

TODDLER TOPICS PLUS



Montgomery County Cooperative Extension
1015 Bridge Road, Suite H
Collegeville, PA 19426
Voice: 610-489-4315 FAX: 610-489-9277
Email: MontgomeryExt@psu.edu
Web: Montgomery.extension.psu.edu

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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!

Ellen M. Helfrich, Editor

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Feelings vs. Behavior

Joan D. Cook, Family Living Program, Berks County

Feelings and behavior are different. **Feelings are inside you. Behavior is what you do with those feelings.** Children need to learn about feelings. If they are mad they need to be taught how to deal with those inside feelings instead rather than throw something, hit or kick another child.

Express in words what the child is feeling and the situation, then help them to understand their feelings in words. **Use an "I" message.** "When I have to leave the park, I feel sad because I was having so much fun." Then remind the child that he will be able to come to the park again.

Give a child words to request a turn with a doll and guide her behavior to ask for a turn instead of fighting over it. "I want to play with the doll Susan has." Susan will let you have the doll when she's finished with it. Let's remind Susan that you want a turn to play with the doll.

When two children are arguing, stop the action and ask each child what is the problem. Then ask each how to solve the problem. Restate the problem and give them a chance to respond. Gently steer the children to a solution. When they have come to a conclusion, ask each one if they agree. Both children must agree for it to work.

As children mature, their behavior in how they cooperative with others will change and they will continually need new words to express their feelings. Always use words that teach your child how to interact with others. This teaches the child self-control and builds their self-esteem.

How to Beat the Rainy Day Blues

Patricia Wells, Assistant Director of Distance Education, Better Kid Care, Centre County

Rainy days got you and your children down? Forget dark and dreary, with a little planning, you can turn those rainy day blues into creative thinking and fun.

Top ten ways to beat the rainy day blues:

Change your indoor environment - Open up your space. Move the furniture out of the way. Now you have the space for active play and games.

Get active - Now that you have the space, put on some music and dance or exercise.

Be dramatic - If children enjoy pretending to play house, extend that idea and bring in items to create a grocery store. A restaurant is another idea that can easily fit in with the housekeeping theme.

Be creative - Make art open-ended in design. Art work that inspires children to think and create from their imaginations will keep children busy. Have an indoor parade. Engage your children in creating musical instruments from household objects.

Get cooking - Cook up a kid friendly recipe. It's the perfect time to bring the children into the kitchen, get out ingredients and measuring cups, bowls, and spoons. Spend quality time together.

Have a picnic (without ants) - Involve your children with lunch or snack preparations. Pack up and hike over to the open space in your house.

Challenge the senses - Sensory play items are easy to find. Fill a container with water or rice. Make homemade playing dough to poke, roll, and shape. <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/activities/PlayDough.html>

Start projects - Visit the library and find books on your child's interests. Read together and find ways to turn inspired thinking into a hands-on project.

Chores - Rainy days are good opportunities to get household chores done. Many hands work faster. Be sure to plan a reward for all their help.

Just go outside - Put on boots, rainwear, and grab umbrellas. Venture outside to discover what the environment looks, feels, and smells like in the rain.

Start planning now. Look for bargains on supplies. Hunt at thrift stores and garage sales to find dramatic play props. Start a 'rainy day fund' jar for supplies; children can contribute, as well.

Teach Your Child to Save

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

Start giving your child an allowance that they can save and use to buy things they want. Even children under age five can be given a small allowance. When your child is screaming for a toy, just ask if he has enough money. You'll need to help your young child figure it out. You can say: "It will take 3 allowances to buy this." Insist your child stays in his budget and he learns to manage money.

Having to save and make choices forces kids to think about what they want. As they grow older, they can decide if having brand name clothes are so important that they want to spend the extra money to buy them. This teaches kids to be good with money and tames their nagging to just buy and buy.

One mom said her daughter nagged and nagged her to buy an expensive doll. Instead of pulling out her credit card, the mom started giving her daughter an allowance of 50 cents every week. Whenever the daughter whined to buy the doll, the mom said, "When you save enough money, you can buy that doll." It didn't take long for the nagging to stop because mom didn't give in. One day the mom asked her daughter if she had enough money to buy her doll. The daughter told her she changed her mind and didn't really want that doll any more.

Read: [The Berenstain Bears, Trouble with Money](#) by Stan and Jan Berenstain and [Benny's Pennies](#) by Pat Brisson. Go on-line and read "Give 'Em an Allowance" by David McCurrach at www.kidsmoney.org, "What Experts Say about Allowances for Children" by Michelle M. Haas-Dosher at <http://hffo.cuna.org/12433/article/107/html>

Discipline Is...

Using Time-In To Teach the Rules

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

Time-In is a teaching strategy that parents and adults can use after an intense situation has been calmed down by using Time-Out. Time-In will help a child learn to think about responsible behavior, develop empathy for others, and find ways to get his needs met.

Time-In allows an adult to connect with a child about behavior in a positive, teaching way instead of a controlling, punishing way. It only works when an existing rule is broken (ex: No running indoors) and the child is old enough to remember and state the rule. Time-In is used to remind the child of the rule and make her think about the reasons for the rule. If necessary Time-In can be used to help a child focus on what happened because she broke the rule and what can be done to make amends.

Discipline takes time and Time-In is no exception. Be sure you have the time and patience to keep things positive before you use Time-In to address a child's behavior. Criticism and punishment have to stay out of the picture. Your goal must be to lovingly teach the child to set internal limits to control her/his behavior. Choose the particular misbehavior you want to change, then use only as many of the Time-In steps as needed at one time.

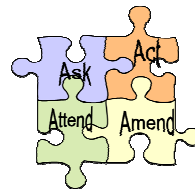
The puzzle pieces of Time-In - ASK, ACT, ATTEND, AMEND - are explained soon. Before you begin, look into their eyes. Use a loving touch to communicate that you care, but be firm. Once you have the child's attention you can begin by using the puzzle piece most appropriate.

This is a time when using less is more successful. Use Time-In steps until the child responds appropriately and then STOP! A child may not need to proceed to Act, Attend, or Amend every time. When adults talk too much, children tune them out! So keep discussions about behavior to a minimum and spend more of the time you are with a child paying attention to her/his successes.

Caution #1: Begin Time-In s-l-o-w-l-y. Start with minor misbehaviors that require only ASK and ACT. When you're both comfortable using Time-In this way, you can add more difficult situations that involve a second child. Keeping the child who broke the rule nearby, you ATTEND to the victim first and empower him/her with ASK and ACT. If you pay attention to the one who broke the rule, your attention will only reinforce the bullying behavior. AMEND takes a lot of time and energy. If you involve another child who is the victim, you are teaching mediation skills that will be useful for a lifetime.

CAUTION #2: Use Time-In only when you are calm and in a teaching mood, not when you are frustrated and wanting to punish. Adults must resolve their own anger before they are able to teach a child. Anger and stress have been known to spoil many attempts by adults to discipline a child.

What are the Time-In Puzzle Pieces?



Use when a child has broken a well established rule. Begin with the piece that is most appropriate for the situation.

ASK - Ask a question that will teach the lesson you want the child to learn. *“Andy, do you remember the rule about throwing toys? What is it?”* This encourages children to think and to be responsible. If the adult does the thinking the child can only accommodate you or resist you. It is important not to make the questions a criticism i.e. *“Don’t you remember the rule about throwing toys?”*

ACT - Interrupt or redirect misbehavior, then re-teach the rule. Pick up the toy and hold it out at arm's length. Say in a reassuring voice, *“Andy, let’s think of three ways toys could hurt if you throw them.”* If you have a wiggly, active kinesthetic learner, it works best to walk the child through the desired behavior. Direct each action toward helping the child learn responsibility for self and toward others.

(Continued on next page)

Discipline Is...

Using Time-In To Teach the Rules (Continued)

ATTEND - Pay attention to what is going on - who, what, when, where, why. Attend to the person, feelings, situation, object that is damaged. Ask questions of yourself to understand why a child is misbehaving i.e. *“What is going on? What is happening in the child’s life? Are we expecting too much/too little?”* This helps decide whether to Act, Ask, or Amend

Teach the child how to attend when a person is hurt or an object is damaged. Attend to the ‘victim’ as you teach the child how to attend. *“Andy, Kaitlin has been hurt. You get the cold pack from the freezer and then stay beside us while we help Kaitlin.”* Empower the victim by asking her/him to state the rule that has been broken. (See Amend)

AMEND - To right a wrong. Help the child decide how to make restitution in a way that satisfies the victim or helps someone similar and helps the offending child learn positive ways to interact with others. This may be repayment of time, objects, services or restoration of a reputation. Involve the ‘victim’, *“Kaitlin, what can Andy do to help you feel better?”*

Remember: use this method only when you have the time and patience to carry it through. It is important to model the behavior you want to create. Make amends when YOU have wronged the child. *“I am sorry I was late to pick you up. What can I do to make it up to you?”*

Source: January 1999 **Family Information Services**, Minneapolis, MN. Adapted from **Time-In: When Time-Out Doesn’t Work** by Jean Illsley Clarke, M.A., Parenting Press. Reprinted with permission.

Money Lessons

Jane Landis, Financial Management Educator,
Dauphin County

Children learn at an early age about the concept of money from adults and TV. Children watch carefully at how adults manage money – what they do to get money, how it is spent, where it is spent, and conflicts when there isn’t enough money.

Lesson #1- where to get money? Being paid because you work or do something is usually what children learn at the beginning. Some may debate about the idea of “paying” children to do chores as they are members of a household; however, it can be a method of teaching children they must do something to EARN money.

Lesson #2- where to spend money? That is an easy one as long as there is money to spend. Children as young as 5 years can develop the basics managing money when they have their own money.

Lesson #3- where to give money? Children of all ages can learn to appreciate that giving money to others that are in need or charity or is a good thing.

Lesson #4 - math is important! Today, we are using those basic skills we learned as a child – adding, subtracting, multiply, dividing, to figure out if we’re getting a deal. Even if you don’t give your child his or her own money, you can ask them to figure out which store has the best deal on a toy they want, which value menu is really the best deal, how long it will take to save for something they want, and how much tax is added to figure out the actual cost of an item.

Remember, money is all about math... What lessons are your children learning?

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