

# **Tips for Parents of Older Toddlers**

(24-36 months)

#### LEARNING TO USE THE BATHROOM

Potty accidents are normal. Children slowly learn what it feels like when they have to pee or poop. Children are often 3 years old or older before they can use the bathroom by themselves. Many children will have accidents even after they have been using the bathroom awhile.

## INSTEAD OF ...

## TRY...

Saying, "You are so lazy!"

Making your child sit on the potty or toilet against their will

Punishing your child for accidents

"Let's try to use the potty next time."

- Establishing comfort while sitting on the potty/toilet – read books. Avoid having a child sit on a toilet for more than 5 minutes
- Expressing excitement when your child is able to use the toilet. When accidents happen, it just means your child's body isn't mature enough yet to consistently use the toilet.

#### **NIGHTTIME WETTING**

Nighttime wetting may occur until children are much older. Stressful events can cause nighttime wetting even after a child has been successful.

#### INSTEAD OF ...

## TRY...

Punishing or shaming your child for wetting the bed or making a big deal out of it  "Oopsy, you had an accident. Let's change your pajamas and sheets and get back to bed."

#### **WON'T SIT STILL**

Young children have a lot of energy. It is normal for a young child to have a hard time sitting in one spot for more than a few minutes. Allowing children to move helps them feel good.

# INSTEAD OF SAYING...

## TRY...

- "Sit still!"
- "If you get out of that chair, you will be punished."
- "Come here and sit by Mommy"
- "Let's [read] this [book]!" or "Let's play [I Spy or any other game]."

#### WON'T GO TO BED

A consistent early bedtime routine every day and a safe sleeping space are keys to a happy bedtime and minimize tantrums and meltdowns.

# INSTEAD OF SAYING...

#### TRY...

"Go to bed right now!"

"If you get out of bed, you will be punished."

- "I'm happy to help you get in bed. Let's read a book."
- Setting up a routine of reading a book before sleep. Reading out loud to a child can help them relax.

#### **WON'T STAY IN BED**

A young child needs help to feel safe and secure. Sometimes your child may still want to be near you after bedtime. When they come to you, they are expressing a need.

## INSTEAD OF ...

#### TRY...

Scolding your child or locking child in room

 Helping your child feel comfortable in the bedroom by turning on a night light, remaining in the room for a short time to offer comfort, reading a story, or rubbing their forehead or feet.

#### BEING AGGRESSIVE

Toddlers commonly bite, hit and grab things from others. Praise good behavior.

# INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

#### TRY ...

- "You are so mean, don't hit!"
- "You are a bad boy/girl!"
- "When you [hit, bite] your [brother], it hurts him and he feels sad." Saying, "It's OK to be angry, but I won't let you hit. We need to keep everyone safe." OR
- "You had something important you wanted to sav."
- "Let's find something else to play with."
- "It's your [sister]'s turn with the [train]. Or, "I will help you wait until it's your turn."

# Dear Parents,

# Did you know that –

• Spanking shrinks brains.

Harvard Medical School found that kids who are spanked just once a month had 14-19% smaller brains in the decision-making area. These were children who remembered being spanked at least 12 times a year and once with a belt, paddle or brush, but were not injured or spanked in anger.

- 1,574 studies found that spanking is harmful.
- Even 'everyday spanking' is consistently associated with:
- **More** aggression
- **More** negative relationships

Substance abuse

- More fighting

with parents

- Lower cognitive ability - Weaker moral values
- Delinguent behavior

- More mental health problems Lower self-esteem
- More antisocial behavior
- Lower self-control<sup>2</sup>

Spanking lowers IQ.

The University of New Hampshire found that American children who are spanked at ages 2-4 have 5 less 10 points than non-spanked children, even years later. Children spanked at ages 5-9 have 2.8 less 10 points.3

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Does this mean that everyone who was spanked as a child has problems? No, it means that spanking doesn't help children learn what we want them to learn. Every time we spank a child, we raise the risk that the child will develop problems.
- Why is this so? Spanking focuses on the behavior and misses the underlying need. It might stop a child from doing something in the moment, but the child hasn't learned how to do things differently. And it can lead to built-up resentment and hostility, and prevent some children from telling about sexual abuse for fear of further punishment.
- But I was spanked and turned out okay? Today, we have a tremendous amount of knowledge about how children learn and develop. We know other ways of teaching children that don't have these risks and harms.

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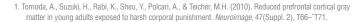












2. Gershoff, E. T., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new metaanalyses. Journal of Family Psychology, 30(4), 453–469.http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/fam0000191

3. Straus, M. & Paschall, M.J. Corporal punishment by mothers and development of children's cognitive ability: A longitudinal study of two nationally representative age cohorts. (2009). Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma, 18(5): 459. doi:10.1080/10926770903035168









