

# Parenting

*the most important job in the world*

0-5yrs

CARING FOR BABIES & TODDLERS

**LIVING WITH TODDLERS:**  
AVOIDING BATTLES AND  
CALMING THEIR FEARS

**BEATING SLEEP PROBLEMS**  
(yours and theirs!)

**FINDING THE RIGHT CHILD CARE**

**TWO'S A CROWD:**  
WELCOMING THE SECOND BABY

**"IT WASN'T ME!"**  
- the truth about lying

**TIPS** ON  
**TANTRUMS**  
TOILET TRAINING  
AND MEALTIMES



Families First in NSW

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

### The Department of Community Services (DoCS)

DoCS provides services from a network of 84 Community Services Centres across NSW. You'll find their phone numbers in your local telephone directory under 'Community Services, Department of'.

**Parent Line** 13 20 55  
Advice and information for  
parents with kids up to 18 years  
statewide (voice and TTY)

**Tresillian** 02 9787 5255 or  
(freecall outside Sydney) 1800 637 357  
24 hour information and  
counselling for parents or carers  
of children under 5 years.

**Karitane** 02 9794 1852 or  
(freecall outside Sydney) 1800 677 961  
24 hour telephone parenting  
information and counselling

**Family Support Services Association** 02 9743 6565  
Support services for families  
experiencing stress

**Relationships Australia (NSW)** 02 9418 8800 or  
(freecall outside Sydney) 1300 364 277

**Centacare Relationship Counselling** 02 9283 4899

**Lifeline** 13 11 14 statewide

**Salvo Care Line** 02 9331 6000 statewide

**Dial-a-Mum** 02 9477 6777 statewide  
Telephone counselling for  
anyone of any age

**Kids Help Line** 1800 55 1800

**Kidsafe** 02 9845 0890

**Poisons Information** 13 11 26

**Children's Hospital Randwick** 02 9382 1111

**Children's Hospital Westmead** 02 9845 0000

### Early Childhood Centres (NSW Health)

To find your local Early Childhood Centre,  
look under 'E' in the Telstra White Pages

### After Hours Emergency Child Protection and Family Crisis Service

24 hours (freecall) 1800 066 777

**Domestic Violence Line** 1800 656 463  
1800 671 442 TTY

### Centrelink

- Family and parenting payments 13 13 05
- Multilingual information 13 12 02

Find out about parenting courses by contacting your local  
Early Childhood Health Centre or Children's Hospital.



Visit our **Parenting Website** at  
[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

to get copies of all our parenting magazines:

**Parenting:** the most important job in the world

**Caring for babies & toddlers** (0 to 5 years)

**Caring for children** (6 to 12 years)

**The teenage years** (13 to 18 years)

### FAMILY HELP KIT

The NSW Health Department has developed the Family Help Kit to assist families to better understand and recognise mental health problems in children, adolescents and young people. It also provides information and contact details on how and where to get help. Topics contained within the kit, include: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Problems, Challenging Behaviours, Grief and Loss, Fears and Anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress, Depression, Psychosis, Suicide Prevention, Body Image and Eating Disorders.

Copies of the Family Help Kit are available from the  
Better Health Centre  
LMB 5003  
Gladesville NSW 2111  
Telephone 02 9816 0452  
Fax 02 9816 0492

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Photography by:

Warwick Orme and John Halfhide

Special thanks to:

Parenting SA,  
South Australian Government

NSW Health Department

Anna, Xannie, Ned, James,  
Alex, Gilbert, Nicholas, Alison  
and all the other children,  
teenagers and adults appearing  
in our magazine.

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Produced by the  
NSW Department of Community Services  
164 - 174 Liverpool Road  
Ashfield NSW 2131

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ISBN 0 7310 4289 1 August 1999

Between the ages of one and three years your toddler's world is growing rapidly. This is a time of many changes for toddlers. The most important learning for your children in these years is that they are separate, independent people. Many of the troubles that some parents experience with their two year olds are because children are struggling with learning to feel independent. At the same time they are still babies in many ways and need a lot of parental support.

# Living with

# toddlers

## IT IS NORMAL FOR CHILDREN OF THIS AGE

- ✗ To want to say "no".
- ✗ To get cross and rebel sometimes.
- ✗ To want to make some choices for themselves.
- ✗ To find it hard to cope with change.
- ✗ To want to feel very secure and safe but at the same time to try out new independence.

Sometimes when they are on the way to learning self control children will say "No! No! No!" to themselves while they do something that is forbidden. They are not deliberately being disobedient. They are on the way to learning what they must not do, but haven't quite got there yet.

All of this is saying

*"I am a  
"separate person,  
"I am me!"*



## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Your children may need you to help them learn to be independent and feel good about themselves. At the same time you don't want them running wild or have a life that is full of battles. Life for the toddler is full of frustration so the smoother parents can make it, the better it is for all.

### Make your home safe and enjoyable

- 🏠 Make your house as childproof as possible.
- 🏠 Have only a few rules. It is better to put your good things away than to always be stopping a toddler from touching them.
- 🏠 Make interesting changes every now and again, for example a pile of cushions to climb over, a cardboard box tunnel to crawl through, a cubby house under the card table.
- 🏠 Make sure that there is a place and space for your child to explore and run every day.
- 🏠 If children have to go somewhere in the car or wait in a waiting room, take some toys to keep them busy.

### Learning to be independent

- 🐱 Make up fun games where your child can practise saying "No", for example "Does Daddy sleep in the bath?" "Does the cat say moo?"
- 🐱 Don't give your children a choice if there isn't one. For example if you have to pick up an older child from school, don't ask your toddlers if they want to come, say "We're going to the school in the car now".
- 🐱 If there is something they do not want to do, try to make a game of it. You could say "See if you can race me to the bath" or put a few drops of food colouring or bubble bath or a boat in the bath to make it more attractive.
- 🐱 Give simple choices, for example with food and clothes. "Do you want to wear your blue shirt or your red shirt, today?" (Some young children find it very difficult to make choices for a while and may need you to choose for them.)
- 🐱 Be positive. For example instead of saying "Don't slam the door" say "I know that you can shut the door quietly, let's see you do it". Then give praise for learning a new skill.



# REMINDERS

- 🕒 Try to avoid battles.
- 👤 Understand that your children need to test out their independence against you.
- 👤 Focus on the things that please you about your toddlers and tell them often!
- 🕒 Get some time out for yourself if you can. Toddlers are exciting but tiring.

- 👤 Give clear messages to your young children. If you just say "No", they may not know what you mean. Tell them exactly what you want them to do in simple words. For example "Don't turn the knobs on the TV, they will break." Give them something else such as an old radio to practise with. (You may have to physically move them away from the TV, or put the TV out of reach).
- 👤 If your children refuse to come with you and there is no time to use any of the above methods, pick them up and carry them, don't threaten to leave them. This is very frightening for young children.

## Help children learn about feelings

- 👤 Label feelings for your young children so that they learn that feelings are something that you can talk about. For example you could say "You're feeling sad because Daddy had to go to work".
- 👤 Separate feelings from behaviour. For example you might say "I know you feel cross but you must not hit. When you feel cross you can tell me". Your children will not understand all of this at first but it is very important learning.
- 👤 Read stories that show children with different kinds of feelings - angry, happy, sad, afraid etc.
- 👤 Begin to help children understand the difference between their own feelings and other people's. For example you could say "It hurts Jenny when you hit her, let's touch her very gently and make her feel better". It takes many years to learn this well but you can start when your children are very young.

## Fighting fears

The world can seem very fearful to children of this age, because there are lots of things they don't understand yet. They don't understand:

- 👤 That you will come back soon - because they don't understand time.

- 👤 That they can't fall down the plug hole in the bath - because they don't understand size and space.
- 👤 That they can't lose parts of their body if they are hurt - because they don't yet understand their bodies are all part of them.
- 👤 That the monsters in their dreams won't get them - because they don't yet understand what is real and what is not.

## Helping young children with fears

- 👤 Fears about cuts and bruises. Put a band aid on sores and hurts even if you don't see the need for it.
- 👤 Fears about going down the plug hole. Let the children bath in a baby bath for a while, or at least don't pull out the plug while they are still in the bath. Let them use a potty instead of the big toilet.
- 👤 Fears about nightmares. If they have a nightmare tell them that "It is only a dream". Comfort them.
- 👤 Fears of monsters. Tell them that there are no monsters. Don't look for monsters under the bed, because they may think that you believe there are some there to look for.
- 👤 Fears of separation. Let your children have their comforter or dummy when they need it. They help children to deal with fears. Children usually need to keep them until they are three or four years old.
- 👤 Fear of the dark. Stay with your children to reassure them. Perhaps use a night light. Let them sleep in the same room as a brother or sister or parent for a while.
- 👤 Let them know that you understand, and you don't think they are silly or babyish. Keep to bedtime routines, for example the same number of kisses goodnight or the same story.
- 👤 If fears are really interfering with a child's life talk it over with a counsellor who works with children.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** It is never useful to force children to face their fears. Mostly they grow out of them, with lots of support and understanding.

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# NEVER shake a baby

We all want to be good parents (or caregivers) with normal, healthy, well-behaved children. However, bringing up children is never easy and sometimes adults find it hard to cope, especially when caring for a baby.

From time to time when babies are hard to settle, parents or carers may lose control and hit or shake the baby. This can cause the child great harm. Many people do not realise that babies can die or suffer permanent brain injury if they are severely shaken. Children under one year of age are most at risk. Older children can also be hurt if they are shaken hard.

No matter how  
tired, angry or  
frustrated you feel,  
**never** shake a baby.

## Shaking a baby very hard can cause irreversible damage

Severely shaking a baby can cause immediate harmful effects such as loss of consciousness or fits. Permanent effects of shaking a baby very hard can include:

- ☠ death
- ☠ brain damage or bleeding inside the head and eyes
- ☠ spasticity in muscles affecting movement
- ☠ blindness and
- ☠ epilepsy.

Many childhood injuries heal, but a head injury could leave your child with a disability for life. By talking to your babysitters, child care workers, and friends or relatives who care for your child, you can make sure they are aware of the dangers of severely shaking a baby.

Because we do not know exactly how hard a baby must be shaken to cause these effects, you should never shake a baby.



## Babies can die if they are shaken

Babies can be damaged by shaking because, relative to an adult, their heads are large compared with their bodies, and their necks are weak. They do not have the strength to stop their head jerking backwards and forwards when shaken and this can tear the blood vessels inside the head causing bleeding and brain damage.

A baby's brain is very fragile. It is softer and moves around inside the skull more than an older child or adult's brain. So when a baby is shaken the brain is easily bruised and damaged.

Dropping babies can also cause injury. Therefore, very young babies should never be tossed in the air or swung around. Older babies and children, who may enjoy being tossed and caught in a playful way, are at risk of serious injury if they are dropped. Anything that causes rapid, uncontrolled movement of a baby's head should be avoided.

## Shaking is not the right way to revive a baby

If you think your baby has stopped breathing, shaking is not the right way to revive your child.









If your baby has stopped breathing, put the baby on one side, clear its mouth and nose and commence resuscitation. Call emergency services by dialling 000 immediately and ask for an ambulance.

**Do not waste time - every second counts.**

## All babies cry

Crying is the way babies communicate their needs and feelings to the world. It is their way of talking to you. If you can find out what the baby needs and provide it, the crying will usually stop. But finding out what the baby needs is not always easy.

### Babies cry when they are:









-  hungry
-  tired
-  wet
-  uncomfortable
-  upset or scared
-  unwell or in pain
-  lonely or
-  wanting attention.

Normal, healthy babies may cry for up to two or three hours a day. Sometimes a baby just wants to be picked up and held. If your baby has been crying for what seems like forever, and you've tried feeding or changing the baby and nothing seems to help, remember:

**no matter how tired, angry or frustrated you feel, never shake a baby.**

## The baby won't stop crying

If your baby has been fed and changed but still will not settle, here are some other ideas. You might not be able to stop your baby crying but you can provide comfort and reassurance.

-  Give the baby a bottle of cooled boiled water.
-  Gently rub the baby's tummy.
-  If your baby uses a dummy then offer a dummy - sucking is a comfort for babies.
-  Walk or rock the baby snuggled up close to your chest so the baby can feel your heartbeat.
-  Take the baby for a walk in the fresh air.
-  Sing or talk to the baby.
-  Wrap the baby in a soft blanket.
-  Gently stroke the baby in a relaxing and rhythmical way.

## What if the baby is still crying?

If you've tried everything you can think of and the baby is still crying, wrap the baby in a soft blanket and put them in the cot.

Leave the room. If you're feeling stressed, give yourself a chance to calm down. Leaving your baby alone for a short time, even though they are crying, will give you an important opportunity to telephone a supportive friend or relative.

### It is very important to let someone know how you are feeling.

Do not leave your baby unchecked for longer than 10 minutes if they are crying.

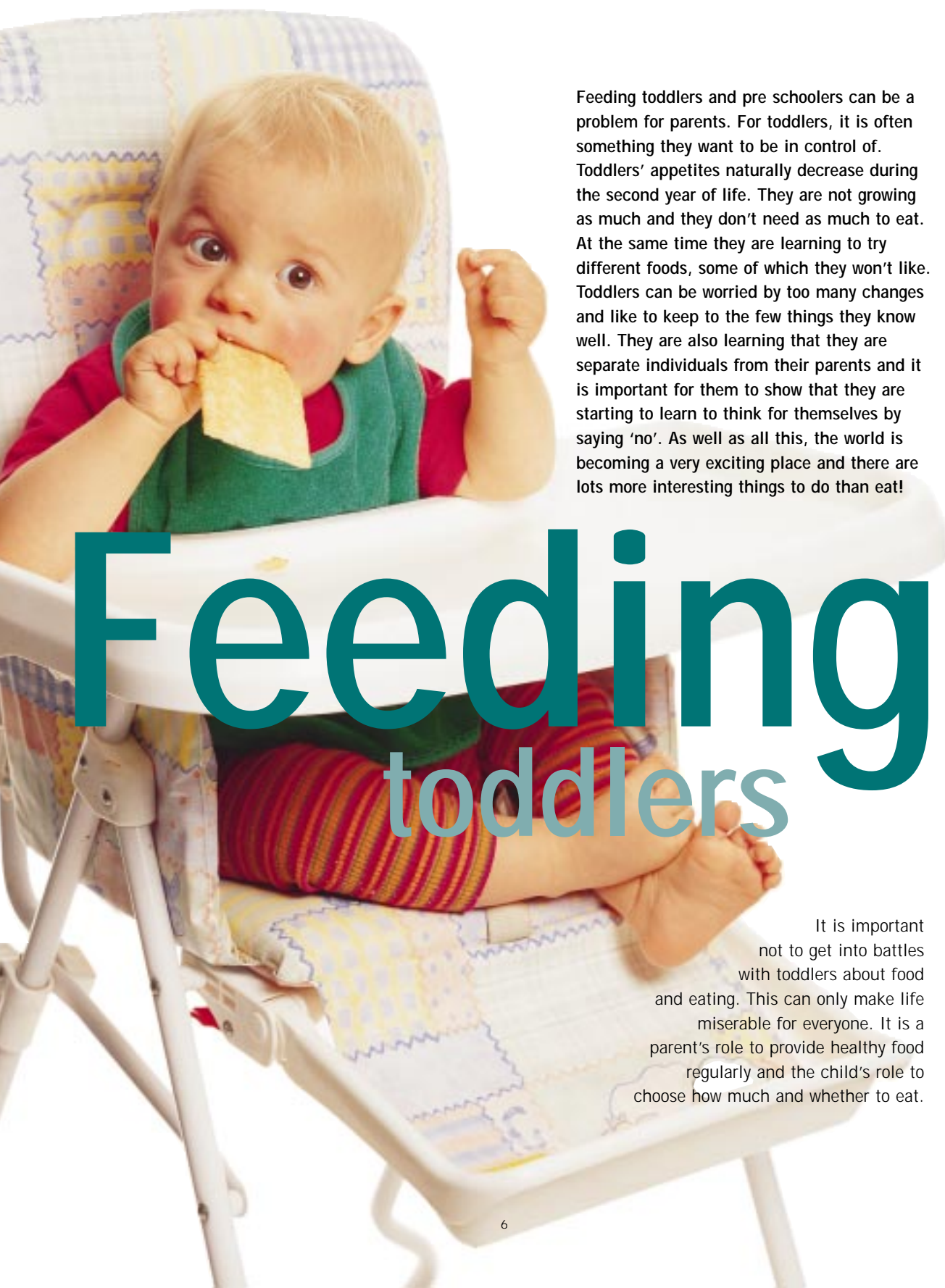
Remember, babies always need love and attention.

Help is available if you are still worried about your baby's crying or general health. Talk to your doctor or local Early Childhood Health Centre.

### For immediate support and advice contact ...

Cry LINE	1800 066 777
Kidsnet	02 9845 2432
Kids Careline (Newcastle area)	02 4921 2800
Your local doctor or paediatrician	

Additional information supplied by NAPCAN  
(National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect)



Feeding toddlers and pre schoolers can be a problem for parents. For toddlers, it is often something they want to be in control of. Toddlers' appetites naturally decrease during the second year of life. They are not growing as much and they don't need as much to eat. At the same time they are learning to try different foods, some of which they won't like. Toddlers can be worried by too many changes and like to keep to the few things they know well. They are also learning that they are separate individuals from their parents and it is important for them to show that they are starting to learn to think for themselves by saying 'no'. As well as all this, the world is becoming a very exciting place and there are lots more interesting things to do than eat!

# Feeding toddlers

It is important not to get into battles with toddlers about food and eating. This can only make life miserable for everyone. It is a parent's role to provide healthy food regularly and the child's role to choose how much and whether to eat.

## What parents can do

No healthy child will starve or be undernourished if they have access to a variety of wholesome foods. If you are really worried about what your toddler eats, keep a chart for a week and write down everything they eat. You will probably be surprised, but if you are in doubt, check with your General Practitioner or Early Childhood Health Centre. If your child eats poorly, a vitamin supplement, appropriate for children, will reassure you and will be more helpful than continual meal time battles. Regular checks for height and weight at your local Early Childhood Health Centre will be helpful to monitor their growth and development.

## What to feed toddlers

Young children need fat in their diet for energy. Do not give low fat foods to under 5 year olds. Use whole milk, not reduced fat types. Soy milk is not recommended for toddlers, but if you do use it, use the calcium-enriched variety.

Young children may not be able to cope with a lot of fibre. High fibre food or a lot of fruit juice may cause diarrhoea.

Avoid having salty or sugary snacks in the house as they spoil the appetite for more healthy foods.

Children don't mind having the same thing over and over. In fact toddlers like it. We get sick of eating the same foods day after day, but some toddlers prefer this and will only eat 2 or 3 foods for weeks at a time. This is quite normal and won't last forever. In fact, usually by the time they are in primary school, children will try anything, especially at friends' homes.

## Nutrition Guide



Sometimes foods



Small amounts of fats and oils



Always drink plenty of water

# REMINDERS

- Healthy children will not starve if they have access to a balance of nutritious food.
- Children, like adults, need to be able to choose what they want to eat and how much.
- If you don't have snack foods and soft drinks in the house your child will not fill up on them.
- Young children have small stomachs. They need to eat less and more often.
- Don't try to force your child to eat or punish them for not eating. Children know how much food they need.
- Don't let mealtimes become a battlefield. Food is to be enjoyed.

- Fruit and vegetables
- Bread, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- Meat, fish, chicken, eggs, nut paste, legumes
- Full fat cow's milk or fortified soy milk, yoghurt, cheese, custard

This chart is a visual guide to the relative amounts of different food that your children need as they grow. It does not say how much your children should eat. How much and what they eat depends on likes, dislikes and how active they are.

## Encouraging toddlers to eat

Toddlers have small stomachs so they do not need large servings of food.

- Provide a range of nutritious food.
- Offer small meals and healthy snacks at regular times during the day.
- It is better not to have unhealthy snack foods (especially snacks like biscuits, soft drinks and sweets) in the house. This will prevent your toddler being tempted.
- Avoid cordials and too much fruit juice as these are high in sugar and take away the appetite for other foods.
- Allow your child to help prepare the meal. It takes longer but encourages interest in the food.
- Keep mealtime serves of food small and allow your child to ask for more.
- Don't use dessert as a bribe to eat the rest of the meal. This makes dessert too special. If you do have desserts make sure they are nutritious such as fruit or milk puddings. Give small serves.
- Offer your child a choice of foods sometimes.
- For a treat you can sometimes make the meal into a picture, such as a potato face with pieces of vegetable for the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Remove uneaten food without comment.
- Having a friend over for a meal often encourages toddlers to eat.
- Sometimes vary where you serve the food, for example at your toddler's own table in the playhouse, a picnic in the garden, or serve a meal where the food is put on plates in the centre of the table and everyone helps themselves.
- Sometimes it is possible for toddlers to help grow vegetables in a window box or small area of the garden.
- Give your toddler the main part of their evening meal early (around 4.30) so they are not too tired to eat. They can still have a small portion of dessert with the family later if you like to eat together. A cold meal such as meat, bread and fruit or salad is equally nutritious. Raw, grated vegetables are just as healthy as cooked. Or you could freeze part of the evening meal from the day before and reheat it for your toddler.

**Do not ever try to force your toddler to eat. It can cause choking. Adults would not like to be forced to eat food they don't like. Keep a relaxed eating environment and leave the eating up to your toddler.**

**NOTE: Learning to feed themselves is often a messy business for toddlers. If you don't like mess, put newspaper on the floor and a big feeder or bib on your toddler. The more practice they get in doing it for themselves, the quicker they will learn to feed themselves well.**

## Snacks

Active young children don't like to sit still for long and may do better with several small meals rather than just three larger ones. Healthy snacks are a great idea.

**Here are some suggestions for snacks or lunches.**

Pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables (be careful of hard bits of food that could break off and cause choking). Grate raw carrot, apple etc.

Dried fruit.

Cheese cubes or sticks.

Dry biscuits (unsalted) with creamed or cottage cheese, or peanut butter or a little vegemite.

Bread or toast with spreads.

Iceblocks made from freezing fruit or pure fruit juices (whole bananas freeze well).

Hard boiled eggs.

Yoghurt.

Home made biscuits. You can use little fat or sugar, no salt and add wholemeal flour, rolled oats, diced or fresh fruit or grated vegetables.

**Do not give nuts to toddlers.**

## Drinks

Water is the best drink for thirst. Always have plenty of water available and show your toddler that you enjoy drinking it too.

Fruit juices (unsweetened) are good but expensive. One to two glasses a day is plenty. Toddlers should not have more than this. Fruit juice can be diluted with water. Avoid fruit juice drinks because they contain a lot of sugar.

Full cream milk is a good source of nutrition but limit it to about 600 mls a day so there is room for other foods.

## Vegetarian diets

**If your family does not eat meat your child can get good nutrition from other foods.**

Milk, cheese and eggs are excellent sources of animal protein.

Dried beans and peas, seeds and nuts give vegetable protein and iron. (Grind nuts into a paste for children under 5 years.)

When vegetable protein is eaten with whole grain cereals you get a complete protein (which is as good as animal protein). It contains all the building blocks your body needs. Examples are soy beans with brown rice, or wholemeal bread with peanut paste.

Include plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables in your diet.

If you are a Vegan and don't eat any animal foods (such as milk, cheese or eggs) it is harder to meet all your child's food needs. Vitamin B12 will be missing and is essential for growth and development, especially of the nervous system. You need to give supplements of Vitamin B12 to your child (some soy bean products have Vitamin B12 added).

**It can be hard for young children on a vegan diet to get enough calcium, iron and protein for healthy growth. It is wise to check with a dietitian.**

## Traditional diets

Various ethnic groups have traditional diets, which are usually balanced and healthy as long as natural and fresh foods are used and you don't substitute too many highly refined western foods. Choose nutritious foods from the Healthy Eating Pyramid and prepare them in your traditional way.



# Sleep

## in the pre school years

### How we sleep

There are two main kinds of sleep. One is light sleep. This is when we dream and 'go over' the day's events and wake feeling refreshed. It is also the kind of sleep where we wake more easily. With infants this is the major part of their sleep, but by adolescence it is only about 20% of sleep time.

The other kind is deep sleep, where growing and healing takes place. This is when children may have night terrors. It is much harder to wake people up from this kind of sleep.

Each night we all experience sleep patterns where we go from lighter sleep to deep sleep then lighter sleep again. Toddlers usually take about an hour for each sleep pattern or cycle.

### How much sleep do children need?

**Infants** - average about 17 hours, with very wide variation.

**One year olds** - sleep about 12 hours a night and may have 2 day sleeps.

**Pre schoolers** - sleep about 10 to 13 hours a night. By five, most of them have given up their day sleep.

**Remember that children's sleep needs are individual and can vary a lot from the average pattern.**

If you want to check roughly how much sleep your own child needs, keep a sleep chart for a few days. Write down exactly how long your child sleeps. Whatever average amount you come to is probably about how much sleep your child needs. Remember that as your child grows, their sleep time will get shorter.

Managing sleep and going to bed is one of the most common concerns for parents of pre school children. Everyone wishes that their child would go to bed at seven o'clock, sleep soundly all night and wake up cheerfully at eight in the morning! If your child doesn't do this you might think there's something wrong and you have a problem child. But first let's look at some facts about sleep.

### How well do children sleep through the night?

We often read in books that children sleep through the night from 6 to 8 months old. This is because they can now last that long between feeds and some do sleep through the night. Many children wake in the lighter periods of sleep, just as we all wake (or almost wake). Then they turn over and go back to sleep. Remember that children have more of these lighter periods of sleep than adults. Many children haven't yet learned how to go back to sleep. Or perhaps, like adults, something is bothering them, so they can't settle back to sleep and end up crying.

### How often do children wake at night?

Research reported in the *Medical Journal of Australia* in 1994 shows that by 12 months of age, only 38% of babies are sleeping through the night. 49% are waking once or twice a night and another 10% are waking 3 or 4 times a night. Between the ages of two and three, 41% of young children are waking once or twice a night, with a few still waking more often. So if your pre school child is waking at night you are not alone! There is a very wide range of what is normal.

### Causes of waking at night

The following are probably the most common causes of young children waking at night.

**Pain** - such as earache or teething. If waking is due to pain, your child may not settle even if you are there to comfort them.

**Discomfort** - too hot, too cold, too thirsty or a wet bed.

## Causes of not being able to settle back to sleep at night

All children have times at night when they sleep more lightly or wake up. Some learn to settle back to sleep by themselves, but in the early years many are not able to do this easily. Apart from pain and discomfort there are other reasons why children may not go back to sleep.

**Separation anxiety** - a very common reason why children under 3 cry at night. By 8 or 9 months children have learned that their parents exist even if they can't see them. However, the inner confidence to be able to feel secure when parents are not there is still developing until 3 or 4 years of age. Night waking usually drops off quickly after this.

**Worries** - children very quickly pick up feelings and happenings in the family, such as a new baby, a change in child care, parents' arguments and health problems. Without reassurance from you, worries such as these may prevent your child going back to sleep.

**Not knowing how to settle back to sleep** - sometimes children who have always been rocked or nursed to sleep find it hard to settle back to sleep when they are in their own beds. They haven't learned how to go to sleep on their own.

**Getting the time of day wrong** - a few pre school children may not have learned yet that night-time is for sleeping. They wake at night all fired up and ready to play.

**If parents know that night waking is normal in the early years, it will remove some of the stress. But parents also need their sleep. You need to look at some of the things you can do to make sure that your sleep is as unbroken as possible.**

## What parents can do about night waking

Depending on the cause of the waking, here are some tips to try.

- Make going to bed time relaxed and comfortable.
- When you go to bed yourself, go into your child's room, touch them gently, tell them you love them and are caring for them (say this at bedtime as well).
- Take turns with your partner to get up at night.
- If your child is worried or afraid about being separated from you, try putting a fold-up bed in their room. You can lie down near them while they go back to sleep (and get some rest yourself).
- Move your child's cot into your bedroom so you can comfort them without getting up. Or put a foam mattress and sleeping bag near your bed so your older child can come in and sleep near you if they are afraid.
- Taking your toddler into your bed to sleep with you will not create a lifetime habit. If you do this you need to make sure that both you and your partner are happy about it. It is important to make sure that your child's head does not go under the bedclothes. It is not wise to sleep with your child if you are a smoker.

- You might want to find somewhere else for lovemaking with your partner if your child is sleeping in your room all night.
- Your child might benefit from a comforting toy such as their dummy or special blanket.
- Night-time waking is a time for comfort and resettling, not a time for play or anything else exciting. Be comforting but boring. Don't respond to any games.
- If your toddler won't lie down you can hold them down firmly with an arm along their back until they relax. This gives a message that you are there for them but that it is time to settle down.
- Sedatives may be useful in some cases, but always discuss this with your doctor first.
- Some parents use 'controlled comforting' to change their child's sleep patterns. If you want to do it it's best to first assess what is causing the night-time crying. Night waking for toddlers can be caused by separation anxiety and this approach can make the child more upset. Controlled comforting needs to be something that both you and your child can cope with without getting too distressed. If your child is still crying a lot after a few days of controlled comforting then try other approaches.

## Going to bed and waking early problems

The other problem parents sometimes have with their young child is getting them to bed. A few parents have problems at the other end of the day with a child who wants to be up with the roosters while parents need that extra hour's sleep.

## Causes of going to bed problems

There are lots of different reasons for going to bed problems. Going to bed means going off on your own and leaving all the interesting things that are happening in the home. In many cultures this does not happen. Children sleep in or near the action! Parents in our society are often tired at the end of the day and need some time to themselves. Children don't always have the chance to nap whenever they feel like it, so they need their sleep at night.

Here are some other causes of going to bed problems.

- Not tired yet. If your child is not tired and you wait until later, they will probably go off to bed happily. (If the problem is fear or worry, no matter what time you put them to bed they will be unhappy.)
- Too much excitement before bedtime or a very busy day.
- Lack of going to bed routine.
- Daylight saving.
- Going to bed too early! You can't have it both ways. Your toddler only needs a certain amount of sleep. If you like them to sleep in in the morning you might have to put up with a later bedtime.

## What parents can try for going to bed and early morning problems

Some things you may not have no control over, like daylight saving. However there are lots of other things you can do.

Make sure your child has a regular bedtime that gets later as they need less sleep.

Use relaxing bedtime routines every night such as a bath, story, saying goodnight to the family and pets and a special cuddle. Tuck your child in with their special cuddly toy if they have one. Keep bedtime activities calm and quiet.

If your child is more attached to one parent, it sometimes helps if that parent has special time with them before bedtime. Then the other parent puts them to bed.

**Some things that help children feel less lonely include:**

- ♪ leaving the light on
- ♪ leaving the door open
- ♪ playing soft music
- ♪ leaving a radio on softly.

Some children cannot settle unless a parent stays with them. If you decide to do this don't sneak out without telling your child. This keeps your child tense and on edge in case you do it again. You might try saying you have to go into another room to do something and you will be back very soon. Make sure you do come back very soon. If your child accepts this you can start taking a bit longer before you come back, but make sure that you always do. This builds trust.

You could make putting your child to bed a time for your own relaxation. Take a book to read and sit on a chair near your child. You are there, but not doing anything that might disturb them. If you wanted to, you could gradually move your chair nearer to the door over a few nights. Eventually you will be able to put it outside the door so your child can hear you but not see you. This way your child gradually learns to settle when you are not there.

Sometimes children will settle where the action is and can be carried to their own beds later. They grow out of this.

If you decide that you want your child to go to bed a bit earlier and you don't mind if they wake a bit earlier, try putting them to bed a quarter of an hour earlier. Sleep rhythms take some time to change so you can expect to wait for about two weeks before you see any real change in sleep behaviour. Then, if that works, you might try another quarter of an hour. You can also put them to bed later to see if that will help them sleep longer in the morning.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** When you are tired at night you are at your lowest ebb. If you start feeling desperate seek help - get your partner, ring a friend, ring the Parent Line. If you feel that you might hurt your child make sure they are safe and then leave until you can cope.



## REMINDERS

- ☆ Everyone's need for sleep is individual. You can't make rules on the basis of age.
- ☆ Sleep problems are often more to do with where your child sleeps, rather than whether your child sleeps. Sleeping alone for babies and young children is not the only way. It is part of our Australian society to have separate bedrooms for children.
- ☆ What you do about your child's night waking depends on what you feel comfortable with and what will help your child feel secure and able to move on to the next stage of growing up.
- ☆ Children usually grow out of night waking by the time they are three or four. This is the age when they are likely to be old enough to feel more secure when they are by themselves. Many grow out of it earlier.



## Learning to

# “talk”

**L**earning to talk is one of the most difficult and important steps that young children take. It helps them to make sense of the world, to ask for what they need and to be able to get on with other people. If you think about how difficult it is for adults to learn a very different language, you can get some idea of what it is like for an infant to learn to speak from having no language at all. Language and speech, like other development, take place at different rates for different children.

## REMINDERS

- 📖 Language is an important development, involving both listening and talking. It should also be fun.
- 📖 Use simple language for the very young. Think about how you would feel learning a new language.
- 📖 Spend time telling and reading simple stories and rhymes and looking at picture books.
- 📖 Sit or kneel down so you are on your child's level when they are talking to you.
- 📖 Help your child to notice road signs and billboards.

## STEPS IN LEARNING TO TALK

### The early months

Long before they can speak, infants are listening to their parents and carers. They begin to make little noises and sounds which come before speech. If you imitate these it's like you're talking to your child. This is the beginning of your baby learning to talk.

**By responding to your baby's needs when they cry, you show that you have heard them and that they matter. This is the beginning of communication.**

### 8 to 12 months

Early little noises turn into babbling such as 'da-da-da-da' and 'ma-ma-ma-ma'.

Babies begin to learn what some simple words mean, such as 'mummy', 'bottle', 'no', even though they cannot say them.

They may say one or two single words, wave 'bye-bye' when asked and obey simple requests such as 'Give me the ball'.

### 12 to 18 months

There is much babbling in children's own jargon.

The first single words appear such as 'no', 'dad' and 'dog'.

Children can point to things they know when asked and know and respond to their name.

### 18 months to 2 years

They learn lots of new words. Two year olds may have a hundred or more words.

Two year olds can say their name.

They can ask for simple things such as 'drink', start to join words together such as 'Daddy home' or 'All gone' and copy the last part of sentences.

They experiment with speech sounds and make mistakes.

### 3 to 4 years

Children begin to ask 'what?' and 'why?' questions and separate truth from make-believe.

They can talk about and understand the significance of 'yesterday, now and tomorrow'.

Their speech should be understandable 70% of the time.

They are likely to talk to themselves in the same way they talk to things and can learn and join-in on simple rhymes and songs.

### 4 to 5 years

Children learn to adjust their language to the situation they are in, for example talking differently to parents and friends.

They ask 'when?' questions and can talk about imaginary situations such as 'I hope...'

They still mix truth and make-believe and like to tell stories.

They can hold conversations with their friends and parents.

They will be able to say their name, age and address if taught.

Four year olds enjoy making up words for fun and using toilet words.

Their speech is clearer but they still may not be using 'th', 'r', 'z', 's', and 'v'.

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- 🗨️ Talk to your baby right from birth and imitate their sounds.
- 🗨️ Name things and talk about what you are doing. Use simple words and sentences at first.
- 🗨️ Give your child some one-to-one talking time each day.
- 🗨️ Listen with interest when your child is talking to you. Don't interfere or correct their speech. Allow your child time to get out what they want to say.
- 🗨️ Answer questions simply and clearly.
- 🗨️ Talk about pictures in books and name things in the pictures. Sing songs and read rhymes. Take your child to the local library and read them. You can borrow or buy ones they particularly enjoy.
- 🗨️ Give them a chance to talk without interruption from older brothers and sisters.
- 🗨️ Slow your child down first, then listen to them if they are stumbling over words because they are excited.
- 🗨️ Get down to eye level with your child when teaching a new word so they can see your lips and hear the word clearly.

## WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

- If your baby or child does not turn their head to sounds. Hearing problems often cause speech difficulties.
- If your child does not understand simple instructions by 2 years.
- If your child has no words by 18 months to 2 years.







**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are concerned about your child's speech contact a speech pathologist. They will be able to reassure you or help if there is a problem. Speech pathologists can be contacted through local Community Health Centres (under 'Community Health' in the phone book) or a local hospital which provides services for children.

Learning to use the toilet is one of the big new steps for toddlers. It is really hard. Some children just seem to train themselves when they are ready, but most seem to need some help from their parents.

Parents see toilet training as an important milestone for their child and often become very concerned if it doesn't all go smoothly.

# toilet TRAINING

## REMINDERS

-  Toilet training is a difficult new skill for children to learn.
-  Start when they show they are ready.
-  Give praise for success.
-  Go at your child's pace.
-  If there are any setbacks give up for a few weeks and then start again.
-  Don't get into battles over toilet training. Your child needs to be proud of what they achieve.





### When will my child be ready?

Most children are not ready to learn to control their bowels and bladder (poo and wee) until they are 2 years old and some not until they are three. Often boys are later than girls.

To be ready to use the toilet or potty your child first needs to understand that their bowels or bladder are full. They need to be able to hold on to their urine (wee) for an hour or so (so they can, for example, wake up dry from their daytime nap). They need to be able to understand that they are meant to use the toilet or potty.

The first sign of this awareness may be that they tell you when they are actually doing wee or poo or when they have just done it. When they get praise for telling you, they will be ready to move on to the next step. This will be to tell you before they are actually doing it.

#### Other signs of readiness are:

-  taking an interest in others using the toilet
-  pulling at wet and dirty nappies
-  telling you that they are wet
-  telling you that they don't want to wear nappies any more.

Be prepared to wait until your child is ready. Most toilet training problems can be avoided if you don't start too early.

Don't give yourself a time you want them to be successful by, such as just before or after a new baby comes. This is almost a sure recipe for disaster.



**IMPORTANT NOTE** The information in this article is for parents of children under five. If problems with soiling go on longer than this you may need professional help. Soiling or wetting during the day can be a distressing social problem for children and they need our best efforts to help them with it.

## Dry at night

Many children go on wetting the bed long after they are dry during the day. It is not necessary to worry about bedwetting if the child is under five or so. If your child continues after this, or has been dry and starts wetting again, check with your doctor to make sure there is no medical problem. Also check with your doctor if one child is bedwetting much later than others in the family. Once this is clear, you can be reassured that over 10% of children in the younger primary school years wet their beds. They grow out of it naturally.

## Getting ready for toilet training

- ☺ Teach your child the words needed for asking to go to the toilet such as 'wet', 'dry', 'poo', 'wee', 'potty'. Choose words that you are comfortable using.
- ☺ Choose either a potty or a special toilet seat with a footstool or brick (a brick is cheap and easy to step up on). This is necessary if you choose to use a toilet seat, so that your child feels safe and relaxed on the toilet. A potty can be moved around the house, but you may need to take it out with you if your child is not used to using a toilet. (This can be quite useful for emergencies when you are caught in traffic.)
- ☺ Some toddlers are afraid of being flushed down the toilet because they don't yet understand that they cannot fit down such a small hole. For these children, a potty is better or at least don't flush the toilet until they are safely out of the way.

- ☺ Make sure the toilet area is safe. For example, keep household cleaners and deodorants out of reach.
- ☺ If you feel comfortable about it, let your child go with you to the toilet and talk about what you are doing.
- ☺ Make sure your child is wearing clothing that is easy to get on and off and to wash, such as trainer pants.
- ☺ In warm weather you might like to let your child go without pants or nappies for some of the time.

## Starting toilet training

If your child tells you before they do a wee or poo, just take them to the toilet or potty. If they don't get there in time at first, give them praise for whatever they have managed, such as pulling down their pants or sitting on the toilet. Make sure they see that the praise is for them learning a new skill, not something they have to do to please you. For example you might say 'You did that really well', rather than 'You are a good girl for Daddy'.

If your child isn't telling you yet before they poo or wee, choose a time when you are able to give lots of attention to them before you decide to start. If you see signs that they are about to do a wee or poo say something like 'Let's see if there is a wee coming'. Then take them to the toilet or potty. Children are often very busy with what they are doing, so they don't always notice their body's message that their wee or poo is coming.

Children do not need to be made to sit on a potty for long periods of time. This feels like punishment to them and does not help toilet training.

Make sure your child can easily get to the toilet by themselves if they want to.

Teach girls to wipe themselves from the front towards the back to avoid getting any soiling into the vagina.

Teach your child to wash their hands after using the toilet or potty.

Reward successes with cuddles. Say things like 'I am proud of you'.

**Be positive. Learning to use the toilet is difficult. Praise small successes.**

## Toilet training troubles

Learning to control bowels and bladder is a major task for your toddler and sometimes there are hitches for various reasons.

- 🛒 Starting too soon.
- 🛒 Parents have set themselves a date to succeed by. Development doesn't obey dates.
- 🛒 Pressure from relatives or friends ('Surely Tom isn't still in nappies?').
- 🛒 Parents feeling they must get their child trained. If your child feels tension and pressure they may become afraid of making a mess, and it will be hard for them to get it right.
- 🛒 Children and parents getting into a battle over toilet training. Everybody loses in this sort of battle.
- 🛒 If you think your child is purposely not trying to succeed, try not to punish them or show them you are angry. This sets back the new learning.
- 🛒 Any stress in your child's life, such as a new baby or starting child care can set them back.

## Physical problems

Sometimes after an illness or because of constipation a small tear (or fissure) occurs which causes pain when a child does poo. This can make your child try to hold on. Eventually small amounts of poo leak out when the bowels become too full to manage. This can cause great distress to children. If you feel this is happening, or your child seems to be in pain or there is blood in the poo it is important to see a doctor.

Sometimes the bowel gets used to being full of poo all the time. Your child then cannot feel when they need to go to the toilet. They don't get the message they need to go. This needs medical help to get it started again.

**You should also see your doctor if there are signs of urinary (bladder) infections such as:**

- + doing wee very often
- + pain when doing wee

- + blood in the wee
- + wetting frequently during the day after the age of two
- + if your child's wee changes in smell
- + a child of four or over is still wetting during the day.

## What parents can do

The most important thing is for your child to feel they have your support in learning this new skill. If they are resisting toilet training or there has been a bit of a battle, they need at least a few weeks with the pressure off. In the meantime, spend lots of time making your child feel good.

Work on making your toddler feel special first, especially if the problem is due to having a new baby (or other stress). After all, your child can see you happily changing the baby's pooey nappies, while inside they may feel they still need some babying as well. If your child wants to wear a nappy or have a bottle again for a while, let them. Once they feel they are still special to you, they will be able to go forward again.

The first step towards a new beginning is telling your toddler, whenever and wherever they do their poo, that poo is good and doing poo is good for them. This will help them to feel free to tell you when they are doing it, or when they are ready to.

Sometimes it helps to put the potty in a place chosen by your child.

If your child is relaxed about it, you could take them to the toilet or potty at a time when they usually do poo, or after a sleep if they wake up dry.

The first praise needs to be just for sitting there for a short time, or for pulling up their pants or whatever they can manage. Children learn new tasks in small steps and each step can be praised. Don't wait until they can do the whole task properly.

It is not helpful to make toddlers wash their own pants or sheets. This usually makes them feel bad and may make the problem worse. (Sometimes a counsellor will suggest this as part of a program to help older children be in charge of their own needs, but it is not appropriate for younger children. If it is used by a counsellor it is never used as punishment).

The more you can take off the pressure and help your child to feel that success will be their own doing, the quicker success is likely to come. When children feel tension or anger in their parents, it makes them tense and then it is harder for them to learn new skills.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Once your child is using the toilet, you need to be on your guard against disappointment if there are accidents. A few accidents are natural, even when children are trained. If disappointment catches you unawares and your child sees you are upset or angry, it is likely to set back all your good work



# feeling sick?

When you or I are not well, what we mostly want is someone to look after us, to give us food and sympathy, peace to be able to rest, and something to keep us amused when we are feeling better. When children are sick, they need all of this and more. When they are unwell, and especially if they are in pain, children often feel frightened or worried. **They need to be cared for by the people they feel closest to.**

## WHAT ABOUT CHILD CARE OR SCHOOL?

Child care workers or family day care workers can be loved by and trusted by children, but usually they are so busy that it is difficult to give the time and attention that a sick child needs. **It really is not fair to send a sick child to child care or school.** Rest is usually not possible in a busy child care or school room. Your child can also pass on infections to other children and to the care givers or teachers.

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Here are some of the things that you can do to help your child when they are sick.

### Rest

Unless they are very sick most young children will not stay in bed.

- ◆ Your sick child wants to be near you, or to be where the 'action' is.
- ◆ Being able to lie on a soft chair where they can watch you is more restful than being alone in a bedroom.
- ◆ Watching TV may not be best for a child who has a headache, but it can be relaxing for children who are not well enough to play. It also gives you a break.
- ◆ Many sick children just want to lie in your arms for a while.
- ◆ Gentle massage of the tummy, head or legs may be very soothing to them.

## Behaviour

When your young child is sick, they are likely to act in a more babylike way for a while. Your child may:

- ☹ cry or whinge more
- ☹ want you to be near all the time
- ☹ want lots of holding and cuddles
- ☹ speak in a more babylike way
- ☹ need a dummy again (even if they have given it up)
- ☹ wet the bed or their pants.



Some sick children, especially those under 3 years, refuse to be with anyone except mum or their main caregiver. They may get very distressed if left with even a close family member like dad. This is a sign of being ill and worried and does not mean your child does not like the other person.

These behaviours are all normal for children who are sick. They are signs that your child needs more care and attention for a while. It may be hard not to be irritated by clinging and whingeing, but it will stop when your child is feeling better. If you are able to give this extra attention, usually your child will begin to 'act their age' quicker when they get better.





## Sleep

Sick children usually need extra sleep, but the sleep can be restless and broken.

If children are in pain, for example from an earache, it is hard to sleep and they may be quite frightened by the pain. They can also have nightmares. Stay nearby, so that your child can see you or hear you during the night. This may help your child relax and go back to sleep. You may need to consider putting a mattress for them on the floor near your bed for a while, or making a comfortable place near their bed for you to sleep. It is important that you get the best possible night's sleep too. This need for extra attention usually only lasts until your child is well again.

## Hygiene

Many of the illnesses that children have are due to infections (coughs and colds, chicken pox, tummy upsets) which they can pass on to others in the family.

-  Sick children still need to be held, kissed and comforted, but be very careful about hand washing and hygiene to help protect you and the rest of the family.
-  Many infections are passed on when hands pick up germs and then move the germs to the mouth or nose.
-  Wash your hands often and clean tables, benches, floors and toys to help lessen the spread of germs.
-  Babies are especially likely to catch infections. If possible try to stop your sick child from handling and kissing your baby. Although it can be hard to totally protect your baby, babies do have some ability to fight off infections.

## Visiting

Older people and babies are more likely to become very ill with infections, so you need to ask friends or relatives before you go to visit with a sick child. Try not to have many outings or visitors to your house. Do not take your child where there are a lot of young children, such as playgroups and kindergyms.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** It is not wise to leave sick children at home alone or in the care of an older child. If you are unable to care for them yourself, try to get another adult to do so. Find out if you can take your child to work with you when they are starting to feel better.







## WHEN TO SEE THE DOCTOR


Symptoms (signs of being sick such as a runny nose, aches and pains) usually don't last very long, however they can possibly mean a serious illness. See the doctor if any of these things are happening:

- + a fever or pain lasting more than a couple of hours
- + your child looks very pale and ill
- + vomiting often
- + diarrhoea that goes on for more than 24 hours
- + wheezing or being short of breath
- + bad headache.

As a parent you have a right to see the doctor about any worries to do with your child, even if they seem small. The doctor may be able to give your child some medicines or other treatment, or may reassure you that something is 'going around' and that your child will recover soon.

## REMINDERS

-  When children are sick they need their parents or someone very close to look after them.
-  Parents have the right to see their doctor if they are worried.
-  Before you go to the doctor write down the things you want to ask about if you think you might forget.
-  Children are often more 'clingy' when they are sick.
-  When children feel better they soon return to their usual behaviour.
-  Your child especially needs your comfort if they have to go to hospital.



**Tantrums happen when children have frustration or stress that they cannot cope with. Children are different in how they react to frustration.**

It is important to remember that the anger of the tantrum is always mixed with another feeling. In young children it is often frustration because there are so many things that they want to do but they can't. However there may also be other feelings, such as fear or feeling unwanted or jealousy. How you cope will depend on the cause and how your child is affected.

# Tantrums

## Little tantrums

These only last a short time and the child's feelings are not totally out of control.

Young children do not always have the words to say what they need. Their world is full of bigger people telling them what to do and what not to do! Young children do not have many inner strengths to cope with stress and frustration.

Sometimes children learn that busy parents are likely to give in to what they want if they 'carry on' long enough. This may mean persistent asking, 'whining' or having little tantrums. The child is not out of control at this stage, but sometimes little tantrums can grow into big 'boil over' tantrums.

### What parents can do

If little tantrums happen often, think about what is happening in your child's life. Often it seems as if the tantrum comes from something very small. However usually the 'something small' has come on top of a lot of other stresses or frustration in the child's life, becoming the thing that tips the child over into a tantrum.

- ☞ Spend regular relaxed time with your children.
- ☞ Give them plenty of room to move and explore.
- ☞ Are there too many 'no's' in your child's life?
- ☞ Notice all the good things about them and let them know that you do.
- ☞ Is your life so hectic that it is easier to give in to everything?
- ☞ Are there any other stresses that could be affecting your child - starting childcare, new baby, parents quarrelling etc?

### Mean what you say

Don't give in to children who have a tantrum because they want something. If the tantrum is small you might try saying "no" and giving a reason once. For example, "No, you can't have a biscuit because it is almost tea time".

Try to distract children by giving them something else to do. Let them help you cook the tea or let them choose a snack that you approve of.

Sometimes you can just ignore little tantrums. Be busy doing something and they will blow over.

Sometimes children's feelings get more and more out of control until they get into a proper 'boil over' tantrum. If you recognise the signs, step in first with whatever you know helps your child.

It is **never** helpful to punish a child to try to stop a tantrum.

## Plan

The best thing you can do about tantrums is to try to plan so they don't happen very often.

- ☞ Think about what is happening in the child's life that is stressful and see if there's anything you can do about it.
- ☞ Make sure there are lots of positives in your child's day.
- ☞ Keep a diary for a few days - what time of day the tantrums happen, when, what you're doing when it happens, what the child is doing. If it always happens around tea time try: let them have their tea earlier, give them a bath before tea, let them help you prepare tea or have some special time with them at this time of day.

**Planning will only work if you take into account your child's needs as well as your own. The child's needs may be attention, or tiredness, or less pressure or hunger. What they want might be a biscuit. Be firm about not giving the biscuit but try to be sure that their real needs are met.**

## Shopping centre tantrums

Tantrums in public are hard to cope with. If they happen often try plan ahead (as above). If possible leave the children with someone else if it is a long shopping trip. If you take them make sure they are not tired when you go. Take a snack for them to eat, make sure they have been to the toilet and try not to be too long. Let them help by getting things off the supermarket shelf for you. Make the shopping trip a treat for everyone by having a milkshake or a little time in the park at the end of it.

If a tantrum does happen you need to be strong to be able to leave the shopping where it is and take the child out to the car or wherever it is quiet until the tantrum is over.

**When your children cope well tell them you are pleased that they managed so well.**

## Big tantrums

Proper tantrums are the 'boil over' kind where the children can no longer control their feelings. This kind of tantrum is very frightening for children.

**When children have this kind of tantrum they can't listen to reason. Punishment such as consequences or time-out don't work. Ignoring this kind of tantrum can be frightening for children, because when they are out of control they need to learn that feelings can be controlled. They need to know that you are in control.**

## What parents can do

No matter how much planning you do some tantrums will happen, especially with children who are very sensitive.

- ☀ Let your child know that you are in control, that you can keep them safe and you will not punish or leave them. This is really major learning that they need to manage their feelings.
- ☀ Stay with your child during the tantrum. Hold them if you can. If not, stay nearby where you can touch them and where they can come to you when the worst of the storm is over. (If you are unable to stay near because your own feelings are in danger of getting out of control and it is unsafe, tell the children that you will be leaving for a short time but will be back soon to look after them. Get someone else to stay with them if you can).
- ☀ Talk to your child gently but firmly about how they feel and what is happening to them. You could say "You are feeling really upset and I will stay with you until you feel better. It's alright to cry when you feel upset, but I won't let you hit/kick/or whatever." You might have to hold the child to prevent this.
- ☀ It is important not to give in to whatever the child was wanting which started the tantrum.
- ☀ If your child is older and you can see their feelings getting out of control you might want to talk to them about going somewhere quiet until they can manage their feelings, then come and talk about it. You could go with them or not, whichever is most helpful.

**You teach your child when you manage the tantrum that angry feelings don't have to take over. They can be managed and expressed in helpful ways. You are also teaching that however bad things are, you will not let them down.**

## At the start and the end of the day

Some days are worse than others. If you can see at the beginning of the day that it is going to be 'one of those days' take some time out right at the start to do something relaxing with your child. Leave whatever you thought you had to do and see if you can turn the day around. A small amount of time at the start of the day is sometimes worth a lot of time at the end of the day.

At the end of a bad day make some time for relaxing, settling down and rebuilding your relationship.

Some relaxing activities include:

- ☑ a walk in the park, or around the block
- ☑ sitting with your child and watching a video
- ☑ stories
- ☑ a bath
- ☑ massage and meditation (there are very good books for children's meditation).

## Take care of yourself

After your child has settled into bed, remember to take care of your own needs. Taking care of a child who is having tantrums puts a great deal of stress on you. If you can, get someone else to take care of your child for a while during the day so you can take some time out for yourself.



# REMINDERS

- ☀ **Tantrums happen when children's feelings get out of control.**
- ☀ **Children need to know that their parent(s) can help them to manage when their feelings are out of control.**
- ☀ **Try to work out what are the major stresses in your child's life and do something about them.**
- ☀ **Watch for triggers and try to get in first to prevent the tantrum from starting.**
- ☀ **Use relaxing activities to help your child calm down.**
- ☀ **If in spite of all this tantrums continue very frequently, talk it over with a child health professional.**

When children don't tell the truth it can be very worrying for parents. It is easy to become upset about the lie and to overlook what it means to your child. There are many reasons why children may not tell the truth. Almost everyone tells lies from time to time for a variety of reasons, from avoiding hurting someone else's feelings to getting out of an awkward situation. It is important to understand the reasons before you react.

# children lying

## WHY CHILDREN LIE

### Learning about the truth

These ages are only guides - each child's rate of development is different.

**Children under 3 years or so** do not understand that thinking is private. They believe that their parents can read their minds. A two year old in a shop may say 'Why did you lose me, Mummy?' because they think their mother knows where they are, even when she is out of sight. Telling lies has no meaning for under threes.

**Three to four year olds** are learning that other people don't know what they are thinking. Children this age enjoy practising their new knowledge and skills, so they test it out by telling 'stories' such as 'The big bad wolf did it' or they may blame someone else.

**Children in the early years of school** usually want to please their parents more than they want to do the 'right thing'. Children this age are not likely to tell the truth if they think it will make their parents cross. It is better not to ask them whether they did something than risk them lying. For example, rather than asking 'Did you spill the milk?', you could say 'I see there has been an accident with the milk, let's get a cloth and I'll help you clean it up'.

**By eight or nine** (when they understand about Father Christmas not being real) children have some understanding of the difference between truth and fantasy. Your child's sense of right and wrong usually develops by then.

**Older children**, especially adolescents, need to keep some parts of their lives private from their parents. If parents ask too many questions, an older child or adolescent may lie to protect their privacy. Adolescents may tell lies because of their strong need for independence. They may be afraid that if they tell the truth they will not be allowed to do something they really want to do.

### Imaginary friends

Some children at about three or four have an imaginary friend. They talk to and play with this friend when they are upset and sometimes blame the friend when they do something wrong. This is part of normal growing up and usually disappears gradually as they grow older. There is no need for concern unless your child seems really withdrawn and unable to get on with other children and adults. You can help by seeing that your child has lots of opportunities for fun and enjoyment.

### Other reasons why children lie

- ! Fear of punishment or of losing their parents' affection.
- ! Low self esteem and wanting to make themselves sound better.
- ! Being young for their age and not yet understanding the difference between truth and untruth.
- ! To impress their friends and be accepted.
- ! Sometimes they believe that what they are saying is true.
- ! Copying other people in the family who tell lies. Parents might say that lying is wrong but not always tell the truth themselves, for example when someone is at the door and a parent says to their child 'Tell them I am not at home'.

# It wasn't me!

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

If you think your child is afraid of punishment, talk with them about other ways that you will deal with mistakes so they know there's no reason to fear being honest. Try not to get into a battle about telling the truth.

For younger children, teach the difference between truth and fantasy. For example you might say 'That was a good story' or 'I can see you make up lovely stories, perhaps we can write them down to keep'.

Show your child you understand that some lies are wishes. For example, if your child says that dad is ringing them up all the time and you know this is not so, you could say 'It sounds like you wish Daddy could be here all the time'.

Teach your child why it is important to tell the truth such as by saying 'When people tell us the truth it helps us to trust them'.

Don't label your child 'a liar', because labels tend to encourage the kind of behaviour that you don't want.

Notice when your child tells the truth and let them know that you are pleased.

Give adolescents and older children some personal privacy. Ask what you need to know about to protect them, but don't pry too much. Often your teenager will talk to you when the time is right and they feel you will listen without judging.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If your child is continually lying for any reason or if they are unable to accept the truth when it is presented in a caring way, it would be wise to seek some counselling.*

## REMINDERS

- ! Telling the truth is something that children learn over years, not something they know how to do from birth.
- ! Young children want to please parents more than anything else. They won't tell the truth if they think it will make parents cross.
- ! Teach your child the difference between truth and untruth.
- ! Explain why telling the truth is important to you.
- ! Set a good example.





# Discipline for toddlers:

## getting a handle on toddler behaviour

By **Patricia Gornall**

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Patricia is co-author of  
*How to Stay Sane in Your Baby's  
First Year: The Tresillian Guide*  
published by  
Simon & Schuster (1996).

Discipline can be one of the hardest things to do as a parent. You'll find a host of different views on what's acceptable, which you may or may not find appropriate. Basically discipline involves setting limits, once your toddler is able to understand what you want to teach them. This way they learn self-control and to adjust to different situations.

Toddlers have boundless energy, curiosity and the physical skills needed to explore the world around them. They love to try to do things by themselves and to be independent. Sometimes they make a mess or use things the wrong way. They are a mixture of emotions. Sometimes they want to be cuddled and protected. At other times they want to do everything themselves and will have a tantrum if you try to stop them.

This makes it a trying age - for both you and your toddler. They are learning to be independent. But remember that toddlers are too little to be responsible for most of their actions. You still have to keep your toddler safe both from themselves and other dangers.

'Time out', which you use to teach children to think about their behaviour, isn't an option for toddlers. At this age they find it hard to put themselves in someone else's shoes and don't really understand that their behaviour can cause harm.

Your toddler uses behaviour to tell you how they're feeling - many don't have words to express it. They can have a range of feelings in a short time and can find it difficult to understand what they're feeling. If they feel strong emotion, like hate or anger, and they think you don't approve then they may feel scared.

**You can discipline without using physical punishment, especially when your child is a toddler.**

## Tips for disciplining your toddler

### **Be consistent**

You and your partner should decide on a common approach to discipline. Your toddler will soon work out if one of you is easier than the other. If you're a single parent discuss approaches with someone whose opinion you trust. Sticking to a "routine" helps toddlers feel secure, for example a set bedtime every night.

### **Only have a few rules**

Try have as few rules as possible but stick to them as you will need to be consistent over the next few years. Talk to your partner about what you feel is important, eg not touching the video. Often it's easier to move precious things until they're older.

### **Offer realistic choices**

Everyone likes to feel they "have a say", even toddlers. Giving choice helps them become independent. But don't give them overwhelming choices. For example, don't ask them what they want to drink. Ask if they want juice or water. This gives them a choice and you control over what they drink.

### **Distract them**

Distraction works well, especially for toddlers between one and two. Say "No" and give them something else to do.

### **Look for the causes of tantrums**

Its normal for toddlers to have tantrums. Sometimes toddlers get bored or frustrated because they can't achieve what they're trying to do. Tantrums can be scary for toddlers because they feel out of control. Try to hold them if you can or if you can't then stay near. Don't punish temper tantrums. Look for the cause so you can prevent it next time, for example is there a new baby in the house or are they just tired and hungry.

### **Show them other ways to behave**

Toddlers often poke, bite or hurt other children if they don't get what they want. This may be because your toddler doesn't have the language to ask or because they're tired or cranky. Don't bite your child back because it doesn't teach your child better ways to behave. Care for the other child then explain to your toddler why it hurts the other child.

### **Praise good behaviour**

Remember to praise your toddler when they're being 'good'. This encourages the behaviour you want and makes your toddler feel special. Small children hate to be ignored and getting into trouble is better than not being noticed at all.

### **Give your toddler some special time**

Take them for a walk to the local park or sing them a song. Teach your child new skills with patience and praise.

### **Look at your own behaviour**

Toddlers imitate what they see. Make sure that your own actions are the behaviour you expect from your toddler.

### **Ask yourself whether its worth fighting over**

Some days both you and your toddler will be tired and irritable. Don't get into a fight over very small issues. Consider if your child is sick or tired or whether what you're asking them to do is too difficult for them.

### **Try to keep a sense of humour**

Parenting can be stressful. Try to see the funny side of your toddler's behaviour - they grow quickly. That said, laughing at your toddler when you are disciplining them gives them conflicting messages. If you are feeling angry or frustrated try arrange some time out or contact a parent help line.

### **Take time out for yourself**

To do any job well you need some time off. Try sharing care with your partner or leaving your toddler with friends or family for a few hours.

Throughout many children's lives there are times when their sleep is disturbed because of nightmares, night terrors or sleepwalking. These can be frightening for children and a worry for parents.



# Nightmares

## What are nightmares?

Nightmares are frightening dreams which most children have at some time or other. They are most likely to happen between 3 to 6 years of age. Younger children can also have nightmares and about a quarter of 6 to 12 year olds do.

Nightmares are most likely to occur in the last few hours of sleep. On waking from a nightmare, your child will usually tell you what has frightened them. Lots of children wake and think that what they have dreamt is real. With comfort they can usually return to sleep.

## What causes nightmares?

Most children have nightmares. Nightmares often seem to be linked with things that have happened during the day, or with worries or fears. Dreams and nightmares are normal ways of dealing with their worries. As children gain confidence in dealing with the problems of growing up they tend to have fewer nightmares.

If they are happening a lot, think about what is going on in your child's life. For example, has there been a recent upset in the family (break-in, death, loss of job, parents arguing). Has there been a recent separation (starting child care or school, going to hospital or a parent starting work).

In the 3 to 6 year age range, children develop a vivid imagination in their daytime play and sometimes have nightmares about monsters and robbers.

## What parents can do

- ☞ Mostly what your child needs is comfort and calm reassurance that everything is alright and they are safe.
- ☞ Children can be told that dreams are not real but it takes years for them to fully understand this.
- ☞ If your child is too frightened to be left alone, you could sit or lie down with them until they go back to sleep.
- ☞ Bedroom doors can be left open and a night light left on.
- ☞ Some parents gently ask their child to tell them briefly about the nightmare when they awake. It can often help your child to talk about it, but try not to get into long talks in the middle of the night.
- ☞ Try to make what is happening in the daytime less stressful if you can. For example, if there are nightmares when toilet training, it might be worth going more gently or putting it off for a while.
- ☞ TV and video can be powerful triggers which disturb children's sleep. Choose carefully which programs your child watches.
- ☞ Older children can be encouraged to talk about their problems.
- ☞ Evening routines can be helpful in settling your child into bed. Wind down the day's activities with a bath, story, a talk with a parent, a tuck into bed and a goodnight hug.
- ☞ Go into your child's bedroom just before you go to bed, touch them gently so that they half waken, and say





something like 'You are very special and I love you'. This often helps to give a restful night.

**If nightmares are very disturbing, if they keep happening for a month or two, and if the causes are difficult to work out, then it may help to get some professional advice.**

## What is sleepwalking?

Sleepwalking usually happens during the first few hours after falling asleep. It usually lasts from 5 to 30 minutes.

### Sleepwalking can involve:

-  sitting upright in bed
-  walking and even running around inside and outside the house
-  unlocking doors
-  finding and even eating food.

Children have no control over what they do when they are sleepwalking and so may hurt themselves. This can be very worrying for parents.

Usually there is a family history of sleepwalking. If both parents were sleepwalkers, there is a fairly high chance their child will walk in their sleep.




When your child is sleepwalking they are likely to have their eyes open, and even to talk to you, although what they say may be hard to understand. Children often go to the toilet when they are sleepwalking, sometimes in unusual places. They are usually difficult to wake up, although some will wake by themselves. Sometimes they will return to sleep in places other than their beds. They do not remember what has happened.

## What causes sleepwalking?

Sleepwalking is more likely to happen if your child has a high temperature or is overtired. Some medicines also seem to have an effect. Sleepwalking doesn't mean that your child has emotional or psychological problems, unless there is some other stress in their life. As children grow older they sleepwalk less.

## What parents can do

**There is no special treatment to stop sleepwalking. The important thing is to make sure your child is safe.**





-  Lock doors and windows and put heaters, electric cords and any other dangerous objects out of the way.
-  If you catch your child sleepwalking, carefully guide them back to bed without waking them.
-  Help them to understand that this is a natural thing and is nothing to be embarrassed or worried about.

## What are night terrors?

Night terrors are not the same as nightmares. Night terrors usually (but not always) happen in the first few hours after going to sleep. Children suddenly scream or cry and they look pale and terrified. They don't recognise anyone and cannot be comforted. They may breathe heavily, perspire and stare with wide-open eyes. Some children get out of bed and run around in a distressed way or even hurt themselves. Night terrors usually last for 5 or 10 minutes. Afterwards they will not remember what has happened.








## What causes night terrors?

**Children are more likely to have night terrors if:**





-  they have a fever
-  they need to go to the toilet to do a wee
-  they are overtired
-  they are taking medicines.

Usually there is no emotional or psychological problem connected with night terrors in children.

## What parents can do

-  Don't try to wake your child.
-  Stay with them and let them go back to sleep naturally.
-  Make sure that they have good, regular amounts of sleep.
-  Make sure they go to the toilet before bed to empty their bladder.
-  Treat any fever.
-  Keep your home safe.
-  If the night terror happens around the same time each night, try waking your child about 10 to 15 minutes before it usually happens. Keep them awake for just a short while and then let them go back to sleep. This seems to prevent the night terrors for some children.

# REMINDERS

-  **Most children grow out of sleepwalking, nightmares and night terrors.**
-  **Children who wake at night and are afraid need comfort.**
-  **For sleepwalking, make sure your house is safe.**
-  **Keep your child's days as happy and relaxed as you can.**

Toddlers need to have a safe environment. They are too young to behave safely. Telling them and teaching them about danger does not keep them safe. Keeping your toddler safe is your responsibility.

## Traffic and car safety

- 🚗 Make fences and gates toddler proof.
- 🚗 Toddlers need to be held when they are near roads. They may begin to remember rules about crossing roads but they are unable to understand them, no matter how many times they are told.
- 🚗 Your child must be in an approved child restraint in the car.
- 🚗 Make sure that there is nothing on the dashboard. Even a box of tissues can do a lot of harm in an accident.
- 🚗 Never put anything heavy in the back of a hatchback unless it is secured strongly.
- 🚗 When you are moving the car at home, it is safest to have your children in the car, so they cannot be run over.
- 🚗 Never leave children alone in cars.

# Child Safety

## Falls

**Falls are the major cause of toddler injury.**

- Pad sharp corners of furniture or round them off.
- Use barrier gates or lock doors to stop your child going into dangerous places.
- Don't use bunk beds with toddlers.
- Use straps in the high chair and pusher.
- Don't leave young children alone on change tables, high chairs etc.
- Teach your toddlers how to climb down as they are learning to climb up.

## Burns and scalds

- 🔥 Keep hot things well back from the edge of tables. Turn saucepan handles away from the edge of the stove. Use a stove guard.
- 🔥 Use placemats instead of tablecloths.
- 🔥 Have short or curly electric cords that don't hang over the side of benches.
- 🔥 Remember that many toddlers can light matches and lighters and unscrew the globes of the Christmas tree lights.
- 🔥 To prevent scalding install a tempering valve which delivers hot water to your bathroom at 50° C.
- 🔥 Run cold water into the bath first.
- 🔥 Use fireguards for open fires and radiators.
- 🔥 Install an Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker in your fuse box.



## Poisoning

Toddlers explore everywhere they can reach and still put things into their mouths. **They cannot understand poison signs.**

- ☠️ Keep kitchen and laundry detergents out of reach. They are best in a locked cupboard. Dishwasher powder is particularly dangerous.
- ☠️ Use a child proof medicine cupboard for all medicines (including oral contraceptives).
- ☠️ Check that visitors don't leave bags with tablets in them in your child's reach.
- ☠️ Lock garden products away.
- ☠️ Keep poisons in their original, labelled containers.
- ☠️ Never put poisons into food or drink containers.

**Write the poisons information number next to your phone.**

## Choking

- 🍷 Check that there are no small objects or coins lying around.
- 🍷 Don't give your child hard pieces of food such as raw carrot to chew. Give cooked or grated vegetables.
- 🍷 Toddlers should sit still when eating.
- 🍷 Stay with your child when they are eating.
- 🍷 Never give toddlers peanuts or other nuts.
- 🍷 Don't force your children to eat anything they don't want.
- 🍷 Tie plastic bags with a knot in the middle so that they cannot be put over your child's head.
- 🍷 Cords or ribbons on toys, dummies and clothing should be short so they can't choke your child.
- 🍷 Cords on curtains and blinds need to be short or out of reach.
- 🍷 Replace dummies before they are worn.
- 🍷 Some antique cots are not safe for young children.

## Drowning

Most children who drown are under four years old. Drowning happens very quickly and quietly. Young children can drown in only a few centimetres of water. Teaching your toddler to swim will not prevent drowning.

- 🌊 Stay with your children whenever they are near or in water, such as the bath, paddle pool or buckets.
- 🌊 Keep a lid on nappy buckets and keep them out of reach.
- 🌊 Water can collect in all sorts of things after rain. **Empty them!**
- 🌊 Always make sure that the paddle pool is emptied after use. **Every time!**
- 🌊 All other pools should be fenced, with a self closing and locking gate.

## Play

- 🧸 Check equipment regularly for sharp edges, splinters and loose parts.
- 🧸 The surface under climbing frames and swings needs to be soft.
- 🧸 Toys for young children should not have small loose parts that can be broken off and swallowed.
- 🧸 Baby walkers often cause injuries and should not be used.

## Sun

- ☀️ Whenever possible keep children in the shade. Teach them to play in the shade.
- ☀️ Make sure that their favourite play areas are shaded.
- ☀️ Children can get sunburnt even on cold, cloudy summer days.
- ☀️ Sunlight through the glass of car windows can burn the skin.
- ☀️ Young children can become very quickly overheated in parked cars.
- ☀️ In the sun use a hat and clothing that covers arms and legs, such as the new cover-up bathers.
- ☀️ Sunscreen can be used in small amounts on young children on areas that are not covered by clothing. Some sunscreens irritate the eyes and sensitive skin. It needs to be re-applied often. Zinc cream is an effective sun block.

## Shopping

- 🛒 Never leave young children alone in the car while you shop.
- 🛒 Supermarket shopping carts can tip up even if you are using the safety seat, especially if a toddler pulls on them.
- 🛒 Don't let young children wander in the aisles while you shop.

# REMINDERS

- 💧 **Have emergency phone numbers near the phone (police, doctor, poisons information).**
- 💧 **Have a first aid kit in the house and car.**
- 💧 **Install an Earth Leakage Circuit Breaker in your fuse box.**
- 💧 **Install a smoke detector.**
- 💧 **Check that homes you visit with your child are safe.**
- 💧 **Do a first aid course which includes emergency resuscitation so you will know what to do.**



“Parents of young children face difficult decisions when they consider placing their child in a children’s service. For example, how do you choose a service that meets your family’s needs? What are your rights as a parent using a children’s service? This article provides parents with very useful information to help them make these and other important decisions.”

**Assoc. Prof. June Wangmann**  
 Manager, Office of Childcare  
 Department of Community Services (DoCS)

# Choosing the right

# CHILD CARE

## What to expect from your service

Parents can be assured that all services for children before they start school meet the minimum standards required by law. The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) employs over 60 Children’s Services Advisers around the State to license children’s service.

Once you have a general idea about the services in your area or near your work most likely to meet your needs, there is no short cut to finding out as much as you can about how they operate.

Here are some commonly asked questions and issues to guide you in your search. But don’t be afraid to rely on your feelings. If it doesn’t feel right, then it might not be.

## What are their policies?

Every service should have written information available to parents. Ask to see their philosophy, aims and policies which explain the how, what and why.

### Policies should cover:

- + what their education objectives are and how they will be achieved, including how parents can input into the day-to-day program of the service
- + how each child’s individual developmental needs will be met
- + staff and child interactions, for example that staff will treat your child with respect
- + how the program is relevant to children of different cultures, appropriate for children with disabilities and not biased in favour of any particular group.
- + excursion procedures
- + complaint handling
- + staff employment, management and training policies
- + behaviour guidance
- + authority for access to or picking up your child
- + health and safety.

## What kind of activities must be provided?

Every service must have a balanced program of indoor and outdoor activities and enough variety to stimulate your child’s development.

Services should have sufficient toys and equipment to provide choice for your child and enough variety to make each day interesting.

In centre-based care, a written program should be displayed for you to see. You should also be able to view any individual developmental records on your child.

In home-based or family day care, the carer must advise parents regularly about the activities their child has been involved in.

## How should my child be treated?

Caregivers should create an environment that limits conflict by giving children choices.

If potential conflicts are handled constructively, children will learn to solve problems. They should be encouraged to develop their skills at their own pace, in their own way, and to learn independence.

Children in child care should not be physically, verbally or emotionally punished. They should never be hit. They should never be called names by caregivers, nor be humiliated or frightened.

Children should be supervised at all times and never isolated from adult contact.

## How should arriving and leaving be managed?

All children should be greeted by a caregiver when they arrive and be encouraged to become involved in an activity.

This helps them settle in for the day. It's also good to encourage children to say goodbye. (Occasionally, if a child is having difficulty settling at a service, a caregiver may suggest that you leave quickly.) Once you leave, the child begins to accept that you've gone but will be back later.

Some parents and children like to take time together at the centre, either when arriving in the morning or before going home. This can help your child understand that you are part of their life at the centre and help you understand how they spend their day.

The parent or person dropping the child off in the morning and picking them up must sign an attendance book. Any person picking up the child - other than the parent - must be authorised in writing by the parent.

## Can I visit my child?

Any parent (unless denied access through a court order) is entitled to visit their child at the service at any time.

## What are the rules on sleeping?

Whether children sleep or rest while in child care depends on their individual needs.

All services, particularly those open long hours, need to provide fresh bedding for children so they can sleep or rest.

In a centre-based service no adult should sleep in the same room as your child.

In family day care or home-based care, a child under two may sleep in the same room as an adult. (This is to provide for family day care or home-based care provided for shift workers).

*Children should be supervised at all times and never isolated from adult contact.*

## What about accidents, illnesses and infectious diseases?

If a child has an accident or falls ill while they are in care, they must be watched until their parent arrives or medical treatment is obtained.

Services must always keep a record of accidents. There must always be a staff member with First Aid qualifications.

Every service must have should inform you about their a policy on how to handlinge infectious diseases, such as chicken pox or measles. It should explain when children will be excluded from the service to stop diseases spreading.

Services should have good health and hygiene practices that minimise the spread of any infection. Ask the staff what their policies are.

## What records are kept?

**Records on your child must include:**

- + the initial enrolment form you fill in
- + up-to-date contact numbers
- + changes to your child's health (such as up-to-date immunisation records)
- + reports of your child's development

All information about the children, families and staff is confidential.

**Records kept on your child may be looked at by staff, but they cannot reveal this information to anyone else, including other parents. As a parent, you may look at your child's records at any time.**

## Do I have a right to a say about how the service operates?

As a parent or family member you have a right to stand up for your child.

As a user of the service you have a right to question practices and changes. You should be told about any changes that are happening.

If you believe a service is not operating within the standards set by the licensing regulations, you can let DoCS know by contacting your local Area Office.

## Choosing a service which meets your needs

There are at least seven types of children's services, each with differences and similarities. For example, a service may be called a long day care centre but offer much the same service as a preschool except that it's open for longer hours. The information overleaf shows that there are some important ground rules but often also a great deal of flexibility about what a particular service might offer.

## Centre-Based Long Day Care

<b>Age</b>	0 - 6 years
<b>Staffing levels</b>	1 staff member to every 5 children under the age of 2 1 staff member to every 8 children between the ages of 2 - 3 years 1 staff member to every 10 children from 3 years to school age
<b>Staff training</b>	Must have staff trained in early childhood but levels of training vary with the size of service.
<b>Hours</b>	Normally open for 10 hours per day, five days per week.
<b>Fee relief</b>	Child care assistance may be available for working or studying parents; ask at the centre, or contact Centrelink.
<b>Management and License Requirements</b>	Can be privately run as a small business, sponsored by a church or a local government, a parent committee or by an employer for their employee; licensing responsibility with DoCS.

## Pre School

<b>Age</b>	Usually 3 - 5 years, sometimes accepts 2 year olds; Department of Education and Training pre schools usually for 4 year olds.
<b>Staffing levels</b>	1 staff member to every 5 children under the age of 2 1 staff member to every 8 children between the ages of 2 - 3 years 1 staff member to every 10 children from 3 years to school age
<b>Staff training</b>	Must have staff trained in early childhood but levels of training vary with the size of the pre school.
<b>Hours</b>	Either morning or afternoon or from 9 - 3pm; some offer up to five days per week.
<b>Fee relief</b>	No child care assistance available.
<b>Management and License Requirements</b>	Usually run by a parent committee or sponsored by a church, community organisation, local government or independent schools; licensing responsibility with DoCS.

## Family Day Care Schemes

<b>Age</b>	Any age, including babies and for before and after school.
<b>Staffing levels</b>	1 staff member for up to 7 children, under 12 years, including their own children; or a limit of 5 if they have not started school.
<b>Staff training</b>	The carer provides the service in their own home and is not required to have formal training, although the coordinator of the scheme must have early childhood qualifications.
<b>Hours</b>	Varies according to the arrangement between the carer and the parent.
<b>Fee relief</b>	Child care assistance may be available for working or studying parents; ask at the Scheme, or contact Centrelink.
<b>Management and License Requirements</b>	Run by local councils or community groups; licensing responsibility with DoCS.

## Home-Based Care

Age	Any age, including babies and for before and after school.
Staffing levels	1 staff member for up to 7 children, under 12 years, including their own children; or a limit of 5 if they have not started school.
Staff training	The carer provides the service in their own home and is not required to have formal training.
Hours	Varies according to the arrangement between the carer and the parent.
Fee relief	Child care assistance may be available for working or studying parents; ask at the service, or contact Centrelink.
Management and License Requirements	Licensing responsibility with DoCS, carer operates alone.

## Occasional Child Care (Usually located in shopping malls, specialist centres or community halls)

Age	0 to School Age
Staffing levels	1 staff member to every 5 children under the age of 2 1 staff member to every 8 children between the ages of 2 - 3 years 1 staff member to every 10 children from 3 years to school age
Staff training	At least one staff member to oversee the service; sometimes relies on volunteers.
Hours	Variable, up to five days per week.
Fee relief	Not always available; ask at the centre or contact Centrelink.
Management and License Requirements	Run by community groups or local councils; licensing responsibility with DoCS.

## Mobile Services (Pre School and Occasional Care)

Age	Variable, usually 0 - 6 year olds for occasional care, 3 - 5 year olds for pre school.
Staffing levels	1 staff member to every 5 children under the age of 2 1 staff member to every 8 children between the ages of 2 - 3 years 1 staff member to every 10 children from 3 years to school age
Staff training	Must have staff trained in early childhood but levels of training vary with the size of the service.
Hours	Variable, some visit an area weekly for one or more days.
Fee relief	Not always available; ask at the service or contact Centrelink.
Management and License Requirements	Run by community groups or local councils; licensing responsibility with DoCS.

## Out of School Hours (Often located in school grounds or community halls)

<b>Age</b>	School aged children.
<b>Staffing levels</b>	Staff to child ratios not regulated; DoCS recommends 1 staff member to every 15 children.
<b>Staff training</b>	No formal qualifications required, but recommended by DoCS; focus is on recreation, not education.
<b>Hours</b>	Before and after school and during school vacations.
<b>Fee relief</b>	Child care assistance may be available for working or studying parents; ask at the service, or contact Centrelink.
<b>Management and License Requirements</b>	Run by local schools, community groups or local councils; not covered by licensing requirements; DoCS has produced a voluntary Code of Practice.

### For further information, contact:

#### Children's Services Switchboard

For parents seeking information on all children's services, special emphasis on helping families with particular language, cultural or special needs.

Tel: 02 9557 0900 or 1800 803 820 (freecall outside Sydney)

#### Children's Services Advisers

At your local DoCS Office (for information on licensing, regulations, funding and complaints).

#### Office of Childcare

For strategic policy and planning issues.

6-8 Holden St, Ashfield, 2131.

Tel: 02 9716 2100

Fax: 02 9716 2101

Email: [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au) (and follow the links to child care)

#### Community Childcare Cooperative Ltd. NSW

For information, management, publications and advocacy.

Tel: 02 9557 5599 or 1800 629 397 (freecall outside Sydney)

Fax: 02 9557 5563

Email: [CCCC@localnet.com.au](mailto:CCCC@localnet.com.au)

#### Country Children's Services Association

For information and management training for member services.

Tel: 02 4782 1470

Fax: 02 4782 4425

#### Network of Community Activities

For information on services available for school age children.

Tel: 02 9212 3244

#### Association of Childcare Centres of NSW

For information about care and early learning services throughout NSW for children aged 0-12 years, provided by members and other services.

Tel: 02 9687 9055

#### NSW Family Day Care Association

For information about family day care schemes in your local area.

Tel: 02 4588 6000 or

#### The National Childcare Hotline

1800 670 305 (freecall outside Sydney)

#### Quality Childcare Association of NSW

For advice about private long day care and pre school centres in your local area and referrals to other services.

Tel: 02 9757 3166

#### Mobile Resource Service Association

For information about the different types of mobile resource services and their availability in NSW.

Tel: 02 4958 8828

#### Child Care Access Hotline

For up-to-date information on child care services in your area, the types of care available and government help with the cost of care.

Tel: 1800 670 305 (freecall)

# Second baby



A new baby arriving in the family brings big changes for everyone, particularly for toddlers. The birth of a new baby is one of the most stressful events in a young child's life, particularly for children two or under. This is because toddlers have not yet formed a strong inner sense of security. There is always less time for toddlers when a baby arrives, so they can feel less loved. If you can keep your relationship with your toddler positive at this time, it will make their life and yours easier. It will also help to build self esteem and confidence.

## What parents can do

### Before the baby arrives

Don't tell a very young child too soon. It is exciting for you, but your child will not have a clear understanding of what is to happen. Toddlers don't have an understanding of time and how long an hour, a week or a month really is. Six months or so is a very long time for a toddler to be waiting for something to happen. Tell your child later in the pregnancy when they can see what is happening and then you can involve them in things like visiting the doctor and planning where the baby will sleep.

Include your toddler in planning for the baby. They may like to help choose baby clothes, for example. Only ask for their help where you are willing to let them have a real choice. You could give them a choice between two baby outfits that you like.

Some toddlers, both boys and girls, enjoy having a doll as their 'baby' and making the same sort of preparations as you do for the real baby.

Don't change your toddler from a cot to a bed too close to the birth. They may think you are taking their cot for the baby. If you are going to make bed or bedroom changes, do it a long time before the baby comes. Then your toddler will see it as something special for them, rather than for the baby.

Don't try to toilet train your toddler around the time of the birth, unless they make it very clear they want to use the toilet or potty. Learning to use the toilet is a big task for a young child. When the baby arrives, your toddler will see that you seem quite happy about the baby doing poo in their nappy. Your toddler will wonder why they have to be different.

Plan for the mother's stay in hospital. Your toddler will do best staying in their own home with people they know best, for example their father, a grandparent or a very close friend or relative. If they have to go to a different place, or to be cared for by someone they do not know well, help them to gradually get used to the new person or situation beforehand.

## When mother is in hospital

- 👶 Ensure your toddler has as much contact with their mother as possible. Even if they cry when they have to leave, it is better for them to know where mother is and to see her. It also helps to make your toddler feel special during visits and for the mother not to be holding or nursing the baby.
- 👶 Many toddlers are helped by having a postcard from their mother arrive in the post. Some also get comfort from minding something for their mother, such as the car keys, while she is away.
- 👶 Let your toddler have a photo of their mother to keep.
- 👶 Sometimes a present from the baby to big brother or sister helps. Your toddler may also like to choose a gift for the baby.

## When the new baby comes home

**Expect some change to your toddler's behaviour, no matter how well prepared they are. After all, it is a bit like your partner bringing home a new woman or man to share in your life. When the reality hits it can take some time to adjust, especially if the new person seems to be getting better treatment! Your toddler may go back to younger behaviour for a while such as wanting a bottle, wanting you to dress them and going back on toilet training.**

Letting your toddler act younger for a while, without getting cross, will help them to feel better more quickly.

They may misbehave or show other signs of stress such as tantrums, especially when you are feeding the baby.

Your toddler needs to know that you understand their feelings. For example, you could say 'I know you feel cross when I am feeding the baby and you want to play. I wish I could play with you too.'

Arrange special activities for your toddler when you are feeding the baby, such as having a doll they can feed, a special video, or tell them a story.

Read stories about new babies which show the older child feeling both happy and sad about the new baby.

Teach your toddler to touch the baby gently, but always be there to make sure the baby is safe.

Let your child know that aggressive behaviour is not allowed. If they hit the baby, remove them from the situation with words such as 'You are feeling very cross, but we don't hit'. Don't let your child hit you either. You need to teach them that hitting is not the way to show angry feelings.

Make a special time for your toddler every day, no matter how small. Go out with your toddler and get someone else to mind the baby sometimes. Show your toddler that you enjoy being with them.

## REMINDERS

- 👶 A new baby will make a big impact on your child's life.
- 👶 Never let your toddler hurt the baby.
- 👶 Toddlers learn from actions, such as hugs, loving touches and smiles and most of all from you spending time with them.
- 👶 Make sure that your toddler knows that they are loved.
- 👶 Notice the good things that your toddler does.
- 👶 Try to make a special time for your toddler every day if possible.





School can be a strange and scary place for beginners. They usually have to cope with bigger buildings, lots more children and fewer adults for support. It is a time when they start to compare themselves with others. There are likely to be many new things they are expected to do. The playtime breaks, especially, can be very frightening for beginners. School days can be very tiring, too, for children who are used to a rest during the day. Children may have been looking forward to school a lot and feel very let down if they don't enjoy it as much as they had hoped. Even for those who do enjoy it, starting school is stressful.

# Starting SCHOOL

## What parents can do

Introduce the school. Drive past many times. Talk about what will happen. Show your child over the school so they know where they will be going, where the toilets are and where you will pick them up.

Prepare your child for what will happen. Make sure they have clothes they can manage, that they can unwrap their lunch and that they know how to ask to go to the toilet.

Some children in the early months at school wet their pants. This can be very embarrassing for them. They need to be reassured that it often happens to children and it is nothing to worry about. Encourage your child to tell the teacher. Pack an extra pair of pants if it happens.

Have faith that your child will be able to manage. If you are worried, it will make them feel that there really is something to worry about.

Talk to other parents and share your experiences, ideas and feelings.

Don't be late picking your child up. A few minutes can seem a long time when you are not very sure of yourself.

Make time for your child after school if they need it, or as soon as you get home if you work. Some children, however, like time by themselves before they want company.

A healthy snack straight after school can make up for a missed lunch due to excitement or anxiety. This will be as important as eating a big dinner. Children are often hungry after school and something to eat keeps them going. By dinner time they might be too tired to really want to eat.

Listen, but don't ask too many questions. Your child will talk when they are ready. Bedtime is usually a good listening time.

It helps your child if you read stories to them even after they can read for themselves. A good time to tell stories is at bedtime as well.

Don't expect too much. New learning takes a long time and children learn at different rates. You can help best by encouraging, taking an interest and showing you care.

Be flexible in the early days of school. Your child may be tired and grumpy for a while until they settle in. They need lots of support.





Keep to routines that allow time for rest and free play. Don't arrange too many after school activities. Try not to have too many things to do, such as shopping, on the way home.

Invite your child's friends over. One at a time at first.

If your child is really upset, if you are worried, or there is bullying or teasing going on, talk to the teacher about it.

**NOTE: Some children find it so stressful when they first start school that they don't want to go. They may get tummy aches or be very tearful in the mornings. If this happens to your child listen to their fears. Try not to let them see that you are worried. Let them know you believe that they can manage to go to school and that you will help them. Ask them what they think would help. For example, sometimes going with a neighbour instead of you is a help or having something of yours to mind while your child is at school may help. If the worries don't get better soon, talk to the teacher about the best way to help your child. Forcing children usually does more harm than good.**

## REMINDERS

-  Starting school is a big step for your child and it takes time to adjust.
-  Let the teachers know if anything is happening in your family that might upset your child at school.
-  Children do best at school when their parents and teachers support each other.
-  Let the teacher know when you are pleased with what is happening at school.

Visit our  
**Parenting Website**  
at

[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

to get copies of all our parenting magazines:

**Parenting:** the most important job in the world

Tips on being a parent, building self esteem and managing grief

**Caring for babies & toddlers (0 to 5 years)**

Tips on tantrums, toilet training and mealtimes

**Caring for children (6 to 12 years)**

Tips on choosing the right child care, discipline and TV addictions

**The teenage years (13 to 18 years)**

Tips on discipline, drugs and peer group pressure



N.S.W. Department of  
Community Services

## How we help

The Department of Community Services (DoCS) is one of the biggest and most important community service organisations in NSW.

**Our job is to:**

work with the community to help protect and care for children and young people and support their families

provide and monitor care and support for children who can't live with their families

help people with intellectual disabilities and high support needs achieve greater independence, community involvement and a better quality of life

provide and regulate adoption services

help people separated from their families trace their records

fund and regulate child care services

regulate children's employment

fund community agencies to ensure there are services for the care and support of children and their families as well as for people who are homeless

coordinate services to meet the basic needs of people affected by disasters.