

Family & Parenting

from
Breakfast
to Bedtime

Helping you and your children through the day!

The **Family and Parenting Institute** is an Independent charity set up to enhance the value and quality of family life. We are working to support parents in bringing up their children, to promote the wellbeing of families and to make society more family friendly.

Family and Parenting Institute

430 Highgate Studios
53-79 Highgate Road
London NW5 1TL

Tel: 020 7424 3460

Fax: 020 7485 3590

Email: info@familyandparenting.org

Web: www.familyandparenting.org

A range of our publications – including *'Is it legal?'* and *'Over the Top Behaviour in the Under 10s'* – are available to download from the FPI website.

Tesco Baby & Toddler Club offers a free information service to pregnant women and parents with babies and toddlers under the age of 5. Members receive regular magazines packed full of relevant information and advice aimed at their stage of pregnancy or their baby/toddler's development. Members also benefit from money off vouchers saving **£££** on everyday items, special promotions, special offers and Clubcard points. Tesco Baby & Toddler Clubs have been created to provide practical help to parents when they need it most.

For further information or to join, call **0800 591688** or log on to www.tesco.com/babyandtoddlerclub or pick up an application form at your local store.

contents



introduction	2
play	3
growing up	4
talking	5
self confidence	6
meltdown moments	8-12
the morning rush	8
at the supermarket checkout	10
playtime	11
early evening to bedtime	12
looking after yourself	13
remember	13



introduction

Being a parent to a young child who is full of energy can be a roller coaster ride of amazing moments and tearing your hair out! All parents know the good times with their children; it may be just that today's busy lifestyles make them harder to see. Understanding your child's needs and how to meet them will help you have more of the ups and less of the downs.

Difficult times are more likely to happen when children are bored or frustrated. How you respond to them and how you are feeling can sometimes turn a simple task into a battle of wills. Obviously, these can't always be avoided but a few, simple ideas may help you and your children to have more of the good times!



play

If children really get into an activity, they are less likely to be posting the remote control in the bin or wrestling with a brother or sister! If you've got a lot to do in a short space of time, set up an activity that will give you that all important extra half an hour:

Painting, drawing and

colouring: even very young

tips children enjoy creating works of art and the messier the better! Put down newspaper and cover up clothes to protect them and cut down on tidying up.

Water: a washing up bowl of water and a couple of cups can keep a toddler busy for ages.



Imagination: get out some teddies and dolls and create a tea party or set up a zoo made up of all sizes and shapes of toys – let their imagination run wild.

Join in: Once you've got everything out of the way, take five minutes to get into what your child is doing – show them that what they're doing is important.

Keep it simple: If this all sounds too complicated and time consuming, try to keep a box of toys, crayons and play dough handy and make the most of bath time for playing with a couple of cups and a sponge.



growing up

Children's needs and levels of understanding change as they grow and what might be expected of a four year old can't be expected of a two year old:

- **Exploring:** Young children find out about their world by touching, shaking, tasting, pouring, squeezing... the list is endless!

tips

This isn't naughtiness, but a way of learning about their world. Make your home 'toddler proof' by trying to store valuables and breakables away from your child so they can explore safely. The mess of life with a toddler can be exhausting but think of all the learning they're doing!

- **Independence:** Part of growing up for your toddler will be testing boundaries and becoming

an individual. You can help them by letting them do as much for themselves as possible – store toys at child height, let them choose their clothes, and give finger food.



- **Encouragement:** Your child will learn what's OK to do from you so give lots of praise and attention to good behaviour – try "you're using your spoon really well" instead of "stop making such a mess". If you only pay attention to your child when they misbehave, they'll learn to misbehave to get your attention.

talking

Talking and listening to your child helps them to understand what's going on:

Language: Tell your child what you want them to do, not what you don't want them to do – instead of "don't make such a mess", try "tidy up toys please".

Respect: Children learn from what you do and say. If you want your children to be polite and respectful, think about what you say and how you say it – raising your voice will have them shouting back, and put downs aren't good for anyone's self confidence.

Explaining: If you have to say 'no' give your child a good reason and offer an alternative – "Rosie is playing with the doll now, let's find you another toy".

Listening: Your child is trying out her new language and needs to be heard. Have a conversation with her – even if it feels a bit one sided at times she'll get a lot out of it and learn about talking to others. Try getting down to her level – she'll find it easier to talk (and listen) to you if you're not towering over her.

Feelings: Help your child's frustrations by trying to put how they're feeling into words – "you're really angry that you have to go in your buggy now, but you'll be able to get out when we're at the park".

Have you heard of... Daycare Trust?

They provide advice and information for parents.

Helpline: 020 7840 3350

Website: www.daycaretrust.org.uk



self confidence

Building your child's self confidence will help them to try out new things, make friends and manage the upsets and problems they meet as they grow up:

- **Finding out:** Give your child the chance to face new experiences and challenges with your support.
- **Love:** Tell your child that you love them and show them by smiling, cuddling and kissing.
- **Independence:** Don't try and solve every problem for your child – sorting it out for themselves can be a boost to their confidence.
- **Yourself:** If you feel your confidence could do with a boost, try listing all the things you like about yourself.



remember

Most parents walk the line between being 'too harsh' and 'too soft' everyday. Thinking about how you are as a parent and how you react in different situations can help you have an even better relationship with your child.

All children are different – what works with one child does not always suit a brother or sister in the same family. Children have different temperaments. Some are easy-going and will soon join in activities; some are slow to warm up and need gentle persuasion, while others find things more daunting and may not join in at all.

Have a look at...

www.bbc.co.uk/parenting

Advice on parenting babies and young children as well as information about pregnancy and preparing for parenthood



meltdown moments

Even with good intentions there are still times that are difficult for every family – usually when there's too much to do in a short space of time or when what you need to do clashes with what your child wants to do.

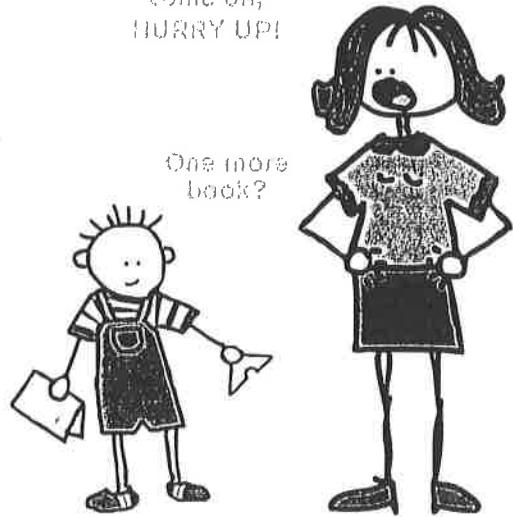
the morning rush

"I try to get clothes out and make up their packed lunches the night before – it gives me a bit of extra time in the morning."

"Getting them to do a bit for themselves always helps, even if it's just getting a bowl and spoon. They feel like they're helping and it's one less thing for me to do."

Come on,
come on,
HURRY UP!

One more
book?



other things to try

If you have to be at work at a certain time see if you can negotiate more flexible hours – for instance going in later, leaving later. If that's not possible, try getting up a little earlier to avoid the rush.

Be the first to get up and have five minutes on your own for a quick coffee.

Ask older children to pack their own bag and say thanks when they do.

Have a look at...

www.workingfamilies.org.uk

A national charity which aims to help children, working parents and their employers to find a better balance between home and work.



at the supermarket checkout

"I try and find something else to interest her before we get to the checkout – sometimes I even sing just to keep her from asking for sweets!"

"When he's sitting in the trolley I pass him things to put on the counter and he really likes that."

other things to try

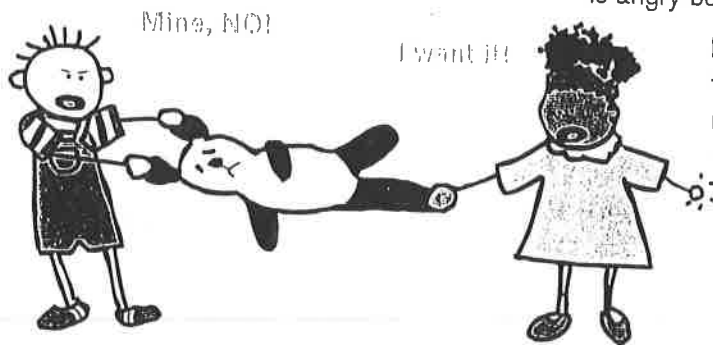
- ❖ Give your child something to look forward to once the boring shopping is out of the way – a trip to the park, a video when you get home.
- ❖ If your child does have a tantrum, trying to find a solution or reasoning with her may not help – she could be too upset to listen. Try and ride the storm, keeping your child from hurting themselves and waiting until they are calmer before trying to do anything else.



playtime

"I put his favourite toy away when other kids come round – it saves them fighting over it."

"If she's really got herself upset, I try and take her somewhere else so she can calm down – she still has to know she can't fight, but it's better doing that somewhere quiet."



other things to try

Let children sort out their own squabbles as long as no-one is getting hurt but do separate them if they hurt each other and explain firmly that you won't allow anyone to hurt another child.

Let your child know that you understand why she is angry but that hurting is not allowed.

Helping your child to talk about their feelings when or after they are upset may help to reduce the chances of the same problem happening again.



early evening to bedtime

"When I get in from work, I try and have five minutes just for them – once I've heard about their day, it's easier for them to let me get on and cook the tea."

"We've just started giving him a five minute warning so he knows that he's got a bit more time to play then it's bedtime."

other things to try

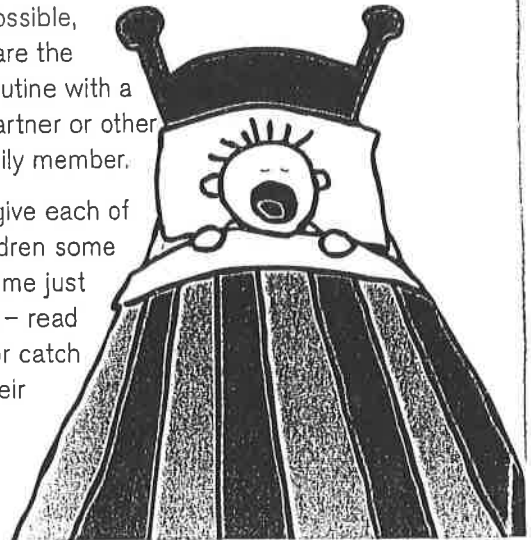
- › Try to explain that you have to cook tea, sort out packed lunches etc, and involve them in things like setting the table or basic cooking – they'll probably want to stay close to you if you've been apart during the day.
- * Get into a routine of bath, book and bed that your child feels happy with.



- › Listen to your child's fears about the dark or going to bed and help them to find ways to deal with the fear e.g. making up a story, chasing the monster out of the bedroom.

- › If possible, share the routine with a partner or other family member.

- * Try and give each of your children some special time just with you – read a story or catch up on their news.



looking after yourself

As much as you love your children, they can also drive you to distraction, dawdling when you're trying to get them off to school, or asking for toys in the supermarket.

If you make sure you get a break to relax, or to go out and enjoy yourself, then you will be in better shape to cope with being a parent too. Get together with other parents – children often feel happier if they have a friend for company. Don't be shy to ask for help. Remember – and it's not always easy – you're important too!

remember

As a general rule, try and give five times more praise than criticism.

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to change too much at once – take one tip and use it until you've worked it out and then try another.

Nobody gets it right all the time.

Flexibility is fine – life can be chaotic and having a flexible approach will help your children learn to do the same.

If you feel overwhelmed by having to cope with everything all at once, take a deep breath and count to ten. If it still feels unbearable, make sure your child is safe and take five minutes to yourself in another room.

The most important thing is that your child is loved and happy amidst the chaos of day-to-day life!



More help...

Books to read with your children:

Naughty Nigel

by Tony Ross

Not now, Bernard

by David McKee

Can't you sleep, Little Bear?

By Martin Waddell

But I Waaannt It!

By Dr Laura Schlessinger

Parentline Plus freephone helpline 24 hours a day – 0808 800 2222 www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Fathers Direct national independent information service www.fathersdirect.com

Disabled Parents Network helpline – 0870 241 0450 www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk

One Parent Families/Gingerbread helpline – 0800 018 5026 www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk

National NEWPIN a charity which supports parents under stress and runs local centres which offer long term emotional support to families – 020 7358 5900 www.newpin.org.uk

Contact a Family helping families who care for children with any disability or special need – 0808 808 3555 www.cafamily.org.uk

YoungMinds the national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people – Parents' Information Service 0800 018 2138 www.youngminds.org.uk

Scottish Parenting Forum aims to support voluntary and community agencies working together to develop and improve sustainable forms of parent support. (Managed and facilitated by Children in Scotland) – 0845 123 2303 www.childreninscotland.org.uk

Original text by Sophie Linington, Anne Page and Gill Keep, with thanks for assistance from: Tesco; Christine Bidmead, Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA); Dr Stephen Scott, Reader in Child Health and Behaviour & Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist; Anne Saville, National Council for One Parent Families (NCOPF); Eileen Hayes, Parenting Advisor NSPCC; Parentline Plus
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