

GROWING TOGETHER

Newsletter for Parents of Preschool Children

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DISCIPLINE

Why Kids Act Up – At The Worst Times

The ringing of the telephone signals bedlam.

As you answer the call, your toddler climbs onto the counter. As you say hello, the five-year-old pulls him off.

It's funny how children are awful, just when you have no time. Like other coincidences in childhood, this one is on purpose.

The bickering and skirmishing around your feet, as you press the telephone close to your ear, is because your children feel scared that they will be abandoned, angry that they are being ignored.

Your children would rather risk a scolding than feel they don't exist for you.

Maybe the following ideas will help, and maybe they won't. At least you and your child will be dealing more directly with the real problems at hand.

To have a telephone conversation. Keep some special things nearby – a puzzle, crayons and pad, a toy telephone for the baby.

Excuse yourself for a moment (it seems long to you, but it's only seconds) and give your full attention to the kids.

Tell them how long you expect to talk – a little while or a long time. Take the time to help them get started on the puzzle or crayoning. Then go back to your conversation.

In the hassle of everyday. Try to echo back to the children how you think they feel - "It must be hard for you when I can't listen."

Explain your side of things: "I'm really interested in talking to my friend about her sick mother."

But here and there, set aside a few minutes for the children – to read that book; to walk around the block a couple of times; to play a new game or get a project started.

The time it takes to make a child feel things are okay is time well spent – especially when you have little time to spare.

GRANDMA SAYS: BOOK REVIEW
'I Am Not Sleepy And I Will Not Go To Bed!'

By Lauren Child, Candlewick Press,
2001

You and your children will absolutely laugh your way through this little story about Lola, who has more tricks up her sleeve for avoiding bedtime than even your child, I'll bet.

Lola claims to be not at all tired at 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 12 o'clock midnight, "And I will probably still be perky at even 13 o'clock in the morning," she asserts.

The good-natured older brother, who goes through it all, provides pink milk for Lola and the tigers that she insists have some too.

He shoos the whales down the drain in the bathtub so Lola can take her bath, and finds the toothbrush that Lola says the lion is using so she can't brush her teeth. (Lola, never daunted, says, "Oh, he must be using yours.")

Eventually Lola gets into bed, even though she has the last comment, leaving us all with the wish that there were an easier way.

Bedtime has to be among the most hotly contested battles in many homes these days.

What can parents do to ensure that bedtime becomes a more relaxed time for all?

Begin to establish helpful sleep habits when your child is an infant.

Studies show that babies who are held until they fall asleep often become habituated to needing an adult with them at bedtime.

Instead, it is a good idea for parents to learn to recognize when babies are sleepy, as they begin to rub their eyes or ears, or "zone out".

Crying is actually a late indicator, and waiting for this may make it difficult for babies to sleep on their own.

If babies are put in bed when they are drowsy, this helps them learn to settle down and fall asleep on their own.

A comfort object, such as a soft toy or blanket associated with bedtime, may help establish relaxing behaviors.

Both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Academy of General Dentistry are now recommending using pacifiers with babies after the first month, giving them only when infants are going to sleep, and beginning to wean by age two.

Research shows that pacifier use may reduce the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

As children become active toddlers, establishing bedtime routines as predictable sequences helps avoid the resistance that some children may develop.

Bath time, followed by a story and a song, then lights out at about the same time each night, helps establish helpful habits.

Leaving a night-light on or the door open will diminish the fears that appear about this time.

Normal household noise can be oddly reassuring to children and help them drop off to sleep – a pattern of allowing sounds that should be begun in infancy.

Parental attitude and expectation are key components in establishing bedtime routine.

Making it very clear that children need to go to sleep for healthy, active bodies allows parents to give a definitive “good night” and not be drawn into the child’s devious schemes for just “one more kiss” or “need a drink”.

After all, parents’ time for relaxation and communication is another prime need for healthy households; recognizing this need helps parents separate their children’s needs for entertainment and companionship from their own.

Consider what you can do to avoid having a Lola in your home.

BEHAVIOR

Shy or Quiet: What’s The Difference?

There is a fine line between “quiet” and “shy”.

Shyness implies inadequacy, an inability to deal with people or situations, an inability to communicate thoughts or feelings.

The major difference between “shy” and “quiet” is the child’s comfort and happiness.

Is he alone or is he lonely?

Does he prefer not to say anything, or does he want to express himself but is afraid or unable to do so?

Does he have positive or negative feelings about himself? Is he happy?

The shy child is self-conscious and fears others’ evaluations and/or rejections.

The quiet child is probably making evaluations of others. (Ask his opinions. His insight might surprise you!)

The shy child is unable to reach out to others, take risks, approach new situations. The shy child holds feelings and emotions inside. He/she may be unpopular and uncomfortable around peers.

It is important for parents to observe and know their child.

Most people are naturally shy to a certain degree. We don’t rush into new situations, talk to every stranger we meet, nor share our every thought, idea, or emotion.

But the “quiet” child has the potential of crossing the line into shyness.

If he is not encouraged to communicate and does not express himself, he could develop self-doubts, real or imagined rejections and misinterpretations of others’ comments or lack of communication.

It is important for parents of a “quiet” child to communicate verbally and non-verbally to support the child’s

self-worth and to provide a supportive home life.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Cultivate Patience

No matter how much you love your child, there will be times when her behavior will exasperate you.

Try to remember that she will never be this age again and that this, too, will pass.

Let her know how you feel when what she does upsets you. But try to keep your sense of humor and perspective.

Be patient with her attempts to do things for herself. She may not do them well at first, but she'll learn with practice.

Like every other skill, responsibility for oneself takes practice and lots of room for mistakes before it's mastered.

ART

Scribblers Just Can't Help Themselves

Scribblers just can't help themselves. They've just got to close their fists around those fat crayons and scribble. Around and around they go, in circles, zigzags, blurs, and blobs.

Unfortunately, scribblers sometimes like to use walls for their canvasses.

If you provide an alternative for the scribbler, like a large chalkboard and

colored chalk, an easel with newspaper and paint, or a lot of plain paper you'll have fewer pictures on your walls.

Scribbling may look like nonsense to adults, but there is some sense in it for a child. Scribbling is necessary preparation for drawing – and writing, too. But it's hard to know what to say when you're presented with a scribbled work of art.

Sincerely,






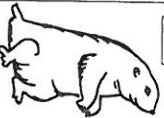


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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<p>1 Tell your parents a story.</p>
						<p>2 Do you look both ways before you cross the street?</p>
						<p>3 Before bedtime, talk about what you did today.</p>
<p>4 Describe your pajamas.</p>	<p>5 Go to the mall and take a long walk inside.</p>	<p>6 Can you say the months of the year?</p>	<p>7 Make some red jello.™</p>	<p>8 Make funny faces with a friend and try to imitate each other.</p>	<p>9 Do you look both ways before you cross the street?</p>	<p>10 Chinese New Year.</p>
<p>11 Make a guess: How many hairs are there on your head? Don't forget eye brows and eye lashes. How can you find out?</p>	<p>12 Birthday of Abraham Lincoln. On which coin does his picture appear?</p>	<p>13 Ash Wednesday.</p>	<p>14 Valentine's Day. Draw a heart.</p>	<p>15 Write a little poem about things you like to do in the wintertime.</p>	<p>16 Do you have a local parks and recreation department? What programs do they offer for children and families?</p>	<p>17 Play with a red toy.</p>
<p>18 President's Day. How many U.S. presidents can you name?</p>	<p>19 Go outside and look for ten birds.</p>	<p>20 Is there enough snow to make a snow person? A snow dog? A snow bird?</p>	<p>21 What can you make with glue, pine cones, cotton balls and small twigs?</p>	<p>22 George Washington's Birthday. Find his picture on a one dollar bill.</p>	<p>23 Check the batteries in your smoke alarms.</p>	<p>24 Sing a lullaby before you go to bed.</p>
<p>25 Look at the numbers on an outdoor thermometer. What is the temperature today?</p>	<p>26 Where is the oldest building in the area where you live?</p>	<p>27 Do you have the phone number of the local poison control center posted by your telephone?</p>	<p>28 Talk about the things that make you happy.</p>	