

Parenting With Love

Chapter One Pregnancy

As soon as you think you might be pregnant it is very important to make an appointment with your OBGYN. Your OB will be a very important part of your pregnancy.

Your OB will give you all the appropriate information and recommendations you need to follow for maximizing your health and the health of your growing baby. Your OB will also monitor the growth of your baby and determine your due date. She will also tell you which pre-natal vitamins to take and give you dietary suggestions.

Just because you are pregnant doesn't mean that you should eat for two, as the old saying goes. Talk to your OB about how much weight you should gain and listen to what is advised! The average birth weight of a full term baby is between six to eight pounds. Twenty five to thirty pounds is usually the expected weight gain during a pregnancy. Ask about exercising, and what you can do to stay physically fit while pregnant.

Remember that whatever you are putting into your body is going into your baby! So you may want to consider stopping the toxic things like cigarettes, alcohol and junk food with little or no nutritional value.

Another thing to think about are the vaccines that are given to a pregnant mother these days. In the past pregnant women were never given vaccines, and were told to stay away from pharmaceutical and over the counter drugs. Infants are also given vaccines at birth and throughout their childhood. There is research linking SIDS Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Shaken

Baby Syndrome to vaccines. Research also links Autism, ADHD Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder to vaccines. There are many other side effects and diseases linked to these vaccines according to research. This is something that you really need to research for yourself. Make sure you read the list of ingredients' and all the side effects. Please do research and find out as much information as you can. You should find out which vaccines are given at what age, the ingredients, and the side effect. These vaccines can cause serious side effects, even death. Please do your research before you get pregnant! This is the most important thing you can do for your baby and yourself! It's up to you to due your due diligence! Please read the inserts for every vaccine! Do not take your doctor's word for it! Read them for yourself so that you are fully aware of what the risks are and the side effects!

Over the thirty years that I have worked with children, I have seen the side effects that can affect your baby. It might not happen right away. It could happen after the fourth or sixth vaccine. You just don't know! One thing for sure is that some of the ingredients are toxic and considered poisonous to humans. The poison control center can verify what ingredients are toxic to Humans. So do your research!

This should be a joyful time for you and your spouse. It's also a time for reflection on your childhood and a time for introspection to becoming a responsible and loving parent.

Chapter Two Language Development

You don't have to wait until your baby is born to start interacting with her or him. Research shows that a baby's language development starts in the womb, so go ahead and start talking, reading and singing to your baby right away!

The best way for your baby to learn how to talk is to hear spoken language. Body language, like facial expressions also help with communication. Some people teach their baby sign language before their baby can speak. The most important thing is to speak directly to your baby as if she already understands what you are saying. That is the best way for her to begin understanding what all the words mean. An example would be; "It's time for your bath. Doesn't the water feel nice and warm? Mommy has put your baby soap on your pink wash cloth. First let's wash your arms," as you wash her arms, then, "now we'll wash your chest, then your legs, and now your feet." This is how your baby learns language. Speaking directly to you baby also validates her sense of self worth.

Another example would be, as you are out for a walk, point to various things and say, "Look at those pretty green trees!" Point up to the sky and say, "The sky is so blue, and the clouds are so white". This is how your baby begins the communication process as well as language development.

Self worth - Speaking to your baby about what you are doing also helps your baby begin to understand what is going on. As your baby grows, pay attention to your child's responses when you are speaking to her. Don't just pick up your baby without saying anything first. Let your baby know what you are about to do by saying, "I am going to pick you up now". This is the beginning of

communication. So always validate your baby's self worth by speaking directly to her.

If you and or your spouse are bilingual, that is great. You need to decide who will speak which language when speaking to your baby. The key is that each adult speak one language consistently to your baby. One parent should speak one language always and the other parent should speak the second language always!

Whichever parent is more fluent in a particular language should only speak that language. Be consistent and always speak the same language that you have decided on. That way you will not confuse your baby.

From birth to five years old, children can learn multiple languages at the same time. Your child's brain is wired for language development. It's ok for the parent to speak to other people in a different language, but when speaking to your child always use the language that you have chosen and have been speaking to your baby.

When your child begins school, English will become the dominant language. Whatever language the mother speaks has dominated until now, because the mother usually spends more time with the child. When your child comes home speaking English, respond in the second language and ask your child to also respond in the second language. This will help your child to always be able to speak and understand the second language. As your child grows older and becomes equally fluent in both languages, you can choose to speak either language.

When your baby begins cooing, this is the beginning of their language development. It's okay to coo back to them. However once your child begins speaking, if your child's pronunciation is not correct, do not point it out to them. Instead just repeat what

was said using the correct pronunciation. This will greatly help with speech development.

If you feel your child may have speech delays, talk to your pediatrician about it. There are many good programs out there for children 0-3 years of age. These programs are usually easy to get into. Once your child turns 3, unless they are already enrolled in a program it becomes much harder to get into a program.

So don't wait if you have concerns. The earlier you get help the easier it is for your child to get caught up developmentally.

Research shows that children with speech delays have a harder time with learning to read and write.

Chapter Three

Bringing your Baby Home & Establishing Trust

It's so important for you to know that your baby is relying on you for everything. At this point your baby is completely helpless without you. First, you must answer every single cry from your baby; this is how a baby establishes trust so that a bond begins to develop. This is a crucial time for your baby; she needs to learn that you her parent can be trusted.

You will get to know your baby's different types of cries, the hungry cry, the please change my diaper cry, the I need attention cry, the I'm feeling sick cry and other types of cries that you may need to discover. The distinction of the different cries will be easier to tell apart as your baby grows.

Breast milk is the best form of nutrition for your baby. There is nothing better for your baby than your breast milk. Many new mothers give up breast-feeding for various reasons. Sometimes a baby may have a hard time latching on and it becomes painful for the mother. Or your baby may nurse for hours without getting enough milk, so she will get hungry again within a short time. It's often hard to be sure of your baby's actual milk intake when nursing. Therefore pumping your breast milk is another option. Then you can still nurse when you want to and also use a bottle with your breast milk to measure your baby's milk intake. This is the best way to be sure that your child is getting enough nourishment. Feeding time is a very important bonding time, so now your husband can also help to feed your baby using a bottle with your breast milk. This way your child will bond with both parents.

When pumping your milk you can measure and monitor how much milk your baby is getting. This is a huge help in helping

your baby sleep through the night. Believe it or not a two-week-old baby can sleep for a straight six to eight hours if their little tummy is good and full.

Breast milk can also be frozen. Definitely talk to your OB about this. They can answer questions as to how long breast milk can be stored in the freezer and ways to freeze it. Also if you do not seem to be producing a lot of milk, pumping will help to increase the amount of milk your body is producing.

Sometimes if an infant seems to cry excessively, try wrapping your baby in a receiving blanket. This type of swaddling may help your child to feel more safe and secure.

Sleep when your baby sleeps. It's important that you and your spouse get enough sleep and not get sleep deprived. "Chronic sleep deprivation not only makes people irritable, it can result in poor memory, learning difficulties, and clinical depression. Lack of sleep reduces our body's ability to produce proteins called cytokines that help us fight infection and actually weakens the immune system." *Ira Zunin M.D. M.P.H. M.B.A.

Chapter Four

Establishing A Sleep Schedule

Establish a schedule and follow the same daily routine for your baby. Of course there may be days when things get off course, but try to stick to the routine as much as possible. It's very important to establish a nightly bedtime routine with your baby that you will continue as they grow. This nightly routine may change somewhat as your baby grows, but the core essence should remain the same.

Make sure your baby has a full tummy from your breast milk, which can be monitored from a bottle. It is extremely important to follow all feedings with the drinking of water in a bottle to rinse your baby's mouth. The milk residue needs to be rinsed so that it does not remain on her gums and in her mouth. The milk residue can cause the baby teeth to decay.

If your baby has problems with her baby teeth, then she will be likely to have problems with her adult teeth as well.

Have the same timing for feedings, naps, and bathing. When putting her to bed it is very important to follow the same routine such as singing a lullaby or reading a story. Following a routine is key with all infants and children.

A routine creates predictability for children. When children can predict what will happen next, it builds up their self-confidence and it also makes them feel safe and secure.

When your baby is 3 months old, you should start putting her in the crib or bassinet awake around the same time every night. You might want to have a little night-light on or a mobile with music that turns itself off. After following your nightly routine, give your baby a kiss and say, "Good night" as you turn off the light.

If your baby cries, go in and check to see if her diaper is wet or if she has developed a fever. Don't pick her up, just gently pat her on her back and say once again as you leave the room, "It's time for you to go to sleep, goodnight!" If she cries again, just go to the doorway and reassure her and say, "You are ok and it's time to go to sleep!" She will get the message and eventually go to sleep.

By putting your baby down for the night when she is awake helps her to learn how to fall asleep on her own. That way if she wakes up in the middle of the night and notices it's still dark she will know that she needs go back to sleep. This is how she will learn how to fall back asleep by herself.

If you get your baby into the habit of nursing or rocking her to sleep every night, then you are going to have problems getting her to learn how to sleep on her own. If she wakes up in the middle of the night she will cry because she thinks that she needs you to rock her back to sleep. This is why it is so important to begin putting your baby to bed awake at night at an early age. This will help everyone to get full nights sleep.

It's also a good idea to put your baby to sleep in her own room or bed right away. This way you will not have to break her from the habit of sleeping in your bed, or room later on. Research shows that we are sleep deprived as a nation. Help your baby develop good sleep patterns right from birth and everyone in your family will sleep better.

Develop a consistent daily routine for your child to follow. Your daily routine will help your child develop a sense of predictability, which builds her self-confidence. When your child has a predictable routine, she will also feel safe and secure within their environment.

Chapter Five

Fostering Gross Motor Skills

It is very important to always support your newborn baby's head. A newborn baby isn't able to lift her head, which is why you need to support her head until her neck muscles have developed enough for her to support her own head. Whenever you pick her up or pass her to another person to hold, always have one hand under her head.

To help the development of your baby's gross motor skills, your baby needs to be free to explore her own body in a safe environment. Place your baby in a nice big safe space where she can be allowed to learn how to roll over and over in an unconfined area. As babies learn to roll over on their own, they are developing their gross motor skills. Once your baby has mastered rolling over, she will begin to push up the upper part of her body with her arms. Soon she will pull herself up onto her knees and that will lead to crawling. Your baby will also discover how to sit up on her own during this process. This usually happens around 6 months. It is important to not put your baby in a sitting position unsupported before she has discovered how to do so on her own. In the next stage baby will begin to pull

herself up to a standing position. She will begin to take steps holding on to whatever is in her grasping range. This is how your baby will learn to walk. You may hold her hand as she begins taking her first steps. It is only a matter of time until she is running.

Over the last twenty years or so our society seems to have been stifling the development of baby's gross motor skills. This stifling is due to baby's being confined in either a car seat, strollers, swing, baby seat, or being held more often. This over confinement

is seen in the delay of the crawling stage and also in learning how to walk. So prepare a nice big space on the floor and lay a bed sheet down for your baby to explore. It's also a good idea to baby proof your house by removing any breakable items that could be grabbed and pulled down. Also, be sure to remove all cleaning chemicals from low cupboards, child proof electrical sockets and install baby locks on the stove, cabinets, refrigerator and guard stops to any stairways.

Chapter Six Toilet Training

These days most people choose to use disposable diapers because they are easy. However, if you would like to get your child toilet trained as early as possible, start using cloth diapers when you are at home. This will also make toilet training somewhat easier.

Research shows that disposable diapers are so absorbent that a baby does not feel the consequence of having a wet diaper. The disposable diapers can absorb several wettings immediately without the baby ever feeling the uncomfortable wet feeling.

If you can use cloth diapers while you are at home and disposable diapers when you are out, you will be helping your child on the path to toilet training. Even using cloth diapers as little as twenty five percent of the time will quickly speed up your child's ability to understand the urge to urinate and the associated uncomfortable wet warm feeling of a wet diaper. Even infants will start to make this association.

When a baby starts walking their body produces a chemical that coats the extremity muscles. This same chemical also helps to control the bladder, so physically your child can begin to learn how to control her bladder and start using the toilet at the same time she starts to walk. This bladder control and toilet training use can start as early as one year old.

Fifty to one hundred years ago children were toilet trained as early as one year old and definitely by two years old. This was due to the fact that disposable diapers were not around yet.

So, once your child starts walking begin to establish a daily routine of putting her on the toilet. Put her on the toilet first thing

in the morning as soon as she wakes up, before and after meals, just before you leave the house, before and after nap time, and before bedtime. It is helpful if your toddler watches while you use the toilet, then you can tell her it's your turn now. Never ask a toddler if she wants to use the toilet, instead just say, "It's your turn now!" In the beginning it's hit and miss, but not to worry. The important thing is to get her comfortable sitting on the toilet. Just have her sit for a few minutes or less.

When you begin putting her on the toilet, put her on facing the tank. That means all her bottom clothing comes off. Facing the tank it is almost impossible for her to fall into the toilet. This also helps your child to keep her urine spray in the toilet. Girls can spray out just as much as boys! Facing the tank also allows her something to hold onto. In the beginning you should hold on to her so she will feel safe. When you take her off, praise her for sitting, as you redress her. It's fine to put a diaper back on. You might not want to use training pants unless you are staying home. When going out please use a diaper as usual until she has

consistently been using the toilet and stays dry for long periods of time. There are child size toilet seats that fit on top of the regular toilet seat. You can use this when you are first putting your child on the toilet. Or, if you prefer, you can use a child sized potty. However the regular toilet works fine and then there is no transition from one to the other. Just remember, facing the tank.

Once your child is around eighteen months old she can start to sit on the big toilet without the small seat. You can also place a small step stool in front to help her climb on and off of the toilet. Around this time you can also begin to teach her how to undress and redress herself.

After using the toilet, lay your child's clothes out for her with the underwear on top of the outer clothing. Have your child sit on the stool and show her how to pick up her underwear on the sides with her thumbs in and fingers out. Don't just redress your child, please take the extra time to show her how to put on her own clothes.

As your child becomes more comfortable using the toilet she will eventually begin to turn around and start to sit facing outwards. This is also around the time when boys begin to stand up instead of sitting when they urinate.

It's also important that you start putting your child on public toilets, so she can get used to using toilets outside of the house. This will help your child adjust quicker to unfamiliar toilets, restrooms and pre-school bathrooms.

If you start putting your child on the toilet routinely once she starts walking and if you used cloth diapers frequently from birth your child will definitely be using the toilet by age two. By age two your child should also be wearing training pants. Training pants are thick cotton underwear that will absorb the wetness of an accident better than regular underwear. Training pants are washable and therefore reusable. Also they are less expensive than pull-ups, which do not allow your child to feel the wetness. Pull ups are just a glorified more expensive diaper, don't use them.

Until your toddler stays dry through the night, continue using a diaper. The bladder is one of the last organs to begin growing so wetting through the night is normal. Once your toddler's diaper is dry through the night, then you can start having her wear underwear at night. If she has accidents at night, she may be a really sound sleeper so don't worry about it, just have her wear a

diaper at night. It's not worth the stress of changing wet sheets in the morning. Don't make a big deal of it. She will grow out of it in time.

So invest in the cotton training pants that allow your child to feel the wetness, this is the quickest way your child will learn how to become toilet trained. When your child is completely toilet trained, you will not even be aware of when they use the toilet anymore. Your child has now become self-sufficient and is using the toilet on her own. This can happen anywhere from age two and a half to three years of age.

Chapter Seven

Setting Boundaries And Limits

As children become more and more mobile, they are also becoming aware of themselves as separate individuals independent of their mothers. Once your child is walking and becoming more mobile, this is the time to start instilling boundaries for your child's safety and your own sanity. The most important aspect to setting effective boundaries is for you to always be consistent in enforcing the boundaries. Boundaries make children feel safe and secure!

If you are inconsistent with enforcing these boundaries, your child will push the limits of her boundaries and test your limits and sanity! So always be firm and consistent as you enforce the boundaries that you have set with an appropriate consequence.

The consequence must produce a permanent memory. A good example is if your child throws her food on the floor, then she must help to clean it up, and then she is finished eating. You tell her "it was your choice to throw your food on the floor, not mine. I still love you, but you get to clean it up, and then you are finished eating for this meal." A child who is walking age can be helped by an adult to clean up the mess. Next time she looks like she might throw her food you can remind her what happened the last time she did that.

This is where clear boundaries are truly important. You must let your child know what you expect from her and what the consequences will be for her actions or choices. This will work with a toddler and children of all ages, with all different types of situations. You put the responsibility on her it was her choice not yours, you are just enforcing the consequences.

Toddlers tend to react physically, due to their lack of communication skills. It is common for a toddler to think that everything is hers and that it is her right to take whatever she wants. A toddler will grab objects away from others who are unable to hang on to whatever it is. When in group situations, it is up to the adult to anticipate possible physical actions before they occur and redirect the toddler before the physical action can occur. It is not uncommon for toddlers to bite, hit and kick. However this behavior must not be allowed. It is up to you to strongly let your toddler know that that kind of behavior is absolutely not acceptable.

Research shows that children who are well behaved are also the most well adjusted, and happy. Research also shows that these children have parents who love them unconditionally and discipline them with purpose.

So when your child exhibits unacceptable behavior, it's very important that you let them know that you still love them. Be very clear and let them know it's just the unacceptable behavior that you do not like and will not accept.

Chapter Eight

How to Deal With Temper Tantrums

Due to a toddler's lack of verbal skills, tantrums are a means of communicating. Chances are when a tantrum occurs it is because they are tired, hungry or not feeling well. This is another reason why routine is so important. When a routine is followed tantrums are less likely to occur. The less attention you give to a tantrum the sooner it should stop. Pick and choose your battles when it comes to tantrums. If you are going to give in to a tantrum, give in right away. Don't allow your child to carry on for an hour and then give in. If you are going to give in, give in right away!

When your toddler exhibits unacceptable behavior, you can tell her, "this behavior is unacceptable so you need to go to your room and rest your body. Once you are finished with your tantrum, then you can come back out of your room!" If you are not at home when a tantrum occurs, stop whatever you are doing and leave with your child. Tell her that because of her unacceptable behavior you have to leave the party, mall, or restaurant, Take her home and put her in her room. If you are with other family members and unable to go home, take her out to the car and stay there until the rest of the family is finished. Remind her it was her choice to have the tantrum and that behavior is unacceptable.

Pay attention to triggers that may bring on a tantrum try to avoid those triggers. When going to special occasions make sure your toddler has had enough sleep, has eaten, and is not feeling unwell this will help reduce the chances of tantrums. When a tantrum does occur, do not give into it. This will only ensure that they will continue and take longer before stopping.

It is most important for you to be very clear as to what you expect from your child with her behavior. For example, your child may become angrier as you are escorting him or her to their room because of the tantrum episode. Then tell your child, "you get to choose to be sad or happy, but you need to rest their body until you have stopped this unacceptable behavior. Sad or happy, it's your choice!" Always say the desired behavior last so that is the last thing your child will hear.

If you know that you will be taking your child to the park the next day, it is up to you to explain what you expect from him or her before hand. For example you may say to your child, "Tomorrow we will be going to the park to play with other children and when mommy says its time to go, that will be the time we will leave, and you need to listen to me. If you choose not to listen to me, then we will not be going to the park until you learn to listen to me!" So let your child know that you will say when the last trip down the slide, or push on the swing will be. Because after that, it will be time to go.

If your child starts a tantrum, then you should take her by the hand and leave immediately. You then tell your child that this behavior needs to stop and remind her that you talked about this before we came to the park. If you choose to continue crying, then we won't be coming back until you learn to listen to me. Only give your child one warning and be firm and consistent with enforcing the consequences that you have set up with her beforehand. If your child cries and runs away from you, then you need to follow through on the consequences and escort her out of the park immediately! Tell her that it was her choice to not follow directions! Now you need to do what Mommy says! Always be clear in explaining to your child what you expect and what behavior is not acceptable!

You must associate some type of negative consequence with temper tantrums. This way your child will soon get the message that tantrums are just not acceptable AT ALL! Some possible consequences are to take away a favorite toy, or to not allow her to go to a play date with a friend, or to not go to the park until she can demonstrate acceptable behavior.

When your child is demonstrating the behavior you expect always remember to acknowledge it and say, "I like the way you came to mommy right away when I told you it was time to go, good listening! Now we can come back to the park again tomorrow, because you followed my directions so well!"

Never reward or bribe your child for good behavior as in promising her a new toy or some candy! Good behavior is just expected and it is now your job as a parent to instill it in your child.

You and your spouse always need to be on the same page with what's expected from your child. Consistency needs to come from both parents on all issues, so your child won't learn to work you both against each other.

Another situation where temper tantrums may occur is when you are shopping with your child. You must tell your child before going into the store exactly what you expect. You may say, "We are going into this store to only buy food! This time we are not going to buy any toys or candy. If you start a tantrum we will leave immediately and we will not be going to the park to play with your friends!" Or, you can take away one of their favorite toys for a while. Be fair and try to match an appropriate consequence to the negative unwanted behavior.

Always set your child up for success, not failure! So when you are going on outings make sure that she is well rested and fed. Be sure to bring along a favorite toy or simple activity to keep her occupied.

So once again always be clear in expressing to your child beforehand what behavior is unacceptable and what behavior you expect. Always be consistent in enforcing the appropriate consequences to match the inappropriate behavior.

Some of the first words your child will learn to use are “NO” and “Mine!” So, you should never ask a toddler a yes or no question. You want to give your toddler choices, keep it simple. An example, “do you want to wear the red dress or the green dress?” As your toddler’s independence develops her sense of being a separate individual, as in separate from you her mom, her need for control will also develop. That is why it is important to give your toddler choices. By having choices, she feels in control.

Chapter Nine

True Happiness Comes From Within

These days I hear so many parents say to their children, "What you just did makes Mommy sad!" or, "Your behavior is making Mommy mad!" Or "Make mommy happy and be a good girl." With a very young child this can be confusing in the sense that her understanding of the vocabulary is limited. Using words like mad and sad can translate in a young child's mind as, "I don't love you!"

It is just better to say, "This behavior is unacceptable. Or, say, "You are a good girl; it is just the bad behavior that you are exhibiting that is unacceptable!" It is very important that parents not use emotional vocabulary, because young children have not yet developed the emotional labeling skills. Your child may confuse what you say, and think that you do not love her anymore.

It is important that children learn to take responsibility for their actions and their emotions. They need to learn that no one else can make them do something and that they are in control of themselves. So many times

parents will enable their children by asking their child, "Did Johnny make you do it?" How is it that Johnny made Mike hit Sally? Many of today's parents seem to be enablers without realizing it. Teach your child to take responsibility for her actions from an early age. This is your responsibility and duty as a parent.

The same goes for your child's emotions. Your child needs to learn that true happiness comes from within herself. It is not material objects or another person that is going to make her happy. Your child needs to learn that happiness is a choice, and

she is responsible for the choices she makes. You can choose to be sad or you can choose to be happy.

You are giving your power away to the world if you rely on other people or things to make you feel happy. Children need to understand that being happy is a choice without putting that burden or requirement on someone else or onto material possessions. How you feel emotionally is your choice.

Chapter Ten Learning By Example

You and your spouse are your child's first and foremost teachers. Your child will learn by watching you. So when you think about what kind of person that you want your child to be, you must first look in the mirror. In most ways your child is going to be a reflection of the parents.

So if you are polite, kind, and respectful, chances are that your child will be polite, kind and respectful also. As a parent you must be the example of the positive character traits that you want to instill in your child. You and your spouse are the number one role models for your child.

Your child is going to be watching every move you make, every word you say, and everything that you do. So, now is the time for some more introspection into your own character. If you have shortcomings in some areas of your own character, now is a good time to work on your self in developing these positive traits that you want to teach to you child. Unfortunately, dysfunctional behavior traits get passed along to your children if the flaws in your own character go unchecked.

Chapter Eleven

How To Teach Your Child To Share

It is important for children to learn to share from the goodness within their own heart. Never force a two year old or a young three year old to share. It's very important for your toddler to feel ownership of her toys and possessions.

In our society, adults have things that they don't want to share and that is perfectly acceptable. But for some reason adults expect young children to just share their things. Learning to share doesn't work that way.

For example, if you force your child to share and just take her toys to give to a visiting friend, the non-verbal message that you give to your own child is that her feelings just don't matter. The child that receives the toys gets the non-verbal message that it is okay to take things away from someone.

You must set the example of demonstrating how to share. What you can do is to have toys of your own that are kept where your child doesn't have access to play with them. These toys should be age appropriate for your child. When other children come for play dates, you can bring out your toys to share with the visiting children. This way your child does not have to share her own toys. Your child will learn how to share by watching your example.

As she get a little older your child will begin to want to share her toys with her friends. However your child might only want

to share a few specific toys and not share her favorite toys. This is fine, it's a good idea to have a conversation with your child and ask her which toys she doesn't want to share. That way you and

your child can put away those toys that are not available for sharing. Your child will then only have toys out that she is willing to share.

So once again, it's up to the parents to lead by example and not force behavior skills onto their children. This way your child will learn how to share from the goodness of her heart.

Chapter Twelve

Allowing Your Child To Participate

As your two year old becomes more and more independent, the next favorite words your child will learn are, I do it, me do it, or she may say her name like, "Ashley do it!" Children want to do things for themselves, but because we adults are in such a hurry and always rushing these days we don't take the extra time to allow them to help us. Or, you are concerned that your child will not do the tasks correctly and or make a big mess, thus making more work for you. This is how your child gets the non-verbal message that she is not competent or capable of participating with house hold tasks. If you don't allow your child to participate she won't learn how to perform those necessary tasks. Then when your child gets older, and you now want her to perform the household tasks that she wanted to do at age two, she will not be interested. Then it will be a struggle for you to get her to help with those tasks, and she may not complete them or do them at all.

So it's important that you take the time to show your child how to do things for herself and let her do them. Be patient with your child when she does it over and over, this repetition is how she learns. She probably will not do it as well as you do, but in time she will become quite competent. Be supportive and encourage your child, this is how independence is developed.

When it comes to household chores, and she wants to help and participate please let her. She may not make her bed to your satisfaction the first couple of years. However, by the time she is around ten years old; she will have figured it out and may even be changing her own sheets as well. You can allow your toddler to help wash dishes that are non-breakable. Get a dish tub of

soapy water and put it on a towel on the floor and let your her participate. Or you can get a step up stool with handrails. Then she can help at the kitchen sink with dish washing. You can show her how to sort laundry, explain how whites go in one pile and colored items go into another pile. The color sorting also helps children learn colors and is a great pre language learning activity. Use the step up stool to allow her to put the clothes into the washer and dryer. Then teach her how to put her own clothes away.

When you allow her to participate with these daily chores, she will be learning practical lifelong skills. Toddlers eagerly want to do what adults do so by allowing her to these tasks she will also learn to enjoy doing them and possibly not see them as chores. This will also give her a sense contributing to your family.

Toddlers are capable of helping set the table and clear away dishes that are not too heavy. Toddlers should be participating in dressing and undressing herself with maybe just a little assistance. Yes, it may take a little longer in completing some of these tasks, but this is how she will learn to become a competent and independent individual. Most importantly she will also be developing self- confidence!

These daily tasks are part of everyday life, so allow your toddler to participate! To your child these tasks are fun. As time goes by it is part of the daily routine and something all in the family help with. By the time your child is a teenager, there should be no struggle to get her to do chores, because these chores have always been part of the family's daily routine.

Chapter Thirteen

Developing The Proper Pencil Grip

There are many things you can do to help your toddler begin to develop her fine motor skills that will eventually lead to a good proper pencil grip. Puzzles with small knobs are really good to help her develop her three finger-pinching grip. This is the pencil grip, which is using the thumb, first and middle finger.

In my observations over the years I have seen fat handled silverware being used very often by children. These fat handles unfortunately foster a fist grip. The grip usually starts first with the fist grip and then with your help and guidance your child will learn how to use the correct three-finger pencil grip. So get rid of those fat handles and get regular thin handled silverware. This will greatly help your child get in the habit of using the three-finger pinching pencil grip.

It is very important that you monitor your child's development of the correct pencil grip starting at an early age. Although your child may not hold a pencil or marker until a later age, you can still monitor it and have your child do activities to help develop the proper grip. By five years old a child's pencil grip is set. Once their pencil grip is set, it is very hard to break this bad habit and retrain her to use a proper pencil grip.

Provide your child with things that will help to foster the development of the fine motor skills. Play dough is really good to help strengthen the fingers. A turkey baster to transfer water from one container to another is great for eye to hand coordination. The squeezing of the baster also helps to strengthen the pincher fingers. You can break crayons in half and use short pencils; this will force your child to use the three-finger pencil grip instead of the fist grip. Use thin markers and pencils, instead of the fat

markers. There are rubber pencil grips with three sides that you can place on a pencil to use as a finger guide.

Always be demonstrating the proper pencil grip for your child at home and be monitoring their actual grip. Any activity that helps your child to strengthen the three-finger pencil grip is great. Once again your child's pencil grip is set by the age of five. With the proper grip it will be much easier for her when she begins learning how write and eventually to learn to use the cursive writing style.

Chapter Fourteen

Allowing Enough Unstructured Free Playtime

As your child continues to grow and develop, it's really important that you allow her to just be and play! The worst thing that you can do for a child under the age of four is to just sit her in front of the television.

Dr. Jane Healey has been doing research for the past several decades on the long-term effects of the TV on children. One of her books is called, "Endangered Minds." She has discovered that the television is physically changing the development of children's brains. Dr. Healey states, "That children under four should not watch TV at all because the constant movement on the screen causes the subconscious mind to become very frustrated. This constant movement on the screen is not healthy for your child's brain development!"

It's much better to have books for your child to look at. The board books are really good when your child is young, because she can't tear the pages. Or, make the time and take your child to the park to let her just run around, climb, crawl or just be the child that she is.

Having too many toys can be very overwhelming for children. Less is best! The only good thing about the TV is the box that it came in. Children love to play with big boxes. The box helps them stimulate their creativity and imaginations. The box can be a fort, a truck, a boat, or it can be anything your child wants it to be. Watching the TV stifles creativity and damages the brain, but the box it came in can stimulate your child's creativity and imagination.

It's very important that you assist your child in developing her creative imagination. Quite often children are more satisfied playing with spoons and bowls in your cupboard, than playing with toys. Any object that helps stimulate your child's creativity and imagination is great!

Most toys that you buy at the store don't help your child develop her creativity, since the toys or games already have a pre-set way to use them or a pre-determined outcome. Many toys limit your child's imagination and creativity. It's much better to have less toys and allow your child to explore nature. Get out of the house. If you have a yard let your child play outside, or go to the park, or the beach, or to the mountains, or anywhere away from the demoralizing and frustrating television.

The development of your child's creativity and imagination is so very important. These skills help your child learn how to be problem solvers, to be resourceful and to be able to work cooperatively with others. Those who don't develop their creativity become the followers. Those who develop their creativity become happy healthy people.

Chapter Fifteen

Following Adult Direction

If your child does not watch the television, chances are very good that your child will follow adult direction. Unfortunately the television has such a negative impact on developing healthy morals. The constant bombardment of violence to each other, especially in cartoons, will program your child to want to fight, be angry and resist your authority.

For your child to be successful in school she needs to be able to follow adult direction. If your child spends a lot of time in front of the television or playing video games, then she is not going to be able to listen to you or any other adult that is speaking.

You can help your child learn how to follow adult direction at an early age. Boundary setting and communicating what you expect from her is so very crucial. You can start by giving your child simple directions to follow, like telling your child, "Please put on your shoes because it's time to leave." "Please wash your hands, because it's time to eat." As your child gets a little older then you can give her more complex directions.

It's up to you, the parent; to make sure your child learns how to follow directions. It's important to be in charge and keep your child on track with following directions. Don't be wishy washy and let your child get away with being disobedient. If your child chooses to not follow your directions and the ground rules that you have set, then she will not be successful at school. You want your child to be successful with life in general and being successful at school is the first major step.

Chapter Sixteen

Two Hats

Children usually have two hats that they wear, the one they wear at home and the one they wear at school. This can also translate into the one that they wear with mom and dad, or the one that they wear when mom and dad are not around.

It is so incomprehensible to me as a teacher of young children that so many parents allow their children to exhibit undesirable and antisocial behavior. So many of my students are wonderful children, they follow directions, participate with activities. But, so many of these same children turn into monsters when their parents are around! Why would you allow your child to behave in such a way? It all comes down to setting appropriate boundaries, and declaring to your child what type of behavior you will and WILL NOT accept!

It you don't correct the undesirable behavior when it occurs, then it will only become worse as your child gets older. For example, a two year old that hits at her mother may seem cute now, but at the age of five, ten or fifteen years old it will be very ugly!

In my observation, it seems that parents want to be their child's friend, therefore they don't discipline their child. Your child doesn't need more friends, your child needs you to be their parent! If your child tells you that you are mean, or say they don't like you, that means you are doing your job! The better you do your job when they are children, then you will be their best friend when they become adults. So don't be afraid to tell your child NO!

Thank you for reading my book, I hope you find it to be helpful.
Much Love and Aloha, Miss Shelly.

Parenting With Love

By Miss Shelly

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