

PARENTING

Advice & Encouragement

The
Toughest Job
You'll Ever Love



*Before I was married I had six theories about raising children.
Now I have six children and no theories.*

-John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester-



How to Use This Book

This book is designed to be easy to read, easy to understand, and easy to use over and over again as a reference. Why make parenting any harder than it already is?

- ✓ Throughout the book we use both “he” and “she” to refer to a single child. But all discussions apply to both sexes.
- ✓ Different children develop different skills at different ages. The milestones listed for each age group are only guidelines. If you have concerns about your child, see a pediatrician or consult a specialist.
- ✓ We put general information on parenting topics like communication and discipline at the beginning of the booklet. Following these are chapters that talk about specific developmental ages and stages children go through.
- ✓ Our hope is that you will find practical advice to help you with parenting your children - *“The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love.”*

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PARENTING

The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love

So what's so hard about parenting?

- It's 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- There are no *right* answers for everything.
- Your children will often resist your efforts—because that's *their* job!
- You'll probably never care about anything more than you care about your children.

*Making the decision to have a child is momentous.
It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking
around outside your body.*

-Elizabeth Stone-

Children need to feel safe and secure. They need to know they are loved and to feel they are special. And they need encouragement to become capable and independent.

*Every child is different
and every parent is different.
Parenting is challenging
because there is no one rule
that works for every child and every parent*

Positive parenting skills can be learned. No one is born knowing how to be a good parent. No one person knows everything there is to know about parenting!

With lots of love, patience, persistence ~~and help~~ parenting can be the toughest *and* the most rewarding job there is!

*The trouble with being a parent is ...
by the time you are experienced, you are unemployed.*

-Author Unknown-

All parents deserve SUPPORT!!!

- From family
- From friends
- From the community

You don't have to do it alone. Asking for help is *not* a sign of weakness. Asking for help is a sign of strength that shows you want the best for your children. An important part of being a good parent is getting the support you need, too!

This booklet is designed to support parents and strengthen families. It provides information on children's ages and stages, as well as suggestions for how to meet children's needs and encourage healthy self-esteem. In the back is a list of community resources that can support you and your family.



It takes a village to raise a child.

-African proverb-

A Child's Job

- To grow
- To explore
- To learn
- To make mistakes
- To test rules and push limits,



over and over and over and over

and over and over and over and over

and over and over and over and

and over and over and over.

- And someday, to leave you.

*There are only two lasting bequests
we can hope to give our children.
One of these is roots, the other, wings.*

-Hodding Carter-



The first advice my mother gave me when I became a parent 26 years ago was to think how I would want to be treated, and treat my daughter as if she was a little me.

KQ

A Parent's Job

- Listen to your children
- Take care of yourself
 - Avoid drugs and alcohol
- Educate yourself about positive parenting
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Make mistakes—then apologize
- Learn about yourself
 - Find healthy ways to deal with your stress
 - Make friends with your past. Unresolved issues from the past can sneak up and affect how we see things today.



Q: *What is a parent's job?*

- A:
- To keep you safe
 - To help you learn
 - To make you happy
 - To help you learn to read

Q: *What do parents need to know?*

- A:
- What their kid likes
 - What their kid likes to eat
 - What their kid likes to play

Jessica, Age 6

COMMUNICATION

Good communication is the key to a good relationship with your child. Learning to talk *and* listen to each other will help you stay close now—and in the future.

3 Tips For Being a Good Listener

Pay Attention

- Stop what you're doing!
- With little children, get down to eye level. For older children, try talking in the car sitting side by side.
- Focus on her words.
- “Look” for the feelings behind her words.

Don't Interrupt

- Let him finish his thoughts.
- Let him use his own words.
- Repeat back what he said to make sure you understand.

Show Respect

- Even if you disagree, listen to everything she has to say.
- Don't finish her sentences.
- Don't twist her words to fit *your* point of view.
- Remember to show your love. Smiles and hugs work wonders.

Adapted from: “In Loving Hands Kids Blossom” April 2004.



Remember, communication is a two way street. It means talking and listening.



3 Roadblocks To Good Communication

Too Much Information

Focus on one topic at a time, and keep it short. Let him respond and ask questions.

Too Many Distractions

It's hard to talk—and listen—when you're doing something else. Stop what you're doing—and ask him to do the same.

Too Many Demands

Avoid phrases like, “Don’t touch that!” Instead, try: “Please be careful with that—it could break.” When you explain the reason behind a rule or request, children are more likely to obey.

Make conversation part of your daily routine.

- Turn off the TV and radio during meals.
- Ask about your child’s friends, classmates, and teachers.
- When they tell you about something, ask what they think or how they feel about it.

*I talk and talk and talk,
and I haven't taught people in 50 years
what my father taught by example in one week.*

-Mario Cuomo-

DISCIPLINE

Discipline comes from the Latin word “discere” which means “to learn.”

The purpose of discipline is to teach your child good choices, appropriate behavior and self-control. Discipline is a process.

There are 3 basic ways to change a child’s behavior:

1. **Positive Reinforcement:** to increase a ‘good’ behavior by following it immediately with something ‘nice.’
 - Praise your child right after he does something good.
2. **Negative Reinforcement:** to increase a good behavior by removing a ‘bad’ condition right after the behavior occurs.
 - Mom stops nagging right after Gabe cleans his room. Room cleaning behavior increases.
3. **Punishment:** to decrease an unwanted behavior by immediately following it with something ‘bad.’
 - Taking a toy away from a child who is misbehaving.
 - Spanking.

How effective is punishment?

1. Physical punishment is less effective than positive or negative reinforcement.
2. Punishment only hides ‘bad’ behavior; kids learn when they *can* and when they *can’t* get away with it.
3. Non-physical punishments like losing TV privileges for a week or time-outs, work better *with* reinforcement so ‘right’ behavior is also learned and increased (See Page 10).

Then of course, some things never change!

*“Children today are tyrants.
They contradict their parents,
gobble their food, and
tyrannize their teachers.”
-Socrates (470 BC-399 BC)-*



Question: I don't want to have to bribe my kids to be good. I just want them to do what I ask them to do.

Answer: You work for a paycheck, right? Do you get paid before, or after you've done the work?

Positive reinforcement is a 'paycheck' your child gets right after she does what you want. Bribes are like getting paid *before* you do the work, in hopes that you will try harder. But people being what they are, too often bribes encourage them to take the money and run.



*Effective discipline
teaches children lessons
from their poor behavior choices,
rather than punishing them.*

*If you want your children to improve, let them overhear the
nice things you say about them to others.*

-Haim Ginott-

Spanking



Question: What about spanking? My parents spanked me and I turned out okay. But now my kid's teacher tells me I shouldn't spank my kids.

Answer: The purpose of discipline is to teach children appropriate behavior. Spanking stops a behavior out of pain and fear but does not teach the right behavior. It also teaches bad lessons, like hitting and hurting are okay.

*No one wants rude, spoiled children.
The main problem with spanking
is that it is NOT the best, or even 2nd best, way
to teach children good choices and good behavior!*

Your Angry Feelings

Your children will make you mad, no doubt about it. This is normal. What matters is how you express your anger. Pay attention to signs you're getting mad— increased heart rate, harder and faster breathing, headache, stomach pains, and muscle tightness. When you start feeling angry, STOP and do any of the following:

- **Breathe.** When we get mad, the part of our brain that encourages aggressive behavior turns on and overpowers the thinking part. Breathing slowly sends oxygen to the thinking part of the brain so we can think before we act.
- **Walk away from the situation.** Make sure your child is safe, then take a break.
- **Do something soothing and relaxing.** Take a bath; listen to music or go for a walk. If you have a fish tank, go look at the fish. Research shows watching fish swim increases calm brain waves.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES

Redirecting (1-3 years old)

“Redirect” your child’s attention away from the undesired behavior to a more appropriate one.

Calmly stop the behavior,
explain why it’s not okay,
then substitute another activity.

For example, if your toddler is banging a toy truck on the floor, gently take the truck away, tell her *“That will hurt the floor,”* then offer a softer toy. *“Here, you can pound with this.”*

Time-Outs (3+ years old)

Time-outs interrupt unacceptable behaviors by removing the child from the activity. The term “Time-Out” can be confusing because it is used to refer to 2 different methods. One technique, often used with preschool children, restricts a child’s activities and contacts for a short period of time. It is a form of punishment used to decrease a “bad” behavior. The second approach focuses on anger management through complex positive reinforcement. Its purpose is to help children learn to control strong emotions.

Time-Out I: Non-Physical Punishment

1. Explain time-outs ahead of time.

“If you hit the dog you will have to go into time-out. During time-out, you will sit in this chair and face the wall for three minutes, starting from the time you are quiet. If you get up early we will have to start the timer over again.”

2. Practice with little children until they understand.
3. Pick a quiet, dull “time-out” place (where you can see young children). A chair facing a blank wall works well.
4. Only quiet time counts (not time spent whining, yelling, or crying).

5. The child stays in time-out for 1 minute per year of age; for example, 4 minutes for a four year old.
6. When the time is up, tell the child again what behavior is appropriate and allow him to return to the activity.
7. Praise him for using appropriate behavior.

Time-Out I: Points to Remember

- The punishment used in this case is the time AWAY from anything reinforcing such as toys, other children, or adults. The point is to stop a bad behavior, and make the consequences unpleasant so children (slowly) stop acting that way.
- This is strictly a behavior modification technique. It is NOT supposed to make children suffer for their bad behavior.
- Do not talk to the child during time-out, or allow others to interact with her, because attention is reinforcing.

Time-Out II: Emotional Control

1. Explain time-outs ahead of time.
"When you feel really mad, you can go (specify the place) and do something to make yourself feel better. Then, when you feel calm you can come back."
2. Suggest things he can do to calm down while in time-out. *"You can lie down with Blankey, or look at a book."* Older children can help decide where to go and what they can do to help themselves calm down.
3. Practice with little children until they understand.
4. Present time-outs as a choice. Firmly, but kindly, ask,

“Can you calm your body down or do you need to take some time out? You can come back when you’re ready.”

5. If she returns before she has calmed down, kindly but firmly return her to the time-out and remind her the purpose is to cool off. Describe what you want to see that shows she is calm. *“When you stop crying and can talk quietly I will know you are calm.”*
6. Allow the child to play. This is a good sign that he has regained self-control. Maybe he’s now ready to think about how he might do things differently next time.

Time-Out II: Points to Remember

- This type of time-out is NOT punishment. The point of sending children to time-out is NOT to make them suffer for their bad behavior. Pain and suffering only increase resentment and power struggles.
- Don’t force your child to stay put on a chair or a small space for these time-outs. This shifts the focus from what he did and his responsibility for calming down to who is in power.
- Avoid timers. Use her ability to calm down or her willingness to act appropriately to decide how long a time-out should last. Timers often turn time-outs into power struggles.

So Which Time-Out Is Better?

Each method works best for different problems. (See the Time-Out table on page 13 comparing best uses.) Time-Out I is useful to teach very young children NOT to hit, bite, or throw things. Time-Out II is best for teaching children, including older children, to control and manage their anger. If you use both methods, call them different names, like Time-Outs and Calm-Down-Times, to avoid confusing your child.

<i>TIME-OUT</i>		
	Time-Out I	Time-Out II
Breaking toys	✓	✓
Throwing food	✓	
Tantrums		✓
Hitting, pushing, grabbing	✓	
Talking back	✓	
Screaming “I hate you!”		✓
Not listening	✓	

Setting Reasonable Limits

Limits are important family rules set to protect people and property from harm.

- 4 to 5 limits are enough. Too many rules get confusing.
- Explain limits simply and clearly so your child knows what is expected.
 - You may not play in the street because you might get hit by a car. You may play in the backyard.*
- Explain the consequences for breaking the limit.
 - If you run into the street, you will have to go inside to play.*
- Be consistent in enforcing the limit and the consequence.
- Let the child help in setting some limits. She will often be more cooperative in following the rule.

Consequences

Consequences are the outcomes or results that follow action or behavior. There are positive and negative ways to reinforce behavior. Positive reinforcement will increase behavior and negative reinforcement will decrease behavior (See reinforcements listed on page 7). The type of reinforcement effects behavior directly. You can reinforce your child’s behavior by using positive or negative consequences.

Positive Consequences

1. **Tokens:** Young children love rewards like colorful stickers or tokens. Use them to reward simple behaviors like washing hands or sharing toys. Stickers and tokens can also be saved. When he earns 3 to 5 tokens he gets a BIG reward, like a new coloring book or a trip to play land for lunch.
2. **Charts:** Let her put the stickers on a chart with pictures of the “good” behavior (brushing teeth) to remind her of the goal and potential reward.
3. **Behavior Rewards:** Use activities your child likes to reward him for finishing less fun jobs. When he clears his dishes from the table, play a game of cards with him.
4. **Attention:** Children thrive on adult attention. Even negative attention, like scolding, can reinforce behavior (but probably NOT the behavior you want to increase!).



Remember:

*Pay MORE attention to good behavior
than bad behavior.*

If your child keeps doing something you don't like, try to figure out if you are encouraging it without meaning to. For example:

Sally cries for a candy bar at the store and Dad buys it to quiet her down. Sally's crying is rewarded. The next time they go to the store, Sally is MORE likely to cry for toys or candy.

This is an example of
positive consequences = negative results!

Consistency is the key!

Be consistent with your rules and consequences.

Negative Consequences...

help children learn to take responsibility for their actions.

1. Restricting privileges:

- Taking telephone or car privileges from a teen.
- Restricting television, video games, or other favorite toys for an elementary-school-aged child.

2. Graded consequences (that increase in severity):

- 1st time- lose video game privileges for one day.
- 2nd time- child is "grounded" for one day.
- 3rd time- no play dates for the weekend.

3. Time-Out I:

- Tell him what he did wrong for example, "You threw your toy truck across the room; you will have to go into Time-Out." When the time is up say: "You can play with your toy truck by rolling it across the floor."

Rules for Negative Consequences:

- Tell your child what the consequences are *before* she breaks the rule.
- Tie the consequence directly to a misbehavior.
- The consequence **must** occur every time the misbehavior does.

*It behooves a father to be blameless
if he expects his child to be.*

-Homer-

Assisted Compliance

Gently but firmly help your child to do what you asked. This involves three steps:

1. Remind the child of the rule, "*No jumping on the bed.*"
2. Give a choice, "*Do you want to get off the bed by yourself, or do you want me to help you?*"
3. Count to 3 out loud to give him time to respond. If he doesn't get off the bed, physically "*help*" him to do so. Say "*I guess you want me to help you,*" then gently pick him up and put him on the floor.

You may need to repeat these steps several times before the child cooperates.

Other Helpful Ideas

- Model behaviors you want your child to do.
- Call her name to get her attention before asking or telling her to do something.
- Give a 5- to 10-minute warning before you expect him to stop what he is doing and do what you asked.
- Recognize and praise positive behavior.

Catch them being good!



Discipline is easy-
Consistency is hard!



Roadblocks To Good Discipline

The six biggest roadblocks to effective discipline are:

1. **Confusing discipline with punishment.** Discipline helps children develop self-control and self-esteem. It teaches right from wrong. Punishment might restrain a child temporarily, but it does not teach alternative behavior. Punishment can even damage the parent-child relationship by reducing a child's trust in the parent.
2. **Believing that what works at one time will work all the time.** You need to change the way you discipline your children to keep pace with their natural growth. Different ages and stages, as well as different children, require different techniques.
3. **Thinking that when you have difficulty disciplining a child, you are a “bad” parent.** Don't put yourself down if you don't get the results you want. Think it through and try again.
4. **Believing your children “should” behave a certain way at a certain time.** Children are unique and special. They develop at their own speed, in their own way.
5. **Believing you must “win” every battle.** Don't argue over unimportant issues. Decide which arguments you want to win.
6. **Parents disagreeing in front of a child about discipline.** Solve serious disagreements in private.

PREGNANCY

It is important to seek medical care as soon as you know you are pregnant. Prenatal (“before birth”) care will ensure that you and your baby get a healthy start together.



For prenatal care, call:

Alaska Native Medical Center	563-2662
Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center Downtown	257-4686
Municipal Women, Infants, & Children (WIC)	343-4668

Five Ways To Have A Healthy Baby

“A Healthy Start: Begin Before Baby’s Born” 2008

1. See a health care provider from the start of your pregnancy.
2. Don’t drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes or take drugs.
3. Eat healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk, eggs, cheese, and grains.
4. Take good care of your health and exercise sensibly.
5. Have your baby checked by a doctor or health care provider right after birth and throughout childhood.

Babies born to mothers who received no prenatal care are *3 times* more likely to be born at low birth weight, and *5 times* more likely to die, than those whose mothers received prenatal care.

“A Healthy Start: Begin Before Baby’s Born” 2008

Alcohol and Pregnancy

DO NOT DRINK WHILE PREGNANT!

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a permanent birth defect syndrome caused by consuming alcohol during pregnancy. Drinking while pregnant can cause your child to have permanent brain damage.

FASD is the leading known-
and the only 100 percent preventable-
cause of mental retardation in children.

(State of Alaska, DHSS 2008)

Symptoms of FASD can include the following:

- Low birth weight
- Impaired growth before and after birth
- Facial malformations
- Small head size
- Learning disabilities and lower IQ
- Hyperactivity and the inability to pay attention
- Sleeping problems
- Organ damage

*Although there are many trial marriages...
there is no such thing as a trial child.*

-Gail Sheehy-

Smoking and Pregnancy

Smoking during pregnancy increases the following health risks:

- Premature births
- Stillbirths
- Low birth weight
- Death of baby during the first year of life
- Birth defects



**Smoking during pregnancy
is the single most preventable cause
of illness and death
among mothers and infants.**

(Centers for Disease Control 2006)

Second Hand Smoke and Children

Second hand smoke is smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar or pipe *plus* smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers. It lingers in the air for hours, and is breathed in by non-smokers. A scientific report released in June 2006, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke*, revealed that the effects of secondhand smoke are more dangerous than previously believed.

Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can cause increased risk for heart and lung diseases. Secondhand smoke contains more than 50 chemicals that cause cancer.

Children are especially vulnerable to the toxic effects of secondhand smoke because their bodies are still developing.

**There [are] more children killed
by exposure to parental smoking
than by all unintentional injuries combined.**

(Cornell University Science News, September 26, 1997)

The children killed included approximately:

- 3,000 due to low birth weight;
- 2,000 due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome; and,
- another 1,300 caused by respiratory infection, asthma and burns.



BIRTH TO ONE YEAR (0-1)



Coming into the world is a big scary adventure for babies. At first, they don't even know who you are- they only know when they feel good (full, warm, dry...) or bad (hungry, cold, tired...). They are learning all the time, and the job of parents is to help them know the world is a welcoming place where their needs will be met.

Newborns: What To Expect

1. Exhaustion! All new parents are sleep-deprived.

Your baby doesn't know day from night, so she sleeps and wakes intermittently - around the clock. Every baby is different, but expect your baby to sleep 11 to 16 out of every 24 hours.

2. Uncertainty – you are getting to know a new person.

You don't know yet whether your baby will be bold or shy, athletic or artistic, or quiet or busy. He doesn't know either. He just knows when he feels good or bad.

3. Crying

Babies cry the most between ages 2 to 4 months. If you are getting upset by the crying, try to find a responsible adult to watch the baby and take a break. If you're alone, put him in his crib where he's safe, and take a "time-out" for yourself (with ear plugs if necessary). ☺

People who say they sleep like a baby usually don't have one.

-Leo Burke-

CRYING
IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE
OF PHYSICAL ABUSE FOR INFANTS.

"In Loving Hands Kids Blossom" April 2004

What To Do If Your Baby Is Crying

If you've fed her, changed her diaper, and made sure nothing is poking her, but your baby still keeps crying, try to comfort her by holding her. Sing and dance gently with her or rock to some soft calming music. If that still doesn't work, put her down in her crib and let her cry it out. Check on her every few minutes, patting her gently to let her know you are near. If nothing seems to work, consult your pediatrician.



*Remember, your baby's cry
is supposed to be hard to ignore!
It's made that way — to make you respond.
Respond with care!*

What Your Baby Needs

Your baby needs to learn he can TRUST you. He learns to trust each time you:

- comfort him when he cries
- feed her when she's hungry
- change his diaper when necessary
- dress her appropriately
- hold him close and often
- talk to her sweetly and softly

Never EVER shake a baby!

Newborn babies have very weak neck muscles that cannot support their heads.

Shaking a baby can cause severe brain damage or death!

- **Car safety:** *Always* put your baby in a car safety seat. The safest place is in the middle of the back seat. Children less than 1 year **OR** less than 20 pounds should sit in a rear-facing car seat.
- **Choking:** When she starts eating solid food, cut it into small bites. Don't let her play with anything that may cover her face (like plastic bags) or that she can swallow (like coins).
- **Scalding:** Never carry hot liquids or food near your baby. Test hotness of food and bottles before giving them to him. Stir bath water thoroughly.
- **Sleeping Safety:** To prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) always put your baby to sleep on her back.
- **Shots:** Shots are important for your child's health and safety. For information, call the Municipality of Anchorage Immunization Clinic at 343-4799.

Fun Things To Do With Babies

- Talk, read and sing to your baby. He loves to hear your voice. To him, you're better than American Idol!
- Play soothing music. Some psychologists believe exposing babies to music helps healthy brain development.
- Spend time cuddling and holding your baby. Give a gentle baby massage, enjoying her smooth skin and baby smell, the miracle of her fingers and toes.
- Play with your baby when he's alert and relaxed. Take a break when he gets tired or fussy.



*Every beetle
is a
gazelle
in the eyes of its
mother.*

-Arab proverb-

**The following are general guidelines only—
All babies grow at different rates.**

Between 3-6 Months Old Your Baby Will...

- smile,
- make cooing, gurgling sounds,
- anticipate being lifted,
- play "peek-a-boo" games,
- follow moving objects or people with his eyes,
- grasp rattle given to her,
- turn toward the sound of a human voice,
- often sleep through the night, and
- quiet down at the sound of a soothing voice or when held.

Between 6-9 Months Old Your Baby Will...

- roll over, (Never leave her on the bed alone.)
- laugh and squeal with delight,
- scream if annoyed,
- smile at herself in a mirror,
- know familiar faces,
- reach for objects,
- help hold the bottle during feeding,
- move toys from one hand to another,
- shake a rattle,
- pull up to a sitting position on her own if you grasp her hands,
- sit with only a little support,
- bounce when held in a standing position, and
- open his mouth for a spoon.

Between 9-12 Months Old Your Baby Will...

- know you,
- and recognize people he doesn't know = "strangers".



All of a sudden your baby does *not* want to be held by people she doesn't know. She cries when you leave the house or drop her off at daycare. This is normal. At this age, when you leave her sight, you no longer exist - she's afraid you will be gone forever. This is called *separation anxiety*, and it usually peaks between 12-24 months of age.

Prepare your child for your absence by playing "peek-a-boo". Leave a blanket with your perfume or pictures of you in his cubby at daycare.



Baby Signing

A fun way to communicate with your baby or toddler is to teach them *baby signs*, just like American Sign Language. Simple, easy-to-do gestures represent words like “cat,” “eat,” or “all gone.” Using signs gives babies a way to “talk” to you before they can speak. Many babies learn to wave “bye-bye” or shake their head to mean “no” all by themselves. Baby sign programs teach lots more easy gestures to communicate. It helps the child acquire language and is easy and fun for the whole family.

“Benefits of Signing with Your Baby” 2004

For more information look online at <http://www.mybabycantalk.com>, or visit your local library.



*You never “spoil” an infant
by picking her up when she cries.*

If you have questions about your child's development or want to have him tested, call your pediatrician, the Department of Health and Human Services, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program at 343-4668 or the Make-A-Difference Information Network at 1-800-332-6262. (To help you find a testing location near your community.)

The Alaska Parent Line

1-800-643-KIDS (5437)

can help you with questions about child rearing.

Parts of this chapter adapted from the following sources: “Developmental Milestones—A Guide for Parents” April 1991, “Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy Child Development” May 27, 2008.

TODDLERS: ONE TO THREE YEARS



Your toddler is curious about the world. Now his body can take him where he wants to go, and his hands can grab things he wants to see! He's off and running (with you running as fast as you can behind him...).

This is a time for huge intellectual, social, and emotional changes.

What To Expect

Toddlers can follow two to three short sentence instructions and express a wide range of emotions.

- Her favorite word is, “NO.”
- His favorite phrase is, “I can do it!”

Toddlers *need* to feel independent and brave so they can go out and explore the world.

What Your Toddler Needs

SAFETY & FREEDOM

- Give her room to explore – safely. Childproof your home. Put fragile, valuable or dangerous items out of reach.
- Let him touch and feel things around him. Go on walks and let her feel nature.
- Her sense of taste is also developing. Things often go from hand to mouth.
- Make sure your child is always supervised, and be prepared to redirect when necessary.
- Keep a regular schedule for meals, naps and playtimes.

Discouraging curiosity and independence may cause children to believe there is something “wrong” or “shameful” with what they are doing. They may then think there is something “wrong” or “shameful” about them!

What You Can Do

- Celebrate her accomplishments no matter how small they seem to you. Walking, picking up something, learning a new word– these are big accomplishments.
- Ask him to point to his eyes, nose, and ears...
- Sit on the floor and roll a ball back & forth...
- Ask her to help you: *Would you please get me a diaper?* Then, *Good girl. Thank you. What a big helper you are!*



Celebrate!

I can do it!
Yes you can!



Once as a young mother, I was so frustrated with my son’s actions I threatened him in a loud irritated voice. He looked at me, tilting his head back and said, “But mama, I’m only two years old.” That really hit me... Ohhhh yes... he was only two years old and I was expecting him to do things far, far beyond his years. I never forgot that comment. Even when my kids were teens I reminded myself to keep their age in mind before expecting them to do a task beyond their years.

Norma

TANTRUMS

This is the age when tantrums are common. Young children are still learning appropriate ways to express anger and frustration. Also, they know more than they express with words. So they get very frustrated when they can't make their needs and feelings clear.

How To Cope With Your Child's Tantrum

1. Stay calm.

*"When your child has a tantrum don't have one of your own."
- Dr. J. Kuriansky-*

2. Remind her to use her words. Teach "I" statements:

"I feel angry when you grab my toy." Using "I" statements focuses on the child's feelings without attacking or blaming the other person.

3. Help him calm down.

-Hold him. Some children get so mad they feel like they are falling apart. Sit him on your lap and wrap your arms around him to help him calm down.

-Other children need more space. Stay in the same room with her but keep your distance. Give her some time to deal with her feelings. Use Time-Out II (See Page 11).

As long as your child is safe, go about your business and wait patiently until he calms down. Then help him identify his feelings, "I saw that you were really mad when Suzi took your crayon. Next time use your words and tell her, "I don't like it when you take my toy."



When I asked a young student if she knew what "I Statements" were, she nodded and said, "When you look someone in the eye when you're talking to them."
Marie

PLAY

Play is serious business for young children. They learn about the world, develop social skills, and improve their motor skills through play.

Fun activities for young children include:

1. **Dress-up.** Keep a box with clothes/costumes, shoes, jewelry, and scarves (all of which can be bought inexpensively from a thrift store). Encourage your child to play “pretend.”
2. **Art.** Crayons, pencils, and lots of paper. Stop by the Anchorage Daily News and ask for the ‘ends’ of newsprint rolls for great paper.
3. **Toys to break apart and put back together.**
4. **Wooden blocks.** Well-sanded 2x4’s cut in different lengths make great building blocks.
5. **Bag Game.** Take a paper bag (lunch size) and put about 20 objects in it - like a key, a spoon, a button, a comb, a thimble. Then have your toddler reach in and grab an object, figuring out what it is by touch before he pulls it out.
6. **Story time.** Set up a special time to read books with your toddler.
7. **Play parade or follow the leader** with your toddler (and let them lead).
8. **Encourage your child to tell you his name and age.**
9. **Teach your child simple songs** like Itsy Bitsy Spider, or other cultural childhood rhymes.
10. **Limit television to one show** (preferably ½ hour) a day.

PRESCHOOL AGE: THREE TO FIVE YEARS

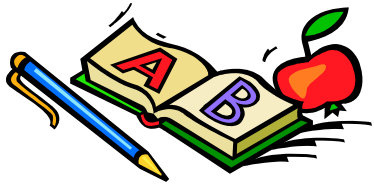


Your child is interested in the world around him. He is becoming more independent and is now interested in adults and children outside his own family. He is also very curious and wants to explore and ask you (again and again and again and...) about his surroundings.

He is able to...

- ✓ ride a tricycle, skip and jump
- ✓ dress and undress himself
- ✓ use safety scissors
- ✓ copy basic shapes like squares and triangles
- ✓ know the difference between boys and girls
- ✓ play well with other children
- ✓ recall part of a story
- ✓ talk clearly and use adult language; and
- ✓ feel pride in his accomplishments

This stage is called the preschool age. Preschoolers develop skills they will need for school like following directions, learning colors and shapes, as well as the alphabet and numbers.



The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles. A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom.

The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard.

-Sloan Wilson-

What You Can Do

Encourage her to play with other kids. Go to the park or make play dates with friends. Playing with other children helps her learn social skills like sharing and friendship.

Children this age *like* to help! Take advantage of it while you can. Let him help with simple chores like...

- setting the table
- tearing lettuce for the salad; gathering ingredients
- folding and sorting laundry (kitchen towels, socks, underwear and so on)

You not only get some help around the house, but he feels

- you value his help
- he is very capable

What a deal!



Question: Tommy does not listen when I ask him to do something. How can I make him listen?

Answer: Young children are able to understand simple instructions at this stage.

- Get his attention by saying, “*Tommy, please look at me.*”
- Keep your instruction short and simple, “*Please put your toy away.*”
- Ask **only once**. If he doesn’t move, ask him if he wants to do it himself, or if he wants you to help him. Or tell him you are going to count to 3, then he will go into time-out (#1), if he doesn’t put the toy away.
- Praise him when he responds. “*Good choice. What a big boy to do it by yourself.*” Or, “*I like how you put the truck away.*”

The quickest way for a parent to get a child's attention is to sit down and look comfortable.

Discipline and Your Preschooler

Preschoolers are beginning to make the connection between actions and consequences. Make sure you explain the rules to your child.

- ✓ Discipline works best if your child knows what TO DO instead of just what NOT to do. “*Please use your inside voices,*” instead of just “*Stop yelling!*”
- ✓ Reward good behavior. Be specific with your praise. “*I liked how patient you were while I was paying for our groceries.*”
- ✓ Focus on the behavior, not the child. Instead of, “*Don’t be a bully,*” say “*It is not okay to hit.*”
- ✓ Time-outs work well for children in this age group (no more than one-minute per year of age).



**ALL kids are good!
There are no bad kids.
It’s their behavior that is sometimes bad!**

Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child learns to feel shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

-Dorothy Law Neite-

Surviving Errands!



For young children, errands are boring and just plain exhausting. Dealing with a screaming child in public is no picnic for you, either. Worry not! Here are some tips to make running errands a little more enjoyable for you and your tot.

- ✓ Plan only a few (2-3) errands a day and keep them short!
- ✓ Go when your child is rested – not tired or hungry.
- ✓ If your child misbehaves while you're out, take her aside to a quiet place and stand there quietly for 30 seconds.
- ✓ DO NOT yell at your child in public! (How would you like your boss to scold you in front of others?)
- ✓ If your child completely 'falls apart' abandon your mission until another day. (People will understand if you have to leave a half-filled grocery cart in the aisle; we've all been there.)



Before you go...

- *Discuss your trip with your child.* Tell her where you are going, how long it will take, and what you will do.
- *Review the rules.* Use indoor voices, keep hands to yourself, no running.
- Make sure that your child has *something to do*. Bring a small toy or book in the car. Play games like looking for out-of-state license plates. In the store, let him find items on the shelves or count the items in the cart.
- Don't forget to **reward good behavior!**
- Schedule in rewards, such as a stop at the park on the way home *if* he's quiet and helpful. (If you make a promise, you **MUST** honor it. If you're not sure you'll be able to do something, don't promise; tell him you will try to stop but it will depend on how long the errands take.)

PRESCHOOL REWARDS

- Play a game of her choice – let her make up her own rules if she wants to.
- Read to her for an extra 5 or 10 minutes at night.
- Do something *he* enjoys – not what you enjoy. Quality time with you – even for just a few minutes will be remembered longer than any reward that can be bought at any store.
- Your time and attention are the best rewards you can give.

*Your children need your presence
more than your presents.*

-Jesse Jackson-

PRESCHOOL PLAY IS FOCUSED ON IMITATING WHAT ADULTS DO:

- playing house;
- playing doctor or a veterinarian;
- talking on a toy phone;
- playing with cars; or
- playing store.

Check out the Municipality of Anchorage
Parks and Recreation Department at
<http://www.muni.org/parks/index.cfm>
about programs and activities available
for children and families.

*Don't worry that children never listen to you;
worry that they are always watching you.*

-Robert Fulghum-

FEELINGS

Children are learning to identify different feelings. You can help by naming them as you see them: “*You looked sad when your balloon popped,*” or “*It makes you mad when Mark grabs your book, doesn’t it?*”

Normal Feelings

Glad

Sad

Mad

Bad (Sorry)

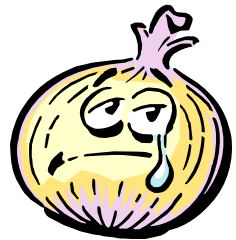
Scared

It’s not always easy to let our children feel their feelings. Their anger may make us mad. Or their sadness makes us feel bad. And we don’t like feeling sad. Remind yourself those are *her* feelings, and it’s okay for her to feel that way.

Boys Have Feelings Too

Some people in some cultures believe that it is not okay for a boy to be sad or scared.

But children who are not allowed to show feelings of sadness or fear often learn to express these feelings in violent or aggressive ways. They learn to hit or yell - to “act out” - when they feel afraid or sad.



Talk to your son about his feelings. Let him know that everybody feels sad sometimes, and it’s okay to cry if he wants to. Encourage him to deal with his feelings in an open, healthy way.

PRESCHOOLER SAFETY

- Explain why it is important to stay out of the street. Remind him not to run after stray balls.
- Be cautious when letting your child ride her tricycle. Make sure she always wears a helmet. Keep her on the sidewalk and away from the street.
- Check outdoor playground equipment for loose parts or sharp edges.
- When your child is playing outside, keep watch over him at **all** times.
- Practice water safety. Teach your child to swim.
- Teach your child how to interact with strangers and when not to interact.



Sometimes I ask a question rather than tell my child what I want. For example, “It’s time to pick up your toys, okay?” This makes it a choice, so he doesn’t really have to do it. Instead, give a timeline, “In five minutes, it will be time to put away the toys,” is more direct and effective. Then I can lead into a clean up (or any task) with choices. Such as, “Can you show me where first?” Dawn

Parts of this chapter adapted from the following sources: “Child Development” September 2005, “Homework Basics” May 2005, “6-8 Years Ages & Stages” April 2004.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD: SIX TO EIGHT YEARS



School is in the center of your child's life at this stage. It is his first independent venture outside the home and family.

What To Expect

Some mental milestones include:

- a longer attention span;
- increased problem-solving ability;
- beginning to understand time and days of the week;
- may show stronger interest in reading; and,
- enjoys creating elaborate collections.

Your child's way of thinking is also changing:

- she begins to see things from another child's point of view (but is still very self-centered); and,
- he views things as black and white, right or wrong, wonderful or terrible, with very little middle ground.

Your child's feelings and abilities:

- shows strong desire to perform well and do things right;
- finds criticism and failure difficult to handle;
- seeks security in groups, organized play, and clubs; and,
- may become upset when behavior or schoolwork is ignored.

Your child's friendships change:

- being with friends is increasingly important;
- girls play with girls, boys with boys; and,
- he may have a "best" friend and an "enemy".



Know What Your Child Likes To Do!

Help your child discover what he likes to do. Maybe it's acting, singing, soccer or baseball, swimming, karate, or music. Ask her teacher for ideas and opportunities. Encourage her interests by signing her up for lessons or joining a team. But keep programs short so she can try different things until she finds one she really likes.

By doing what he likes to do (not what you'd like for him to do), he will work harder at getting better at it!



Don't try to do too many activities at once. You don't want to stress yourself or your child. Pick 1 or 2 activities that interest her and that you can easily fit into your family's schedule.

*You have a lifetime to work,
but children are only young once.*

-Polish Proverb-



Don't Forget To Catch Him Being Good!

Find something *specific* to praise everyday.

- “I like how you *straightened up your room today.*”
- “You were so *patient while waiting for your sister to get ready.*”
- “Nice manners. That was very *polite of you to say thank you to the cashier.*”
- “Wow! You got ready for school on your own and you did it so fast. That will help you get to school and me get to work on time, too! Thank you!”

Encouragement and specific praise give your child positive messages about himself – that he is hardworking, patient, kind, and polite. These positive thoughts are then stored in his mind. The more praise he gets, the more positive thoughts he can store for playback when he needs them most.

*It's not only children who grow. Parents do too. As much as we watch to see what our children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours.
I can't tell my children to reach for the sun.
All I can do is reach for it, myself.*

-Joyce Maynard-

Quality Family Time

As your child spends more time with friends, don't forget to make time for family activities, too.

- Movie night – take turns picking out a movie.
- Play board games or card games.
- Take a walk or ride bikes together.
- In the winter go sledding or cross-country skiing!

Talking To Your Child



Set aside a few minutes every day to listen to your child.

- Put everything down and really listen to what your child has to say.
- Talk about whatever she wants to talk about.
- Don't offer advice or judgments, but do ask

questions: “What do you think about that?” or “How did that make you feel?”

If your child feels comfortable talking with you now, she will come to you when faced with difficult issues like sex and drugs.

Show interest in her interests. Ask questions:

“What happened at recess today?” or “Tell me about your new friend?”

Use kind words. When you remind him of mistakes, use the tone of voice you would like to hear if *you* did something wrong. If he left his dirty clothes on the floor, simply state the facts.

“Josh, your clothes are on the bathroom floor. Please put them away now.”

*In bringing up children,
spend on them half as much money and twice as much time.*

-Author Unknown-



Question: When I ask my child how her day was, she always just says, “Good.” How can I get her to talk more?

Answer: Avoid questions with ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answers like, “Did you have a good day today?”

Try asking more open-ended questions like:

“What did you like best in school today,” or

“What was your favorite activity today,” or

“What did you do in music (or art, or gym)?”

These questions help your child think back about the specifics of her day and remember something to share with you.

Discipline

- **Enforce the rules that you’ve set.**
Your child will continue to test the rules, but if you’re consistent and persistent, they will get it – eventually.
- **Consistently enforce consequences.**
Consequences (like time-outs, no TV or a toy taken away or no play time with friends after dinner) are effective at this stage.
- **Follow through.** If you don’t do what you say, you risk losing your authority and credibility.

*Discipline your son in his early years while there is still hope.
If you don't you will ruin his life.*

-Anonymous -



I have learned a lot about my kids’ daily lives just by making a salad together. You start chopping vegetables and the conversation begins!

Traci

SCHOOL and HOMEWORK



Kids do better in school when their parents are involved. Here are tips on how to help your child succeed in school.

- ✓ **Know her teacher.**
- ✓ **Attend school events and parent-teacher conferences.**
- ✓ **Make space for homework-** a designated place with all her pens, paper, and books.
- ✓ **Set aside time for homework-** same time every day.
- ✓ **Know what she is studying in school.** You might even learn a thing or two!
- ✓ **Recognize and be proud of her efforts.** Display homework or spelling tests on the refrigerator.

If your child needs help you can't provide, ask family members or friends for help. Talk to her teacher, too. School officials can refer you to tutors or other help in the school or the community.

CHILD SAFETY

- **Protect your child properly in the car.**
- **Teach your child how to be safe walking to school, riding a bike, and playing outside.**
- **Always supervise her when she's playing near water or trying risky activities, such as climbing.**
- **Talk with your child about how to ask for help when she needs it.**
- **Keep potentially harmful household products, tools, equipment, and firearms stored safely.**

Parts of this chapter adapted from: "Child Development" September 2005, "Homework Basics" May 2005, "6-8 Years Ages & Stages" April 2004.

THE T'WEENS: NINE TO ELEVEN YEARS

Between Childhood and Adolescence

How time flies! Your little angel is not so little anymore. (And not always an angel...?) Although physical growth is slow for many kids, especially boys, the T'weens is a period of many, many changes in the life of your child.

As she develops a new sense of who she is, her perception of the world and the people around her is also growing and changing.

What To Expect

- ✓ Girls can be as much as 2 years ahead of boys in physical maturity. Some girls begin to menstruate.
- ✓ Boys notice girls; girls notice boys.
- ✓ Both begin trying new ways of behaving.
- ✓ Growing independence in decision-making.
- ✓ They take more responsibility for their own actions.
- ✓ They may show more interest in competitive sports.

*Be prepared to use all your "patience" skills-
T'weens often think they don't need adult care or
supervision any more.*

*But if you leave them to care for themselves,
they're lonely, unhappy, and sometimes frightened.*



Self-image...

- ✓ Both sexes are very concerned with body image.
- ✓ Feeling good about themselves still comes mostly from other people's approval.



Mom and Dad...

Alas, your child begins to realize you are not the all powerful and perfect beings he thought you were!

He may be secretly disappointed and angry by this discovery, and show it by defying your authority.

All the same, he still wants your approval and follows many rules out of respect for you.

Friends...

Friends are increasingly important. Close friends are almost always the same sex, although interest in the opposite sex is growing.



Intellectual Growth

Twins are just beginning to think logically and symbolically. They still consider every situation unique and may not see similarities between them, but they are moving toward abstract ideas. Values are still black or white. Something is right or wrong, fabulous or disgusting, fun or boring. There is very little middle ground.



We were born with
2 ears and 1 mouth for a reason!
Listen to your children!

Traci

What T'weens Need

Understanding

- Support her strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile. Social acceptance and a sense of achievement are important.
- Privacy. Allow him to be alone. Time to read, daydream, or do school work uninterrupted is important.

Support and Reassurance

- Changes in her body and moods can be overwhelming and scary. Talk to your child about normal physical changes and what happens in puberty.
- If your child shows interest in a non-traditional activity, she may need additional support and encouragement to be successful.

A Listening Ear

- Make sure you listen well and avoid criticizing or questioning her actions. It's important she learns she can talk to you about important and delicate topics. It will then be easier to talk about difficult subjects like sex, alcohol, and drugs.

Encouragement and Praise

- School keeps getting harder and more demanding. Other pressures are added, too. Continue to praise successes, even small ones. Minimize failures. Everyone learns better and tries harder when they believe in themselves and think they can succeed!

Appreciation of Individuality

- T'weens *hate* to be compared to others. Instead, point out how much he's improved from what he could do before. Children at this age often are surprised at what they can accomplish, especially with encouragement from an adult.

Affection

- He may not want physical hugs and kisses anymore, but give him verbal hugs—"I love you."

What You Can Do

- **Help your child develop a sense of responsibility.** Encourage older children to help with younger children, but don't overdo. Allow time for play and relaxation.
- **Support your child taking on new challenges.** Encourage him to solve problems, such as a disagreement with a friend, on his own.
- **Do fun things together as a family,** such as playing games.
 - Games of strategy such as checkers, chess, and Monopoly® are favorites.
- Remember to provide **plenty of food.** Older children have larger appetites and need to eat more.
- Help your child set her own **achievable goals**—she'll learn to take pride in herself and rely less on approval or reward from others.
- **Continue to be involved** with his school.

Children are natural mimics: they act like their parents in spite of every attempt to teach them good manners.

-Anonymous-

Tween Safety

- All children younger than 12 years old should ride in the back seat with a seat belt properly fastened. Children shorter than 4 feet 9 inches tall should ride in a car seat or booster seat (because adult seat belts don't fit properly).
- Know where your child is and whether an adult is present.
- Many children get home from school before their parents get home from work. Have clear rules and plans for your child when she is home alone.

Discipline and Your T'ween

As children grow they want more independence and responsibility. Natural consequences are effective discipline tools for this stage.

For example, if your child forgets a project he urgently needs for school that day, you might think about taking time off from work, going home, then taking it to him.

Don't do it! You'll miss a great opportunity for your child to learn through natural consequences – and you're not the bad guy! He needs to suffer the consequences (getting in trouble with his teacher) for not preparing for school the night before (like you've told him a million times).

*Resist the natural urge
to jump in and rescue your child!*

You can do it! Yes, it's easier said than done. If you feel yourself weakening, think about whether you want him still calling you for help when he's 30 years old!

*Children need love,
especially when they do not deserve it.
-Harold Hulbert-*

ADOLESCENCE: TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN YEARS

The Teenage Years or Movement Toward Independence

Adolescence is an intense time of self-discovery. In their quest to define themselves and their relationship to the world, adolescents ask themselves four basic questions.

**Adolescence: The Four Questions* 2001*

Four Major Questions Facing Adolescents

1. **Who am I?** (Relating to sexuality and social roles.)
2. **Am I normal?** (Do I fit in with a certain crowd?)
3. **Am I competent?** (Am I good at something that is valued by peers and parents?)
4. **Am I lovable and loving?** (Will someone besides Mom and Dad love me?)

What To Expect

12-14 Years

- Struggle with sense of identity
- Moodiness
- Close friendships gain importance
- Less affection shown to parents, with occasional rudeness
- Realization that parents are not perfect; pleasure in pointing out their faults
- Search for new people to love in addition to parents
- Tendency to return to childish behavior

Career Interests

- Peer group influences interests and clothing styles
- Mostly interested in present and near future
- Greater ability to work

Sexuality

- Girls develop ahead of boys
- Shyness, blushing, and modesty
- More showing off
- Greater interest in privacy
- Experimentation with body which includes masturbation
- Worries about being normal

Ethics and Self-Direction

- Rule and limit testing
- Occasional experimentation with cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol
- Capacity for abstract thought

15-16 Years

- Self-involvement, flip-flops between unrealistically high expectations and poor self-concept
- Extremely concerned with appearance and body
- Feelings of strangeness about one's self and body
- Lowered opinion of parents, withdrawal from them
- Effort to make new friends
- Periods of sadness as the psychological loss of the parents takes place
- Examination of inner experiences, which may include writing in a diary

Career Interests

- Intellectual interests gain importance
- Energies directed into creative and career interests such as art and dance.

Sexuality

- Concerns about sexual attractiveness
- Frequently changing relationships
- Movement towards sexual identity
- Tenderness and fears shown toward opposite sex
- Feelings of love and passion

*Teenagers are people who act like babies
if they're not treated like adults.*

Ethics and Self-Direction

- Development of ideals and selection of role models
- More consistent evidence of conscience
- Greater capacity for setting goals
- Interest in moral reasoning

17-19 Years

- Firmer identity
- Able to delay gratification
- Able to think ideas through
- Able to express ideas in words
- More developed sense of humor
- Stable interests
- Greater emotional stability
- Able to make independent decisions
- Able to compromise
- Pride in one's work
- Self-reliance
- Greater concern for others

Career Interests

- More defined work habits
- Higher level of concern for the future
- Thoughts about one's role in life

Sexuality

- Concerned with serious relationships
- Clear sexual identity
- Capacities for tender and sensual love

Ethics and Self-Direction

- Capable of useful insight
- Stress on personal dignity and self-esteem
- Ability to set goals and follow through
- Acceptance of social institutions and cultural traditions
- Self-regulation of self-esteem

Adapted from: "Understanding Teens" October 2005.

*You know your children are growing up
when they stop asking you where they came from
and refuse to tell you where they're going.*

-P. J. O'Rourke-

What To Do

1. Give your adolescent the freedom to explore his world. Only then can he begin to answer the question of who he is.
2. Allow her to be like her peers (even if you don't wholeheartedly approve). Fitting in with peers helps adolescents feel "normal."
3. Help your child with his problem or challenge, but don't solve it for him.
4. Ask questions such as, "What do you think?" or "What do you want to do?"
5. Guide but do not direct.
6. Help your teen stay involved in after-school activities (drama club, dance club, theatre, sports) or help him look for volunteer opportunities in the community that interest him.
7. Make sure he chooses what he wants to be involved in.
8. Talk to your teen...Ask about his opinions...Don't judge... Listen...
9. Know her friends. Allow her to have friends visit. Volunteer to drive/carpool to before and/or after-school or even week-end activities.
10. Be entertained; laugh with them. Adolescents are very funny.

Parents often talk about the younger generation as if they didn't have anything to do with it.

-Haim Ginott-

Adolescents develop best with supportive families and community life that include:

- warmth and mutual respect;
- serious and lasting interest of parents and other adults;
- adult attention to the changes they are experiencing;
- clear standards regarding discipline and close supervision;
- communication of high expectations for achievement, ethical behavior; and,
- democratic ways of dealing with conflict.

Peer Pressure

It's no secret that friends are very important during this phase of life. Your teenager will want to spend more and more time with his friends. He will also face increasing peer pressure – both positive and negative.

This is when all that practice choosing (“Do you want peas or green beans?” or “Do you want to read Cinderella or Snow White?”) hopefully pays off.

And this is when the real advantage for using discipline as opposed to punishment becomes clear. **Because the hard truth is you have very little control over your teenager’s behavior.** If they’ve simply hidden bad behavior (a result of punishment), now is the time they will find opportunities to use it.

Remember the word ‘discipline’ comes from the Latin “to learn.” By now your teenager has learned to make good choices (most of the time) whether you are there or not. With luck and a prayer they’ll make it successfully to adulthood.



My mother told me that if I ever wanted to say “no” but was afraid to, I could blame it on her, such as, “Gee, I’d like to go drinking but if my mom found out I’d be grounded for 6 months!”

Gabe, Age 16

Talking To Teens

It's easy to listen to your teen when you're relaxed and not in a hurry. But that's never when they want to talk to you.

And it's easy to listen when they tell you nice things ("I got an "A" on my math test."). But what about when they tell you, "I tried marijuana last night"?

This is when it's really hard. But this is also when "listening to your child" and "being as non-judgmental as possible" really matters.

- Take a deep breath and count to 10.
- Thank her for telling you. (It really is an honor that she trusts you enough to tell you!)
- Ask her how she feels about what she did. (You might learn something *and* this gives you *more* time to calm down.)
- Share your feelings as honestly as you can. "This doesn't make me happy – I worry you'll try heroin next – but I respect you for being truthful."
- Discuss the situation further, "What are you going to do next time someone passes a joint?"
- If you are very upset, tell her you need to think about it, and will talk about it again later.
- Before ending, remind her (and yourself 😊) that you love her.



Shhhhh- Don't tell anyone, but this happens in the "best" of families. It does not mean you are a bad parent. It means your kid is normal. Which is not to say it's acceptable behavior, or that you have to like it. But remember, your main goal should be to help them survive this age with minds and bodies intact– with no unwanted pregnancies and crime free. They can live, learn and grow from their mistakes.

I have found the best way to give advice to your children is to find out what they want and then advise them to do it.

-Harry S. Truman-

What Your Teen Needs

TRUST It is important for your teen to know she can trust you. Do what you say you will do.

It is equally important that *you* trust *her*! Remember, everyone makes mistakes. Forgive as much as you can, and always give second chances (after consequences have occurred).

Think *influence* not *control*.

SUPPORT Even as he becomes more independent, he needs to know he has your support.

PRIVACY You need to respect her privacy. If you listen when she wants to share, she'll let you know the important things going on in her life.

*It kills you to see them grow up.
But I guess it would kill you quicker if they didn't.
-Barbara Kingsolver, Animal Dreams-*

Teen Safety

Teenagers make mistakes, just like everyone else. Okay, they make more mistakes – but after all, it’s their job to “try on” different ‘selves’ to learn about themselves. (Thank goodness most of these ‘selves’ don’t stick.)

CAR SAFETY

- Always wear a seat belt. Make sure everyone else does too.
- Talk to your teen about the dangers of drinking and driving.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, SMOKING

- Talk with your teenager about the dangers of drugs, drinking, smoking, and risky sexual activity.
- Stress the importance of having friends who are interested in positive activities.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- Use the four "W" questions with your adolescent:
 - ◇ **Where** are you going?
 - ◇ **Who** are you going with?
 - ◇ **What** are you going to do?
 - ◇ **When** will you be home?
- Set clear rules for your teenager when he is home alone.
- As teens grow, they form romantic attachments and begin to date. Sometimes teens can be unsafe in a dating relationship. If you believe your teen is being harmed in a dating relationship contact the Municipal Safety Links Program at 343-6302 to request the booklet *“Broken Hearts: Dating Violence in Teen Relationships”*.
- **HAVE A SAFETY PLAN:** What should your child do in difficult situations?



When my kids were teenagers I told them they could call me any time, day or night, to come and get them if they didn't have a safe way home- even if that was because they had been drinking. I promised to try not to get mad, but even if I failed, I would get over it. And I would always respect them for being truthful and safe.

Tony

THE COLD HARD FACTS OF PARENTING

- There are some things you can't control:
 - ◇ It's a dangerous world out there. Your child *will* come in contact with illegal substances and bad influences. How he handles them will depend, in part, on the decision-making skills you've helped him develop.
 - ◇ You have very little control over your teenager's behavior.
 - ◇ However, even if they don't show it, they do still care about what you think of them. Love and attention heal many wounds.
- Don't make rules you can't enforce- you only lose credibility.
- The only person you can change is yourself.
- You *will* make mistakes.
- Don't make ultimatums. That's like playing Russian Roulette with your relationship. And ultimatums usually backfire, they practically dare a child to test them.



If you listen to your kids, respect them, and are honest with them, you'll be fine as parents.

Gilia and Diane, Age 19

Parental Consistency

Consistency With Kids

1. *Pick your fights!* Decide how strongly you feel about what she is doing. Sometimes it is okay to “turn a blind eye” to your child’s behavior as an alternative to arguing. She hates cereal? Let her eat pizza for breakfast. Pizza has protein, calcium, veggies and carbohydrates. Or close the door to his bedroom rather than fight with him about cleaning it today. However, staying out late may be something you are not willing to ignore.
2. *If you choose to fight—Win! Follow through with consequences and be consistent.* Next weekend he can have friends come over to the house but he can’t go out, because he broke curfew. Ask your 2-year old **once** to please stop pounding the table. If she doesn’t stop, “help” her put down the spoon and remind her to use her words, “If you want more rice, say “Please more rice.”

Consistency With Pets

1. *Pick your fights!* You are sitting on the couch reading the newspaper and your dog starts chewing your favorite shoes. You have to decide whether you want to get up, or whether you are willing to sacrifice the shoes, (they are old anyway) for 10 minutes of peace and quiet. (This can be a perfectly okay decision.)
2. *If you choose to fight—Win!* Those shoes may be old but they’re Italian leather and they belonged to your Dad. You’re willing to get up. Now and only now, can you say sternly, “No shoes!” You only get to say it **once**. (Otherwise you’re training your dog to wait until you’ve said it ten times and gotten red in the face.) Then you need to be on your feet, next to Fido, taking the shoe out of his mouth and giving him a rawhide chewy in exchange before he takes another bite.

Simple, right?



PETS

Beware! Unlike those commercials on TV, kids and puppies *don't* always go together like soup and sandwiches. Puppies need the same kind of care and consistent discipline that children do to become well-behaved members of your household.

They also need food, medical care, tutoring (obedience lessons), space and equipment (crates, pens, collars, leashes, licenses) all of which cost money. But most of all, they need time and attention. And just like children, when they hit adolescence they forget everything you ever taught them. If you're already feeling stressed and breathless, like there's never enough time to do everything, seriously consider **NOT** getting a dog.

Finally, despite your child's heart-felt pleas, and very sincere promises, few children under the age of 14 can train and care reliably for a dog without supervision.

A dog may be a child's best friend, but it is the parents' responsibility.

Cats are more independent, but they need to be spayed or neutered (as do dogs): over 3,000 unwanted pets are "put to sleep" killed each year in Anchorage. About 200 of these are unwanted bunnies, ducks and other animals bought as gifts for holidays. They're cute as babies, but when they grow up they don't belong in a house.

Alternate Ideas

- ◆ Easy to care for pets like fish, hamsters or birds.
- ◆ Ant farms are easy and interesting.
- ◆ A pet sitting or dog walking business in the neighborhood.
- ◆ Library trips to get lots of books on all the different breeds of dogs; so he can plan what kind of dog he'll get when he grows up.
- ◆ A pet rock.



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COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Alaska Parent Line 1-800-643-KIDS (5437)
Available 7 days per week 9:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M.

Alaska 211 1-800-478-2221
Statewide Directory of Human Services Providers

To report child abuse or neglect call the State of Alaska
Office of Children's Services at 1-800-478-4444 or 269-4000.

If you think a child is in immediate danger,
call the Anchorage Police Department at 786-8500 and request a
child welfare check. *A police officer will be dispatched immediately.*

Adults with Disabilities

ACCESS Alaska 248-4777
The Arc of Anchorage 277-6677
ASSETS 279-6617

Child Care

Boys and Girls Club 249-5473
Camp Fire USA Alaska 279-3551
Child Care Assistance 343-6710
Child Care Connection 1-800-278-3723
Head Start/Early Head Start 272-0133

Children with Disabilities

Programs for Infants and Children 561-8060
Stone Soup Group 561-3701
The Arc of Anchorage 277-6677

Child Sexual Abuse

Alaska CARES 561-8301
Standing Together Against Rape (STAR) 276-7279
24 hour Crisis Line 276-7273 or
1-800-478-8999

Domestic Violence

Abused Women's Aid in Crisis 279-9581
24 hour Crisis Line 272-0100

Education and Job Training

Alaska Job Center 269-0000
Alaska State Job Hotline 269-4770
Anchorage School District
Child in Transition/Homeless Project 742-3833
Parents as Liaisons in our Schools (PALS) 742-4494
Cook Inlet Tribal Council 793-3300
Nine Star Education Center 279-7827
Vocational Rehabilitation 1-800-478-4378
State of Alaska V/TDD: 269-3570

Emergency Shelters

Abused Women's Aid in Crisis	279-9581
24 hour Crisis Line	272-0100
Clare House	563-4545
Covenant House (Teens to 20 years old)	272-1255
McKinnell House	276-1609

Fitness

Fairview Recreation Center	343-4130
Spenard Recreation Center	343-4160
YMCA	563-3211

Financial/Business Counseling &/or Education

Consumer Credit Counseling	279-6501
Covenant House/Community Services Center	258-4237
YWCA	644-9600

Financial Assistance

State of Alaska	
DHSS, Office of Public Assistance	269-9000
Catholic Social Services, St. Francis House	276-5590
Food Bank of Alaska	272-3663
Municipality of Anchorage	
DHHS, Safety Links Program	343-6589

Food

Bean's Café	274-9595
Kids' Kitchen Inc.	274-8522
Food Bank of Alaska	272-3663
Public Assistance (Food Stamps)	269-6599
Salvation Army	277-2593
Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program	
DHHS 825 L Street	343-4668
Eagle River	694-2131
Muldoon Mall	343-4500

Health Care

Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC)	563-2662
ANMC Pediatric Clinic	729-1000
Alaska Regional Hospital	276-1131
Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center	257-4600
Downtown	257-4686
Reproductive Health Clinic	343-4623
Immunization Clinic	343-4799
Providence Family Practice Clinic	562-9229
Providence Hospital	562-2211
Pediatric Clinic	261-4824

Legal Services

Alaska Legal Services 272-9431

Mental Health

Abused Women's Aid in Crisis 279-9581
Alaska Women's Resources Center 276-0528
Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, Inc.
 24 hour Crisis Line 563-1000
 Non-Crisis 563-3200
Denali Family Services 274-8281
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill 272-0227
Providence Family Practice Clinic 562-9229
Southcentral Foundation
 Behavioral Health 729-3250

Parenting

Alaska Parent Line 1-800-643-KIDS (5437)
 Available 7 days per week 9:00 A.M.-9:00P.M.
Alaska Women's Resource Center 276-0528
Catholic Social Services 276-5590
Child Care Connection
 "Warm Line" 563-1966
Cook Inlet Tribal Council 793-3132
 Parenting classes available to American Native
 Indian families only
New Hope on the Last Frontier & Life Skills Center 274-2745
Providence Hospital
 Parenting with Providence 743-8474
The Salvation Army Booth Memorial
 Youth and Family Services 375-3515
Volunteers of America
 Grandfamilies Network Project 522-9866

Substance Abuse

Akeela Inc. 565-1200
Alcoholics Anonymous 272-2312
Alaska Women's Resource Center 276-0528
Clitheroe Center 276-2898
Volunteers of America 279-9634

For an updated and a more comprehensive listing of the resources available in our community, please call the Municipal Department of Health & Human Services Safety Links Program at (907) 343-6589 or go to www.muni.org.



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