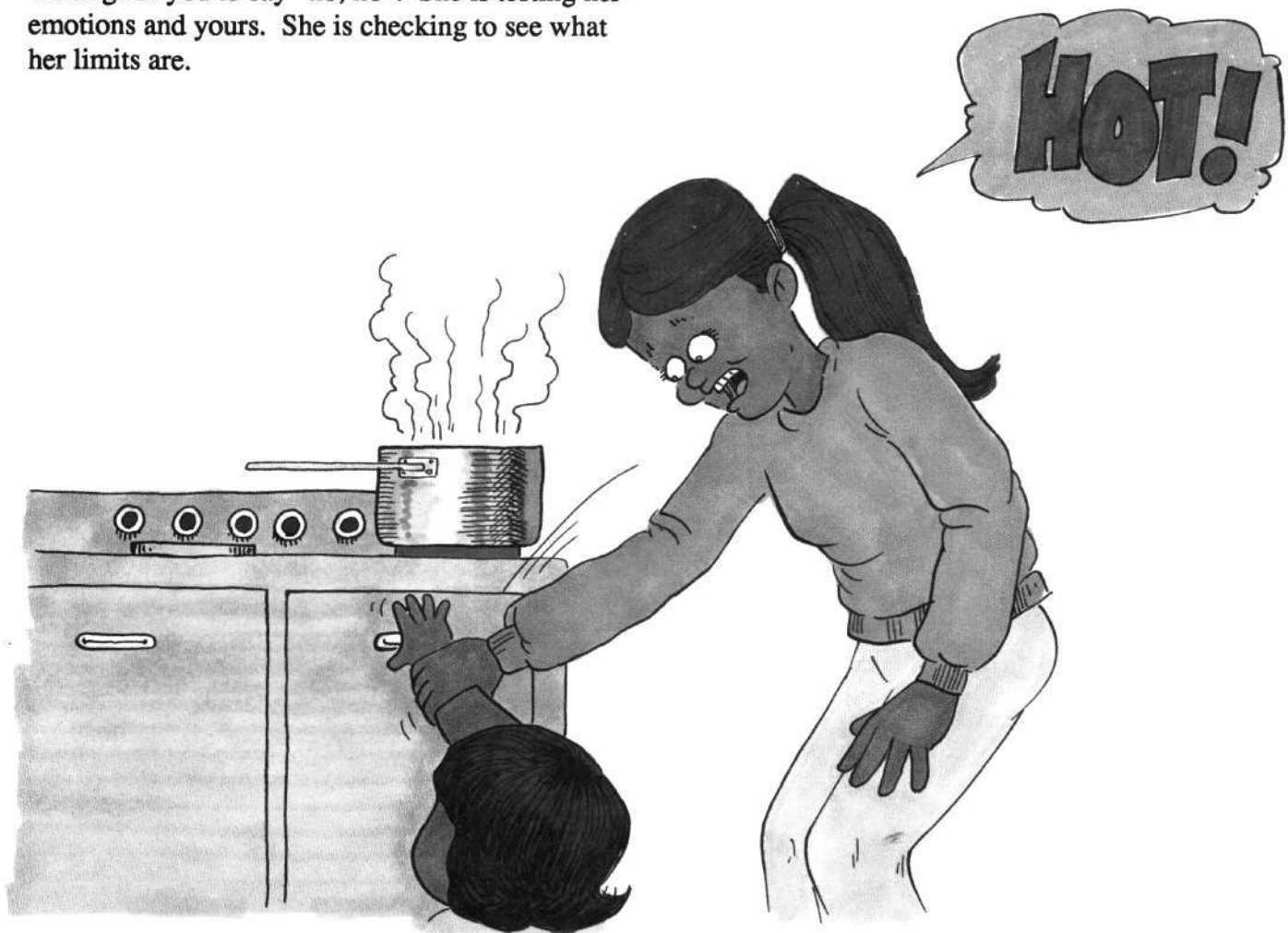


7 to 12 months: How do you set limits with a baby?

Babies cannot talk yet, but they know that words have meanings. You can use words to help your baby stay out of trouble. If she tries to touch the oven, say “hot” and move her away. Do not just say “no” to things she does. Give her one- or two-word explanations to help her learn why she cannot behave in certain ways. As she gets older, you can make the explanations a little longer--three or four words instead of one or two. Her memory is not as good as yours, so it may take several tries to learn to stay away from things and places that you do not want her near.

A baby can tease on purpose. For example, she might head straight for a wastebasket making sure you notice. She might reach for your glasses almost waiting for you to say “no, no”. She is testing her emotions and yours. She is checking to see what her limits are.

Make it easy for her to do the right thing. Do not ask too much of her. Remember, she is still a baby. Do not tempt her with wastebaskets, plants, uncovered outlets, etc. Give her safe toys and safe places to play. Pick her up and take her away from dangerous things. Give her words such as “hot”, “tastes bad” and “stop”, instead of a flat “no” all of the time. Be understanding, gentle and patient. Keep showing your baby what you want. Remember that some behavior is just part of being a baby.



1 to 2 years: Introduction

A child needs limits set for him so he can learn there is order in life. He can learn to wait, to delay gratification, to treat others and possessions with respect. There will be many times that he will be resistant. He will exercise his new need for independence by saying “no” or by having a temper tantrum. Parents can be firm and loving and not give in to his demands. They can follow through on what they expect from him (as long as it is appropriate for his age). If he refuses to walk, pick him up and carry him. If he hurts or hits others, remove him from the group. If he runs into the street, take him into the house. Take over for him until he regains control. It is not necessary to reprimand, scold or hurt him when he rebels.

During this period, the foundation is being laid for the child to find answers to: “What rules do I have to live by?” “What is expected of me?” “Who is in charge here?” Consistent and loving care will help him find the answers. He will feel more secure and is more likely to try to live up to your expectations. However, if his treatment is mean, harsh and punitive, he will become frightened and withdrawn or demanding and aggressive. If he is treated in an inconsistent manner, he will learn to play one adult against another and constantly test his limits.

When a parent says “no,” the child must know what it is that he should stop doing. Is it what he is eating? where he is crawling? what he is doing? The child needs to know specifically what he needs to stop doing.

The challenge to the parent is to make wise, consistent and firm use of the word “no”. It should be used only in dangerous and destructive activities. If you use “no” too often, the child may ignore it in an emergency when his safety depends on instant obedience. A sharp “no” should be reserved only for emergencies, such as when he is about to step off the curb into the street or he is getting too near a hot stove. If you use “no” only when you are trying to protect him, he will be more likely to respond.

What to do to reduce the use of “no”:

- * Structure routines and play spaces to reduce the need for restriction and discipline.
- * Remove tempting and dangerous articles and place them out of reach—out of sight, too, if possible.
- * When an attraction is immovable, such as a hot stove, bodily remove the child and divert his attention to something safer and more interesting.
- * Reduce the toddler’s activities that may cause frustration, try his patience or cause conflict, such as long shopping trips.
- * Keep the rules reasonable. Toddlers’ ability to understand is limited. They may insist on doing things on their own, but they are still likely to have accidents. They may drop, break or spill things. They can understand some rules but not all.
- * Toddlers need to practice independence. Their growing independence includes more defiant and non-cooperative behavior. Parents need to be firm but patient in enforcing rules. Toddlers need safe and reasonable opportunities to make their own decisions so they can practice independence.
- * Toddlers often do something over and over, even after they have been told not to do it. Try to figure out why. They usually are not doing it simply to annoy their parents. There is usually a good reason for doing it. The parents should then help them accomplish what they set out to do but in a way that is okay for both of them.

Not only is this child more mobile, but he is also learning to be independent. He gets into more trouble because of this. Parents can learn how to set limits. Toddlers need the structure. Limits make their world safer for them and they also help a toddler better define who he is and what is expected of him. It is a frustrating time for parents and the child. He does many things that are tiresome, messy, wasteful, dangerous, and destructive. He needs to be taught to avoid cords, plugs, the stove, the cabinets, and not to climb on the windowsill.

When he appears to be avoiding doing anything that he is told, he is not being naughty on purpose. He does not want to disobey or frustrate you. He cannot control his curiosity and may not remember what he was told two days before. He is showing you he is growing up.

Spanking, hitting, shaking, or pinching are not necessary to discipline a child. Such actions teach him to be sneaky, aggressive, and fearful. They also teach him that hurting or hitting others is okay. A parent needs patience and humor to survive the toddler years.

When your child does something you do not like, try to correct him in a way that will not hurt his self-esteem. Instead of yelling at him and telling him he is a rotten kid, say something like: "I do not like it when you..." This makes it possible for him to learn about acceptable behavior without feeling like a failure. The parent needs to be fair and consistent. Try to point out five things he does well each day. Point out specific actions. For example: "I like the nice way you are playing with your sister." Say "please" and "thank-you" to your toddler. It will also help him learn respect for himself and others.



1 to 2 years: What can you do to help your toddler learn your rules?

One responsibility of a parent is to help her child learn her rules so he can eventually learn to manage his own behavior. Parents usually do not hesitate to set limits in other situations. Setting limits with little children can often upset the most enjoyable parent-child relationship. It is, therefore, necessary to be clear about the value of setting limits and enforcing them consistently. In this way, the parent shows the child that her behavior is predictable.

In general, consistency of rules helps the child feel secure and comfortable, and realize that his environment is dependable. A good rule to keep in mind when setting limits is to set only a few necessary limits. These would include limits to protect the health of the child, the safety of the child, and the property rights and rights of others, and to support the child against his own strong feelings. When there are too many rules the child feels boxed in, loses his curiosity and loses his joy of learning.

Once you have decided on your limits, how can they be carried out?

BE BRIEF: Toddlers understand short, simple phrases. Give reasons for your rules but not long, drawn-out explanations.

BE CLEAR: Keep things simple for now. “Do not splash water on the floor,” NOT “Splashing is okay if you do not get too much water on the floor.” A toddler has no way to judge how much water is too much.

BE SPECIFIC: Tell her what she can do and what she cannot do. “You cannot play with this ashtray, but you can play with this cup.” In doing this, you focus on positive behavior instead of negative behavior.

BE CONSISTENT: Do not let your child do something one minute and then tell him he cannot do it the next minute. It is okay to change your mind sometimes, but most of the time make up your mind about what you want, and then stick to it.

Toddlers will meet reasonable demands that parents set but parents have to be willing to state their limits clearly and firmly.



1 to 2 years: How can you prevent tantrums?

What can you do when a tantrum occurs?

Occasional tantrums are not unusual for toddlers. They are balancing between dependence and independence and are trying to define themselves as separate people. They need leeway, understanding, protection, guidance and support. They are great imitators, so parents can not lose their tempers, either.

Toddlers can show their feelings, whether love and affection or dislike and anger. It is easier for a parent to accept the positive feelings than the negative ones. But both kinds of feelings are prevalent among toddlers. Expressions of negative feelings are part of growing up. These actions and feelings should be handled with understanding rather than with arguments and punishment. Angry actions do not mean that the toddler actually hates or dislikes the parent or that the parent is a bad parent. Sometimes toddlers get frustrated and upset because they cannot do what they want. A toddler's anger is temporary and normal. It is their way of coping with frustration.

How to prevent tantrums:

- * Teach your child how to handle frustration and anger. Set an example--do not get violent when you are angry. Teach your toddler to look at his choices to solve his problems.
- * Praise your child. "Catch" your child being good. Praise him when he asks for help in a potentially difficult situation: "I'm glad you asked for help instead of getting mad at your wagon." When you help your child to handle his frustration and anger in a calm manner, it helps him feel good about himself.
- * Do not always let him be alone at playtime. He may try to get your attention by misbehaving if he cannot get it when he is behaving well.

What to do:

- * Ignore a tantrum. Do nothing with, to, or for your toddler during his tantrum. This will teach him that a temper tantrum is not the way to get your attention and not the way to get his wants attended to.
- * Try to stand firm. Silently tell yourself that it is important for your child to learn he cannot have everything he wants when he wants it.

- * Remain as calm as you can. Keeping calm yourself provides a good model for your toddler when he is upset.

- * Praise your toddler. When the worst of the tantrum is past, immediately praise him for gaining self-control. Then get him involved in a fun activity that will not be frustrating for him or you. Say something like: "I love you, but I do not like screaming and yelling. I am glad you feel better now."

It does not help to:

- * Reason or explain during the tantrum. It is a waste of breath. Any discussion gives him the audience he needs to keep up the tantrum.

- * Throw a tantrum yourself. Losing your cool can be frightening to your child, who may already be frightened because he lost his cool.

- * Say mean and nasty things to your toddler. He is not a bad person. Calling him names or insulting him will make him lose his self-respect.

- * Remind him of the tantrum later that day. It gives attention to the behavior and may encourage another tantrum.

- * Make your toddler pay for the tantrum by ignoring him after it is over. It will cause him to have another tantrum to get your attention. You do not want to make him feel unloved and unwanted.

Tantrums in public places are difficult for parent and toddler. Remember that other parents have had to deal with tantrums, too. Ignore people who make nasty comments or frown. Do not be tempted to spank him. He is already out of control and it will scare him if you are out of control, too. Do nothing. In the long run, it will make the tantrum go away sooner. If the adult can remain calm and confident, this will be reassuring to the child who has lost control.

1 to 2 years: How can you help your toddler behave in the grocery store?

Children often act up at the grocery store. Though the stimulation is good for them, they can get over excited with the smells, the colors and the noises.

Some ideas to help children behave in the grocery store:

- * Discuss the rules before entering the store. Let the toddler know your rules--for example, no candy.
- * Make sure you and your toddler have plenty of rest before you take him to the supermarket so the extra stimulation does not make him cranky. Do not wait until the end of a tiring day.
- * Talk to him. Point out different foods. Play games with him. "Who can see the potatoes first?" "Do you remember what animal we get milk from?" Have him help you name all the vegetables in the cart, all the meats, breads, fruits, milk products.
- * When you choose apples or oranges, say: "We need three red apples. See? One, two, three."
- * Show him the box when you get cereal. Count how many steps it takes to get from the shredded wheat to the wheat flakes. Shake the box. Let him look inside it when you get home.

- * You might want to bring a small toy or book from home to help distract his attention and to keep his hands busy. You may want to tie a favorite soft toy to the grocery cart.

- * Bring a nutritious snack for him to eat.

- * Sing songs with him. Make up a grocery store song.

- * Stop behavior you do not like as soon as it occurs. For example, if the child kicks the parent while she is carrying him, she can say: "I don't like to carry you when you kick me." Do not ignore behavior that is dangerous or destructive. Do not let the child think that you will allow him to misbehave in public.

- * If he gets out of control and has a temper tantrum, take him out of the store or to a private place (such as a restroom), talk to him quietly eye to eye and tell him his behavior is not acceptable. Wait for him to calm down, no matter how long it takes. Then ask him if he is ready to try again.

- * Do not let him stand up in the grocery cart. Be sure to use the seat belt in the grocery cart.



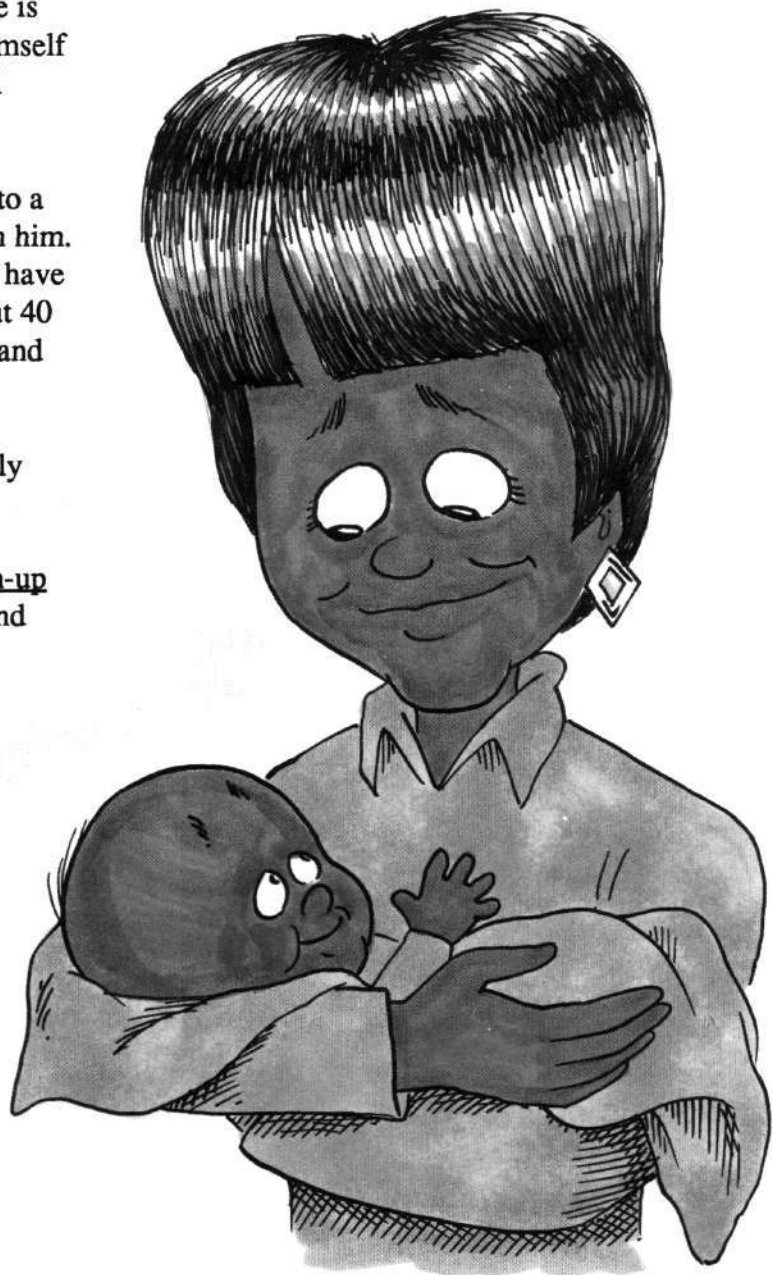
Newborn to 6 months: How can you help a very young baby behave?

The best way to get a baby to behave is to show him you love him. The first year of life is extremely important for babies. Their future development depends on the care they receive the first year. If an infant does not establish a healthy sense of trust, he may withdraw into himself and feel he is empty and no good. He may become clingy and demanding. A child deprived of love may not smile, laugh, establish eye contact or react to people around him. A parent can tune into her infant's needs, decipher his different cries and try to meet his needs when they arise. If he is hungry, feed him. If he is wet, change him. If he is fussy, comfort him. If he is bored, stimulate him. An infant can define himself by the way he is touched, held, comforted and loved.

The temperament of an infant can determine, to a great extent, how the parents will interact with him. Researchers have noted that an infant tends to have one of three types of temperament: easy (about 40 percent), slow to warm up (about 15 percent) and difficult (about 10 percent).

The easy baby takes life in stride. He is usually happy and receives people and things enthusiastically. He does not react to small frustrations and discomforts. A slow-to-warm-up infant needs time to adjust to new situations and

new people. He reacts mildly to things. Once he adjusts to someone or something, he likes and enjoys them. The difficult infant takes most things hard, runs on irregular schedules, cries often, and adapts to new places and people with difficulty. His mood is usually down. This baby needs more patient care and a less stimulating environment. Long-term studies have shown that these temperamental characteristics are stable over a period of time. Most people are a combination of these types, with one type being a little more obvious than the others.



2 to 3 years: Introduction

At all times, a parent should help his child achieve and maintain a positive self-image. A child needs to feel that his parent loves and supports him, regardless of his behavior. Toddlers and preschoolers lack experience about right and wrong behavior, so they are bound to make mistakes. They should be shown their mistakes without being humiliated. Find positive ways to correct mistakes so children will learn from them.

Research has identified characteristics of successful and competent mothers of toddlers (Honig, 1981). They:

- * Carefully organize their children's routines.
- * Encourage their children to help with household chores.
- * Allow their children to do some messy things, such as washing dishes.
- * Read to their children daily.
- * Observe their children closely to keep them safe and to fit activities to their developmental level.
- * Have firm, consistent household rules and give children reasons for these rules.
- * See themselves as teachers of their children and actively help their children learn.
- * Play with their children frequently, including pretend play.

In conclusion, here are a few simple guidelines to remember when dealing with toddlers that will make it easier for the child as well as the parent:

- * Have a few rules and keep them simple. Explain them to your child and stick to them.
- * When disciplining the child, keep calm.
- * Be generous with your praise when your child behaves well.
- * Tell your child what she can do rather than what she cannot do.

Give your child the opportunity to make choices. Keep them reasonable and limited.

- * Save "no" for emergencies.
- * Whenever possible, change the situation to change your child's behavior.
- * Always keep in mind that discipline means to teach and guide. It is one way to show your child that you love him or her.

2 to 3 years: What can you do to avoid potty training accidents?

Toilet training is one of the first battles of will between parents and children. Forcing children to be toilet trained before they are ready--physically, mentally, socially, or emotionally may actually delay their learning. Beginning too early also teaches children to be more dependent on the parent than on their own ability to manage toileting. Each child has his own "right time" when he is ready to begin toilet training. The parent should look for signs of readiness: the ability to stay dry for a few hours at a time; to understand words such as "potty", "wet" and "dry"; and to follow directions such as "sit on the potty chair," "pull down your pants", etc.

For other clues that a child is ready, ask: Is he interested in the experience? Is he somewhat cooperative with the parent's efforts? Can his bladder hold urine long enough to make the time spent in this direction worthwhile?

As the child nears two years of age, the bladder function matures, his posture is improving, and his language is developing so that he learns words to tell his parent that he wants to be taken to the toilet. Often, a toddler indicates that he is already wet rather than that he needs to use the toilet. Though he is maturing, it may still be a little time before he can make the connection between the feeling of a full bladder, telling his mother and telling her in time to get him to the toilet. This is a very complex bit of learning and will take time.

When children are not forced into a rigid routine of training, they are usually quite cooperative by the end of the second year. This is especially true if the parent praises the child when he is successful. Accidents must be expected well into the second year and even into the third.

What to do:

- * Reward the toddler for being dry and for correct toileting. Tell the child how nice it is that she is staying dry. This gives the toddler positive attention and reminds her what is expected of her. About every fifteen minutes, say to the child: "Check your pants--are they dry?" This places the responsibility to be dry with the child--it puts her in control of her dryness. Say: "How nice that you are staying dry."

- * React calmly to accidents. The child needs to be encouraged to practice how to stay dry. This strengthens the child's self-confidence and helps her toilet correctly. If the child is wet say: "I'm sorry that you are wet. Now we need to practice staying dry."

It does not help to:

- * Punish toileting accidents. Punishment gives the child attention for going in her pants and does not teach her how to stay dry.

- * Ask the wrong question. "Check your pants" is a subtle reminder and is a good substitute for "Do you need to go to the potty?" (which is usually answered with a "no"). This helps the child feel responsible for checking her dry-wet condition and doing something about it.

The parent should help the child feel proud of herself and at the same time lessen the possibility that she will have an accident just to get the parent's attention and reaction.

2 to 3 years: How can you prevent arguments with your toddler?

Growing independence by toddlers encourages situations that become power struggles. If the mother wins, the child might fight back even harder. If the child wins, the mother might feel angry, defeated or guilty. The first trick is to create a positive environment. A parent needs to learn to control certain activities so her child has no reason to feel angry, frustrated or rebellious.

To prevent an argument, it is important to allow both mother and child to be winners. If the mother refuses to get caught up in a battle, then neither the child nor the mother will be a loser. For example, Josie wants her mother to read her a story and the mother wants Josie to take a nap. Maybe Josie can pick out the story before naptime, and the mother can read it when the nap is finished. Or, maybe the mother can read half the story before and half after the nap.

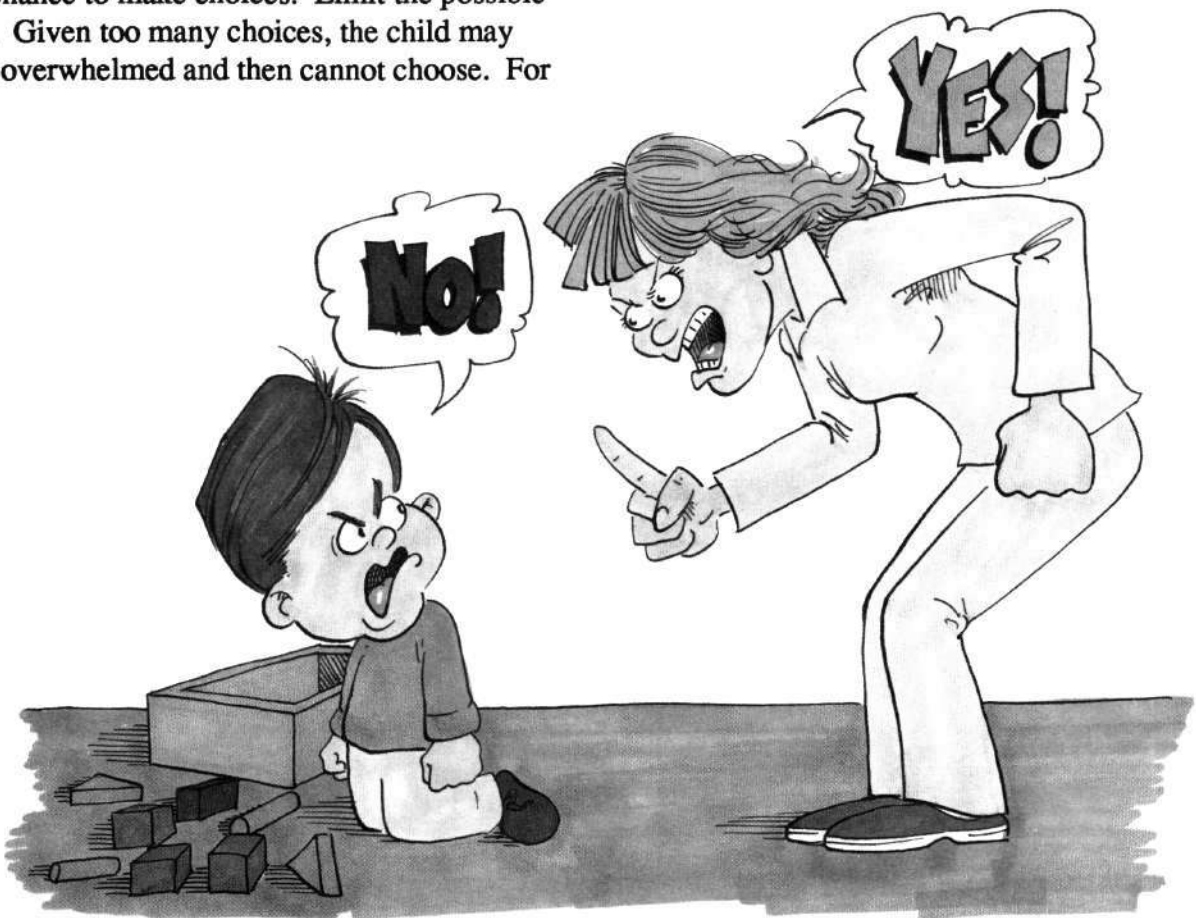
Another way to prevent an argument is to give the child a chance to make choices. Limit the possible choices. Given too many choices, the child may become overwhelmed and then cannot choose. For

example, instead of saying: "What do you want for lunch?" say: "Do you want scrambled eggs or a cheese sandwich for lunch?"

Sometimes it is necessary to manipulate the situation. "I bet I can pick up the blocks faster than you can" may be a challenge that some toddlers cannot resist.

Although manipulation may work with some children, distraction may work better for others. Toddlers are not easy to distract, but sometimes they can be redirected to something similar but acceptable. Carry or lead the child by the hand, saying: "We do not jump off the bed. Josie can jump on the rug."

A little imagination and patience will make it possible for both the mother and the child to win. Both parties will feel better for it.



2 to 3 years: What can you do when your child will not mind?

"Time out" is a good way to handle those times when the older toddler will not mind and nothing seems to stop her. It means putting the toddler safe somewhere away from the mother for a short period of time.

This allows time for the mother to calm down and lets the toddler know that she will not be allowed to continue her disobedient or naughty behavior. Time out should be used so that the toddler does not feel unloved or hurt. It's important to use time out so it is a guidance and discipline technique and not a punishment.

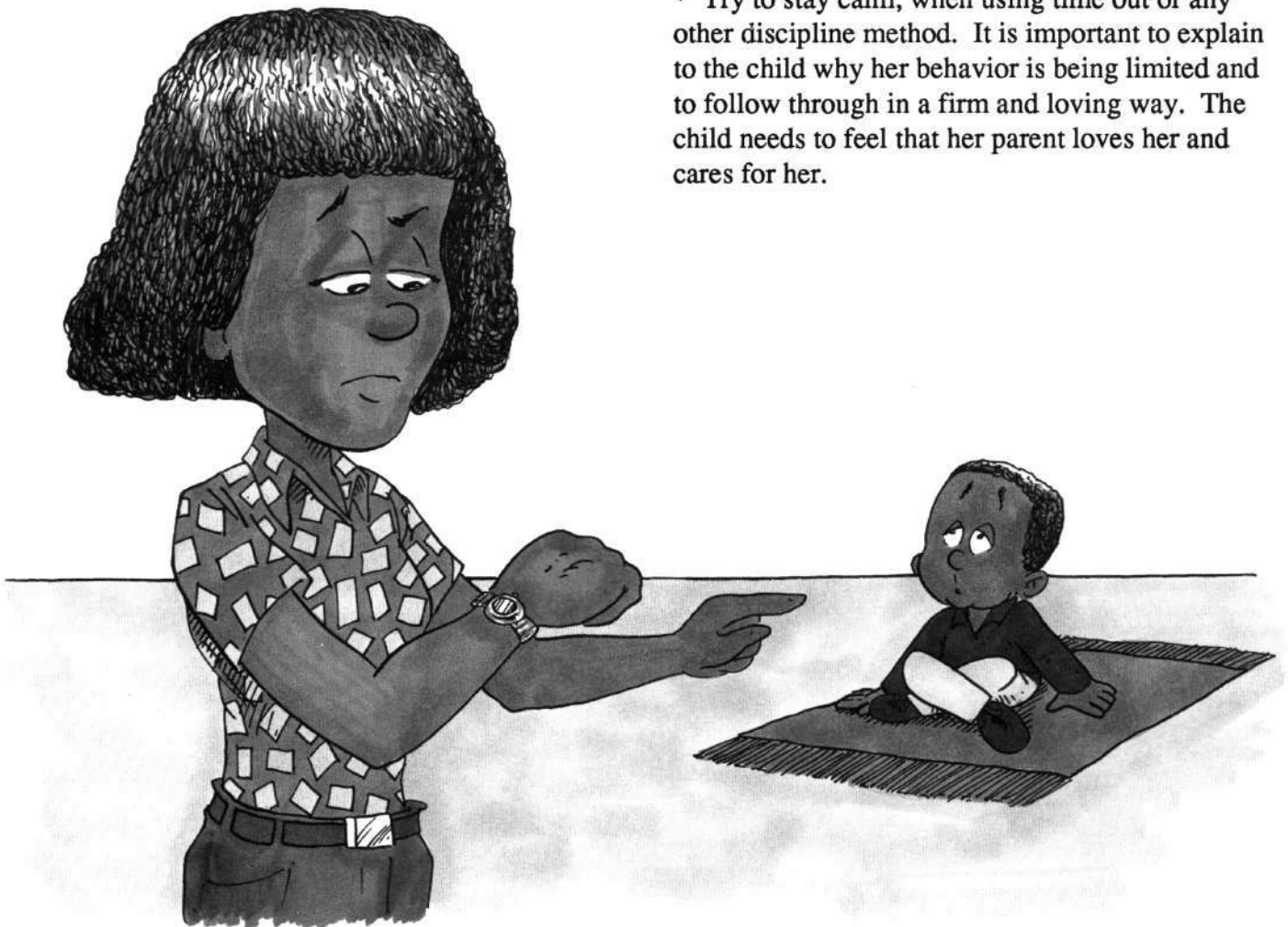
* Tell the child about time out ahead of time, before a rule is broken. The child should be told what time out is and how you will use it.

* The time out place should be chosen carefully, such as a room, a chair, a playpen, a rug or part of a room. Never use a closet or a place that is dangerous or frightening to a child.

* Tell the toddler why the time out is being used and how long it will last. Explain before the time out why it is being used. Tell her how long the time out is and when the parent will come to get her. Then it is essential to keep your word.

* Keep the time out short. A rule of thumb is one minute for each year of the child's age. A timer is a good way to keep track. When the time is up, the child should be given a hug and be invited to be with the mother and to do something with her.

* Try to stay calm, when using time out or any other discipline method. It is important to explain to the child why her behavior is being limited and to follow through in a firm and loving way. The child needs to feel that her parent loves her and cares for her.



2 to 3 years: What is child abuse?

Physical punishment is not a good way to teach children. It usually hurts more than it instructs. Cooperative and well behaved children get that way because their parents teach and guide them.

Pinching, hitting, spanking or shaking is physical punishment and can seriously hurt a child. Depriving a child of the basic necessities, including food and nurturing, or keeping a child in a closet or locked room is child abuse.

It is abusive to threaten the child with scary things if he does not behave. For example, saying the "boogie man" will get him if he is not good, or loved ones will stop loving him or leave him to die. It is also abuse to make him think he is unloved, stupid, wicked or hopeless.

Almost all parents want the best for their children. Some who abuse their children think they are doing what is best for them. They may think it is the best way to help them learn. These parents are usually rearing their children the way they were reared.

Some parents abuse their children because they lose control of themselves. They have such stressful and difficult lives that they do not have the will or patience to discipline their child without abuse.

Children who are abused or are harmfully punished are more likely to be uncooperative than children who are guided and disciplined more patiently and gently.



2 to 3 years: Why talk with and listen to your child?

The way parents talk to their children influences their development. Many mothers talk to their children. Their talk often includes giving a lot of directions such as do's ("Pick up your toys now"), don'ts ("Do not leave your book there") and refusals ("Not now"). It also includes a lot of teaching new knowledge ("This is shaped like a square") and asking questions ("What color is this?"). It is all right to talk to children, but studies show that when parents talk only to their children, not with them, the children's language learning is limited.

Parents talk with children when they match their comments and discussion to the children's questions and activities. This may include continuing the topic the child has introduced or introducing a new topic based on the interest of the child.

When an adult talks with the child, she shows that she cares about his interests, experiences and needs and that she wants to learn more about them. The adult can initiate such a conversation by saying: "What do you want to do with that stick?" or "Tell me about your visit to the farm" or "You seem rather tired."

Talking with children and listening to them helps them gain confidence and raises their self-esteem. They realize that what they have to say is important and that they are worth being listened to and responded to.



2 to 3 years: Do toddlers lie and steal on purpose?

Children this age do not understand about lying and stealing. It is not unusual for children to tell an untruth or to take things that do not belong to them. They are not trying to misbehave. Gentle teaching is important at these times, not punishment.

Young children's heads are filled with "tall tales". They have difficulty telling the difference between fantasy and reality. Remember, adults in our society support Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny and encourage children to believe in them. It takes a long time before a child can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. Very creative children have very lively imaginations.

Try accepting the untruth as a story and then say: "That's quite a story! Now, what really happened?" This allows the child to express his imagination as well as to help him differentiate between reality and fantasy. (As he gets older, it is better to let the child

know you know he is not telling the truth rather than trying to catch him in a lie.)

Young children have little knowledge of property rights. Within the family, so many things belong to everybody that it is difficult for them to know what is not theirs.

It is not helpful to call a young child a liar or a thief or to treat him as if he has done a very wrong thing. Give him some rules to help him know what behavior is acceptable. For example, tell him: "Do not bring anything home unless a grownup tells you it is okay" or "Always ask a grownup if it is okay to keep something another child gives you or if you can keep something you find."



Two to three years: Biting

At about one year of age, children will sometimes bite others. Usually they are teething and it makes their gums feel better. Sometimes they bite because they are tired.

Around 2 to 3 years, they may bite occasionally even if they are generally happy and good-natured. Toddlers who bite often for no apparent reason and are usually tense or unhappy, may have a problem.

Do not bite the child back. Biting or slapping a child for biting lets the child believe it is okay to bite or slap.

Some reasons toddlers bite:

- * They may be bossed or spanked too much.
- * They may not be accustomed to being around other small children and may be afraid of them and see them as dangerous or powerful.
- * They may be jealous of a new baby or may resent all small children.

Ways to prevent or stop biting:

- * Don't let the child bite you or anyone else. Say firmly: "No, biting hurts."
- * Take the child to a quiet, safe place, look the child in the eyes and say: "Stay here until you are calmer, I cannot let you bite." After a minute or two, ask: "Are you ready to play again without biting?" If the answer is "yes," let the child go back to playing.
- * You can also teach better ways of showing anger. Tell the child that when he's angry he should say: "Stop that," "Go away" or "I don't like that."
- * When the child substitutes words for hurting, praise him with words and hugs. As the child learns to express feelings through words, biting (and hitting) will stop.



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Newborn to 6 months: Why do babies cry?

Crying is an infant's way of communicating with those in his environment that he needs help.

Crying disturbs adults. Parents should not shake or spank a baby if she cries. She does not cry to upset her parents, and she will cry more if she is treated in a rough way. Rough treatment can hurt a baby internally and can cause brain damage. It can also break bones such as arms and legs. Shaking can cause blindness and death.

Sometimes people think that picking up their baby every time he cries teaches him to cry even more to get attention. This is not true for very young babies. Comforting them will not spoil them. A baby that is picked up right away will cry less later on. At about the fourth week of life, babies will begin to make fussy and complaining noises when they need something. If these quiet cries are answered right away they learn they do not have to scream.

