



TODDLER TOPICS PLUS



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TODDLER TOPICS PLUS:

A parent, newsletter for toddlers, preschoolers & beyond! This provides info to help you parent your child and enrich your time together. We strive to enhance your parenting skills: to either reinforce what you know or redirect you with new knowledge. Often additional resources are listed in the articles, plus your local Penn State Extension Office is available to assist you. Enjoy your family!

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I WANT IT!!!! Kids as Consumers

Lyn Horning, Assistant Director of Programs,
Penn State Better Kid Care, Centre County

Does your child beg you for junk food, toys, or clothes that she sees on TV? Advertisers know that children are very good at wearing down their parents. More than 50 million dollars are spent on advertising every day to get your children to plead to buy, buy, and buy. Research shows that teens will ask nine times for something they want in the hope their parents will give in and buy it. (They have been practicing for years.) More than half the parents surveyed said they usually break down and buy what their children ask for.

BUY, BUY, BUY does not spell LOVE -- Busy parents often feel they don't have enough time to spend with their children. Many parents say they give in to their child's whining and nagging and buy what their child wants because they feel guilty. They reason, if they can't spend time with their child, they'll spend money to buy whatever their child wants, even if they can't afford it. These children are learning that whining and nagging are good ways to get their parents to do whatever they want.

Read more about children as consumers; borrow The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies by Stan and Jan Berenstain, Born to Buy by Juliet Schor or Can't Buy My Love by Jean Kilbourne from your local library. **Spending time reading with your child instead of spending money on your child will reward you both; just ask a librarian or a teacher.**

Communicating with Children

Darlene Sansone, Better Kid Care Coordinator,
Lawrence, Butler, Beaver, Armstrong, Indiana
Counties

They never listen to me!!! How many times have you heard a parent say this about their child? As a child care provider, I have heard this many times throughout my years of caring for young children. I often wondered what was going on because the children listened and responded to the staff at the center. What the parent was really telling us was that their child did not immediately comply with the parent's wishes at that time. It all comes down to knowing how to communicate in a positive way with our children to get the results we want.

Positive communication is the road map to cooperation. Communication involves much more than what you say to your child. **There are three channels of communication that carry messages to your child: 1- words, 2- tone of voice and 3- body language.**

1- When we look at the **words** spoken: did they convey what you wanted done or were they fuzzy statements? If you want your child to eat breakfast, ask if they want cereal or pancakes instead of "do you want breakfast?" The words convey a choice of breakfast items to eat, not the option of eating or not eating.

2- Tone of voice is part of the message also: was it clear and firm or emotionally charged? Was the tone supportive and non-judgmental or dripping with honey, thereby sending a mixed message because the tone doesn't seem to fit with the spoken words?

3- Body language is the last channel we carry the message with and it includes hand gestures, facial expressions and how close we are to the person we are speaking to. If I am talking to my child from a distance of one foot away at their eye level, they can better understand my message that they need to keep toys clear of the kitchen floor so I do not trip and spill hot food on top of them causing serious injury. If I answer or command my child from

another room, they get the impression I am not too concerned and probably will do whatever they want to do.

Listening to them is just as important in the communication/cooperation equation. When



they say their day was "fine", but their head is down and they toss their coat and book bag on the floor -the message is clear - something happened! At this point, we need to sit down facing the child and ask some open-

ended questions to allow the child to explain in their own words what went on. Start with, "Could you tell me what you did today?" and listen without interrupting. When the child is finished, you might ask another open-ended question to get more details or ask, "Do you think things have been handled differently?"

At the end of the day, **intercommunication** is the best option. **Everyone is listening carefully and openly to the other person, sharing feelings and ideas instead of using road blocks which could shut down all communication between parent and child.**

In the words of Fred Rogers, "Parents don't arrive full bloom at the birth of the first baby. In fact, parenting is about growing. It's about our own growing as much as it is about our children's growing and that kind of growing happens little by little."



Additional Resources: Penn State Better Kid Care, Active Parenting , University of Minnesota Extension, Kansas Extension, [Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting](#) by Elizabeth Pantley

Parents Need to Know about Bullying!

Laurie Welch, Extension Educator, Clinton County

How much do you know about bullying? Are these statements True or False?

Bullying is just teasing. FALSE: Bullying is much more than teasing. While many bullies tease, others use violence, intimidation and other tactics.

Some kids deserve to be bullied. FALSE: No one ever deserves to be bullied. Most kids are bullied for being “different” in some way. Being different is not a reason to be bullied.

Only Boys are Bullies. FALSE: Girls and boys can be bullies.

Bullying is a normal part of growing up. FALSE: Getting teased, picked on, pushed around, threatened, harassed, insulted and hurt isn’t normal.

What is bullying? Bullying is an imbalance of power. Bullying is repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on others, bullying can be perpetrated by an individual or a group. Bullying is an unprovoked action or threat that is motivated to cause fear or harm against another with less power.

Bullying behaviors start in preschool and seems to peak during the middle school years and declines in high school. In preschool, many kids bully to get attention and show off or get what they want (such as a toy). Preschoolers may be jealous of the children they are bullying. When preschoolers begin to call names or use unkind words, parents must intervene immediately and consistently to teach acceptable behavior.

How can you tell if your child is being bullied?

Children can show physical signs, emotional signs, behavioral/social signs and academic signs of bullying. The most important thing parents can do is recognize and act to prevent bullying.

Physical signs include: cuts, bruises, scratches, headaches, damaged possessions or “missing” possessions.

Emotional signs include: withdrawal, shyness, anxiety, depression and aggression.

Behavior/Social signs include: changes in eating and sleeping habits, no longer wanting to participate in activities they once enjoyed, beginning to bully siblings or mistreating the family pet.

Academic signs: not wanting to go to school (even pre-school).

Parents can help children deal with bullying by helping them build the skills needed such as positive social skills. Provide opportunities to make friends. Children should always be supervised and parents need to take action when bullying is witnessed or reported to you. If your child’s daycare or pre-school doesn’t have an established bullying policy in place, ask the director to develop a policy. Parents should teach their children to:

- ✓ Tell an adult
- ✓ Talk it out
- ✓ Walk away
- ✓ Distract the bully with a joke
- ✓ Avoid the bully
- ✓ Hang out with friends
- ✓ Tell an adult if a friend is being bullied.

Parents need to take complaints of bullying seriously and reassure the child they were right to tell them. Parents can teach their children to be assertive and not aggressive. Parents need to continually ask their children direct questions about how their peers treat them and if they ever witness bullying. Parents need to work with childcare and pre-school providers to address any bullying issues. Parents need to be a positive role model for their children by not bullying children or other adults.

What if your child is the bully? Spend time with your child daily and know where your child is and with whom. Make it clear to your child, that you do not tolerate the bullying behavior. Arrange for an effective non-violent consequence if your child continues to bully others. Remember to reward good behavior and teach your child positive ways of solving problems and managing anger.

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children

Frazier B. Zahniser, M Ed. CFCS, Extension Educator, Mercer County

Do you believe: 1) that quality early learning and child development play a major role in a child's future success in school and in life? 2) That every child in Pennsylvania deserves access to quality early learning opportunities? 3) That it is the responsibility of every Pennsylvanian to help our children reach their promise?

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children is a statewide campaign to raise awareness about the value of quality early learning for all of our young children and build responsibility among every Pennsylvanian for the early learning of the young children in their lives. By signing the online declaration and inviting your friends, family and colleagues to do the same, you are sending the message to fellow Pennsylvanian's that every child is Pennsylvania's future and that we need to care about their education... from birth! **Signing the declaration is easy.** Simply go to www.papromiseforchildren.com and click the "sign our declaration" link. You can download a flyer with a way to sign and mail in your declaration.

But this is just the first step. There are five other simple things you can do:

1. Learn simple ways that you can support learning in the young children in your life.
2. Spend some time with the young children in your community.
3. Talk to child care programs in your neighborhood, your workplace, or at your place of worship about Keystone STARS.
4. Ask your employer to provide resources to employees on choosing quality early learning opportunities.

5. Find out if your school district is working with local child care, Head Start and preschool programs to get your children ready for kindergarten.

You can learn more about each of these items at www.papromiseforchildren.com. **We cannot afford to let even one child in Pennsylvania slip through the cracks.** *Pennsylvania's Promise for Children is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Build Initiative and Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality.*

Healthy Bodies and Books

Ellen Helfrick, Youth Services Program Coordinator, York County Library System,

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries and Pennsylvania Department of Education want you to incorporate activity and good eating habits into your reading. They have created a brochure to make it easy for you. Here are a few of my personal favorites from the long list found in *HEALTHY BODIES Promoting Good Nutrition and Movement with Preschoolers through Picture Books*. For more suggestions, talk to your librarian or visit www.statelibrary.state.pa.us

From Head to Toe by Eric Carle

Off We Go! by Jane Yolen

We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

The Seven Silly Eaters by Mary Ann Hoberman

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato by Lauren Child

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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