

First Steps

PARENTING IN THE SECOND YEAR

WEXFORD, MISSAUKEE & NORTHERN OSCEOLA COUNTIES



24-30
Months

Communicating to Lower Stress

Sometimes angry feelings and stress are caused by the way people talk to each other. You can reduce your stress by changing the way you say things. It doesn't mean you should hold things inside, but simply that you should say them in a different way.

Things we say to others often have the word "you" in them.

For example, you might say, "You always tell me how to care for my child!"

If you give the same message with "I" in it, the other person might not get so irritated. You could say, "I feel like a child myself when someone tells me what to do."

Try turning "you" messages into "I" messages. This may make your conversations less stressful.

Two other words that can make for trouble in communications are "always" and "never." Our example above not only begins with the word "you," it also uses the word "always." To reduce the stress of your conversation, try using "sometimes" or "often" instead of "always" or "never".

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Turn Win-Lose into Win-Win

Your toddler's growing independence may be a big source of stress in your life right now. Sometimes, you may feel like you're in a war with your child, trying to win every battle. Some battles end so that you both lose. When you're the one who wins, your child might fight back even harder. When he wins, you might feel angry, defeated, or guilty.

One way to reduce this kind of stress is to handle these battles in a way that lets both of you win at least a little. Maybe you can't talk about compromise with a stubborn 2-year-old, but you can

figure out how to end up with no one feeling like a loser. If you refuse to get caught up in a battle, then your child can't lose and neither can you.

Here is an example: Susie demands that you read her a story and you want her to take a nap. Maybe Susie can pick out the story before nap time, and you can read it when the nap is finished. Maybe you can read half the story before and half after the nap. With a little imagination and patience, you can find a way to let you and your child both win.

Disciplined Parenting

Spanking and shouting are counterproductive and often makes more problems than it solves. Shouting and spanking give children all the wrong kinds of attention. If this is the only kind of attention they receive from you, they may misbehave just to get you to notice them.

Shouting and spanking often drive bad behavior underground: While parents may be convinced undesirable behavior has lessened, it may have only stopped happening in front of you. Children then become experts at not getting caught.

Try these ideas instead:

- Decide on the specific behavior you would like to change.
- Tell your child exactly what you want him to do and show him how to do it.
- Praise your child for being successful.
- Continue to praise as long as the new behavior needs support.
- Avoid power struggles with your children.
- Be there for supervision purposes.
- Avoid being a historian and repeating mistakes.



Feelie Bag

Children learn by touching things around them. Some things are soft and some are hard, some cool and others warm. Some things are rough and some smooth, some light and some heavy. A feelie bag can help your toddler learn to tell one kind of feel from another.

Write your child's name in large letters on a paper bag. This lets her know the bag is hers and gives her the idea of writing.

Choose some things she might enjoy feeling and put them in the bag, such as: a smooth rock, a rough rock, a piece of wood, a piece of paper egg carton, some cloth, a feather, and so on. Be sure the things you put in are not sharp or dangerous.

Close the top of the bag, leaving a hole just big enough for the child's hand. Ask her to reach in and find something soft or hard or smooth or rough. Ask her what she has found and help her say, "I have found something hard," or "I have found something rough."

You can turn this into a guessing game. Have her say, "I have found something hard. What is it?" Then you guess what it is. You can take turns guessing. This is a good game for two or three children to play together. Your child can help you change the game by putting different things in the bag.

Your Child Wants You To Know

How I Grow

- I often have to look at my feet to keep from stepping on things that are in my way.
- I like to do things in the same way each day.
- I like to walk by myself. I don't like being carried or pushed in a stroller.
- I can walk backwards for about 10 feet.
- I can jump with both feet off the ground.
- I can balance on one foot for about a second.
- I'm interested in lots of things but usually just for a few minutes.
- I get into things and make messes.
- I can take lids off jars. Be sure things you don't want me to open have safety caps.
- I may have learned from adults to fear snakes, mice, and spiders.

How I Talk

- I like to learn words that describe things like high, big, wet, hard.
- I can understand sentences, but I can't say long sentences yet.
- I like books. I can point to pictures and name them.
- I usually give information in two- or three-word sentences like "all dirty," "go to store," "that mine."

- I can sing parts of songs or all of very short songs.
- I'm learning what front, back, side and under mean.
- I'm paying more attention now to what people say.
- I can use plurals like dogs, books, cups.
- I can imitate my parents' voices.
- I talk mostly to myself and adults, not much to other children.

What I Have Learned

- I can draw a pretty good circle.
- I understand why some things happen, like turning on a switch makes the light come on.
- I'm getting better at remembering and keeping my attention on things.
- I can sometimes understand "today" and "pretty soon," but I don't understand "yesterday."
- I'm beginning to understand the difference between one and two.
- I can sort silverware in a drawer.

Your Child Wants You To Know

(continued)

How I Get Along With Others

- I'm good at getting your attention.
- Mostly, I'm still just interested in myself.
- I don't usually share toys or play well with other children my own age.
- I may hit other children, not because I don't like them, but because I just don't know what else to do.
- I stare at other people and like being looked at.
- I may call other children "baby," men "daddy," and women "mommy."
- If you ask me to do something simple I can usually do it.
- I am now more willing to be away from you.
- I want to do things my own way by myself.
- I say "no" a lot and often do what you want me NOT to do just to show you how independent I am.
- It helps me to feel important if you admire what I have learned to do.
- I like our routines, like the story and hug you give me before I go to sleep.

What I Can Do For Myself

- I can use a spoon and fork pretty well. I still spill some.

- Sometimes, I can ask to go to the toilet.
- I like to wash my hands, but not my face.
- I'm ready to learn to brush my teeth, but you will need to help me until I am older and better coordinated.
- I'm still better at undressing than dressing.
- I like to help you put things away and clean things up.

Play I Enjoy

- I like to talk to myself when I play.
- I like wheel toys like kiddie cars. Be sure I ride these safely.
- I like to play in the bathtub and often don't want to leave it.
- I like stories you tell me about myself and my things.
- I like to run, gallop, and sway to music.
- I like toys that I can pile up, or nest, or sort by color and size, or put in bags or pails.
- I like to hear favorite songs over and over again.
- I sometimes act silly just to make you laugh.
- I like to paint with large paint brushes and finger paint. I'm pretty messy.

Homemade Play Dough

Play dough helps your toddler practice using his hands and fingers and learn how to mold different shapes by patting, squeezing, and rolling.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- Food coloring (optional, may not come out of clothes)

Mix the dry ingredients, add the water and oil. Stir over low heat until the mixture forms a ball. Add food coloring if you want, (but make sure your child is wearing old clothes when she plays with the play dough). Knead it and let it cool. Store it in the refrigerator in a covered container.

Put the play dough on a plastic placemat. Your child will enjoy having you near her when she plays with it. You can give her ideas on how to squeeze, roll and pinch the dough. Add cookie cutters, a dull knife, a rolling pin to encourage your child's creativity.

Nutrition & TV

Television tells toddlers about cereals. Has this happened to you yet? You're pushing your cart down the aisle of the grocery store. Suddenly your toddler sees a certain brand of cereal and begins calling out the name of the cereal. He wants you to buy it. You're amazed. You've never bought that kind of cereal, and he's never eaten it. How did he find out about it?

Probably from TV. Toddlers don't seem to pay much attention to television, but they are often aware of what is happening on the screen. Commercials are very appealing because of the action and the noise. The food most often advertised during children's TV shows is cereal. Some of these are nutritious, others are not. In fact, some of these cereals have more sugar than cereal in them. They are more like candy than cereal.

How can you tell if a cereal is high in sugar? Look for the list of ingredients on the box. They are listed in order of amounts. The first ingredient is what there is most of in the cereal. The last ingredient is what there is least of in the cereal. Sugar is measured in grams. If the first ingredient on the list is sugar, there is more sugar in the cereal than anything else. You will want to choose another cereal lower in sugar. Compare several boxes to see the variation in the number of grams of sugar in each brand.

Television and Children

With new shows targeted to children as young as one year, parents are asking more questions about how TV might be influencing their children.

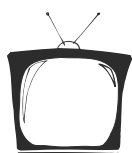
Research suggests the following:

- Children who are aggressive tend to watch a lot of violence on television.
- Children are attracted to and influenced by television commercials. They may pressure parents to buy toys and food advertised on television. Many of these toys may not be right for your child. The foods may not be good for him, since many of those advertised are high in sugar, fat, and salt.
- Children who are heavy television viewers use less imagination in their play and school activities than children who see less television.
- Very young children enjoy the catchy tunes and repeated phrases used in cartoon, children shows, and commercials. These jingles give them a chance to practice their listening and talking skills.
- Very young children don't understand the meaning of TV shows. However, they may be developing a television viewing

habit that will keep them from other healthier activities. If your child shows a great interest in TV, then talking and listening may be important to him right now. Read to him and talk with him about pictures in a book. Play some story or music tapes. Substitute these things for some of his television viewing time.

You might think about these questions when you decide how much TV your child should watch:

- Do you know how many hours a day your child watches? Even one hour a day is a lot for preschoolers.
- Do you know which programs he watches and do you know what he's learning from them? It is important for you to know these things, no matter what the age of the child.
- Do you want your child to see violence on television? Violent situations are shown even in cartoons and music videos, and they can be scary.
- Does television keep you from reading, talking and playing with your child? Does it keep him from creative, active, or imaginative play?



Television can be a very powerful influence in children's lives. It can entertain and educate. It can take children away from other important activities. Begin deciding now how much television you want your child to see and what programs you want him to watch. If you set up some clear guidelines now, it will be easier to handle television later.



Ways You Can Help Your Child Grow

Motor Skills:

- Give your child play dough or clay to help strengthen muscles in hands.
- Show your child how to cut play dough with child safety scissors.
- Give your child wooden blocks to practice building towers, buildings, etc.
- Show your child how to make straight lines and circles on paper, encourage your child to try.
- Spend time drawing with your child. Make faces and point out the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Thread cereal or pasta with a shoelace. Encourage your child to try.
- Punch holes along the edge of old greeting cards. Lace shoelace or yarn in and out of the holes. Encourage your child to try.

Social/Emotional Skills:

- Provide chances for your child to play with peers.
- Provide books and toys appropriate for her age. Avoid interrupting her when she is happily playing.
- Have a regular schedule for meals, naps, play time and bed. Your child will feel less stressed.
- Brush your teeth together.
- Provide a step stool for your child to wash and dry her own hands. Make sure water

temperature is appropriate so your child does not burn herself.

- Give choices that you and your child can both live with. For example, say, "Do you want to wear the blue shirt or the yellow shirt?"
- Praise your child's efforts.

Intellectual Skills:

- Play a matching game together and talk about same/different.
- Count out loud when your child is near (steps, people, toes, fingers, eyes, etc.)
- Talk to your child about what he did that day. For example: First we got up, then we got dressed, brushed teeth, etc.

Language Skills:

- Ask your child what and where questions throughout the day. This will encourage him to use longer sentences. Give him time to answer.
- Encourage communication and respond quickly to questions.
- When playing with blocks, use words: in/out, under/over, behind/in front of/next to.
- When child names an object, give him more information. For example: cup... we drink from a cup.



It's very important to have a SAFE, relaxed place for the child to explore and play. Children learn through play and exploration.

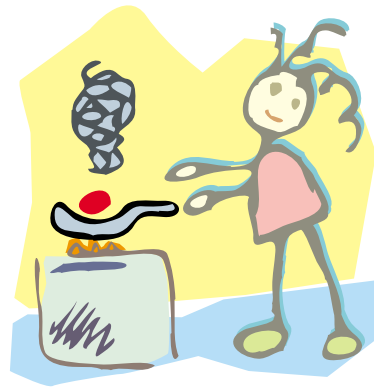


Please don't smoke.
There's a child in the house.

Helping Your Child Develop Language Skills

You can promote your child's use of language with these activities:

- Provide materials for pretend play. Gather things for your child to use in pretend play like old clothing, shoes, hats, purses, and boxes. Suggest that your child pretend to take a trip to a fun place. You can talk about the things he needs to take and what will happen on the trip.
- Take field trips. Include your child in your outings to places like the airport, mall, post office, library and grocery store. Talk about the things you see and do together.
- Give your child a chance to be creative. Fingerpaints, play dough, clay, crayons, paper and stickers are good materials to have on hand. Making a project together gives you a chance to be creative and talk.
- Talk about feelings. When you help your child brush his teeth or comb his hair, you can make various faces in the mirror and tell your child the name of the feeling that goes with each face. Encourage your child to play the "make a face" game, too.
- Give your child a chance to be around other children. Small play groups of two or three children are usually manageable and give your child a chance to hear other children speak.
- Talk about your day. Take some time out to talk to your child about all the activities you've experienced together. Ask him what his favorite activity was or which one he didn't enjoy. Share your feelings about the day, too.



How I Can Cook Healthfully

A healthful eating plan means more than choosing the right foods to eat. It's important to prepare foods in a healthy way. Some ways of cooking are better than others when it comes to cutting cholesterol, fat and calories. At the same time, you want to get as much nutritional value as possible.

You don't have to give up taste or the things you love. Just learn some heart-healthy cooking techniques and you can have it all (almost)!

What are good ways to cook?

- **Roast** — with a rack so the meat or poultry doesn't sit in its own fat drippings. Set at 350° to avoid searing. Baste with fat-free liquids like wine, tomato juice or lemon juice.
- **Bake** — in covered cookware with a little extra liquid.
- **Braise or Stew** — with more liquid than baking, on top of the stove or in the oven. Refrigerate the cooked dish and remove the chilled fat before reheating.
- **Poach** — by immersing chicken or fish in simmering liquid.
- **Grill or Broil** — on a rack so fat drips away from the food.
- **Sauté** — in an open skillet over high heat. Use nonstick vegetable spray, a small amount of broth or wine, or a tiny bit of canola oil rubbed onto the pan with a paper towel.
- **Stir-Fry** — in a Chinese wok with a tiny bit of peanut, olive or vegetable oil.
- **Microwave** — needs no extra fat; in fact, you can drain food of fat by placing it between two paper towels while it cooks.
- **Steam** — in a basket over simmering water.

Source:
American Heart Association

Enjoyable Books for Toddlers

Your local librarian can help you find these books and many more.

ABC Bunny

All About Me

All By Myself

All Fall Down

All Night, All Day: A Child's
First Book of African
American Spirituals

Best Word Book Ever

Big Bird's Mother Goose

Brown Bear, Brown Bear,
What Do You See?

Clifford, The Big Red Dog

Cookie's Week

Curious George

Dancing Feet

De Colores and Other
Latin-American Folk Songs
for Children

Eat Up, Gemma

Everything Has a Place

Finger Rhymes

Freight Train

Goodnight, Gorilla

Goodnight Moon

Half Moon and One Whole
Star

Have You Seen My
Duckling?



Hunky Dory Ate It

If You Give a Mouse a
Cookie

Is Your Mama a Llama?

Jamberry

Jesse Bear, What Will You
Wear?

Julius the Baby of the
World

Jump Frog, Jump

Kisses

Let's Get Dressed

Little Gorilla

Mama, Do You Love Me?
Mary Had a Little Lamb

Max's Bath

Millions of Cats

Moon Bear

"More, More, More" Said
the Baby

Mouse Paint

Mr. Gumpy's Outing

On the Day I Was Born

Over the Meadow

Pat the Bunny

Peter's Chair

Seven Blind Mice

Sheep in a Jeep

Stellaluna

Ten in a Bed

Ten, Nine, Eight

The Blanket

The Bunny Planet

The Cat in the Hat

The Little Red Hen

The Very Quiet Cricket

This is the Farmer

Toddlerobics

Wait till the Moon is Full

When You Were a Baby

Where's Spot?

Who Says Moo?

Will I Have a Friend?

When You Need Help

Catholic Human Services	775-6581	Love, Inc.	779-1888
Cradle To Classroom	876-2300	Mercy Hospital	1-800-33-MERCY 876-7200
Child's Doctor	_____	MSU Extension	
Day Care Information (4 C's)	1-800-968-4228	Missaukee	839-4667
District Health Department		Wexford	779-9480
Missaukee	839-7167	North Central Community Mental Health	
.....	825-2040	1-800-49-ALPHA	(1-800-492-5742)
Wexford	775-9942	OASIS/Family Resource Center	
Family Independence Agency		Car Seat Loans	775-7299
Missaukee & Wexford	779-4500	Crisis Line	775-7233
.....	1-800-684-2170	Poison Control	1-800-POISON-1 (1-800-764-7661)
Emergency	911	Wexford-Missaukee ISD	
Head Start Enrollment/Information		(Intermediate School District)	
Cadillac	775-9781	Preschool	876-2300
Lake City	839-4012		
Manton	824-3385		
Mesick	885-1915		

Talk to me.
Play with me.
Love me.

Here are some guidelines for making communication with your young child more effective and more fun:

- Get your head physically on the same level as the child's.
- Make eye contact.
- Use a gentle touch.
- Speak with firmness, not anger, pleading, or whining.
- Give clear & consistent instructions.
- State things in terms of how a child's behavior is affecting you. "When you do _____, I feel _____." This becomes more effective as the child grows older.



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