

Bright Start UpDate

May / June 2010 ■ Volume 10 ■ Issue 3

Routines Help Promote Positive Relationships!

Did you know that everyday routines such as feeding your baby or changing her diaper are not only important to your child's physical health but also her psychological health?

In 1991, a researcher named John Bowlby stressed the importance of an infant's relationship with her parents for the child's positive psychological development. He suggested that from the quality of the interactions between a parent and child during the earliest years of the child's life, the infant builds an "internal working model" of herself and of the parent. In other words, the infant begins to have a set of expectations concerning her parents' availability and ability to meet her needs.

You can help your child build a positive internal working model by creating an environment that includes safe, consistent, and secure relationships. A secure relationship entails trust. For example, if a baby is hungry and begins to cry, trust is built when her mother or father meets her needs by giving her food. The same could be said for other caregiving routines such as diaper changing or rocking your child to soothe hurt feelings. Routines help families become more organized and lessen the chaos in life. The schedule helps babies have a better understanding and establishes trust in their world and the people in it. When routines are predictable and consistent, a baby can focus on her surroundings with a positive outlook and learns to explore her world with confidence.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends families establish predictable consistent routines. For example, the AAP



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recommends to prevent chaos and frustration in the morning by trying to establish the following routines.

- Put as many things in order as possible the night before. Let your young toddler "gather" up what is needed for her day. This helps you be more organized and teaches your child responsibility. It also helps her recognize what is going to happen each morning. For example, my mom picks up my diaper bag and we go to child care.
- Keep wake-up routines cheerful and positive. Your child is more likely to be positive if you are in the mornings.
- Make sure physical needs such as hunger and comfort are met each morning. This not only keeps your child healthy, but it also helps her better handle any frustrations during the day.
- Give your child a hug and let her know you love her. This will help give her confidence when you are away.

Evening routines often focus on dinner and bedtime. One simple routine is to have dinner with your whole family without distractions.

For example, if you are feeding your infant, talk to her, tell her about her food, or how you love her smile. This is a perfect time for bonding. For bedtime, keep in mind that nighttime routines can help children start to prepare their bodies and mind for sleep. For example, telling bedtime stories, lowering the lights, and/or rubbing your child's back can help your baby recognize that it is time to go to sleep.

Babies need to build trust in their environment and their relationships. Parents can help them do this by creating an environment that encompasses predictable and consistent routines.

Prepared by Dr. Ann Michelle Daniels, Family Life, Parenting, and Child Care Specialist, South Dakota State Cooperative Extension Service, South Dakota State University

Sources:

Bowlby, J. (1991). *Attachment and loss*. London : New York : Penguin Books, (Original work published in 1969).
Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 (Copyright © 2009 American Academy of Pediatrics)



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From a Parent's Perspective – Discipline & Punishment: Is it the Same Thing

No! Discipline is defined as a positive method of teaching a child right from wrong. It is taken from the Latin word “disciple” or to teach.

It is meant to help children learn self-control and take responsibility for their own behavior. Punishment is a form of discipline. Punishment includes physical (spanking) or psychological (verbal disapproval) forms. Keep in mind that when punishment is the foundation for discipline, the responsibility of the child's behavior shifts from the child to the punisher.

As our son starts to exert his independence more and more, my husband and I are often at odds concerning appropriate discipline strategies. My husband leans more towards the



spanking or “an eye for an eye” technique whereas I tend towards explaining why behaviors or actions are inappropriate.

However, if the ultimate goal is to teach our son rules and self-control- we must take a minute to step back, focus on what we are trying to teach our child and discipline toward the agreed-upon goal.

Toddlerhood is a curious time. While you don't want to stifle your child's natural curiosity, boundaries must be in place to teach appropriate behaviors that will carry them through life.

Toddlers can be quite dramatic and emphatic about their feelings. Trying to reason with a toddler can be like putting out a wildfire with a pail of water. Below are additional “pails of water” from the University of

Minnesota to effectively discipline your toddler:

- Ask yourself whether your child is misbehaving or trying to learn something
- Act the way you want your child to act. If you yell, so will your child.
- Stop temptation: Put unsafe things out of your child's reach.
- Make sure you have your child's attention; be specific and direct when asking your child to do something.
- Find things to say “yes” to.

Prepared by Amanda Larson, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, BonHomme County, South Dakota State University

Sources: *Effective Discipline Techniques for Parents: Alternatives to Spanking* factsheet from Mental Health America at <http://www.nmha.org> and *Positive Discipline: A Guide for Parents* from the University of Minnesota Extension at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/familydevelopment/DE7461.html>.

Mealtime – Family Meal Time an Important Habit to Get Into!

Sitting down and eating together as a family is an important habit that can help your family have an increase in communication and develop strong family ties. The family dinner can also help form life long, healthy eating habits for your child. To make the most out of your family meal time turn off the TV and keep telephones and computers away from the table. When interruptions are limited your family can talk and enjoy each others company more.

Family meals are also a great way to encourage your child to try something new such as fruits, vegetables and other nutrient rich foods. Below is a healthy quick and easy salad you may want to try:

- Vanilla yogurt
- Add some cut up fresh fruit (bananas, strawberries, blueberries, or other)
- Top with chopped nuts or granola for a garnish

As with any recipe, remember to cut food small enough to



avoid choking hazard and some nuts are inappropriate for young children.

Prepared by Corrine Huber, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, Dewey County, South Dakota State University

Source: Nutrition Fact Sheet CFS-748-4W - *Make Mealtime Family Time* by Alexandria Corbin from Purdue Extension

Healthy Baby – Ages and Stages of Sleep

Sleep is vital for the health and development of children. Be sure to establish a safe and “sleep friendly” environment - quiet, dark, and with a comfortable temperature.



Always place babies on their back to sleep and use a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib. Articles such as blankets and soft items could cause suffocation and should NOT be placed in the crib with your child.

Newborns need 10.5 to 18 hours of sleep but may have irregular sleep patterns until 6-8 weeks. Proper sleep hygiene includes putting a child to sleep on their

back to prevent SIDS, creating a positive safe sleeping environment, and identifying signs of sleepiness. Children should be put to bed when they are drowsy. This allows them to learn to fall asleep on their own. It also helps them learn to return to sleep during normal nighttime awakenings.

Infants need 14 to 15 hours which includes 2.5 to 5 hours of naps. By the end of the first year of your child’s life, nighttime sleep increases while daytime sleep begins to reduce. Proper sleep hygiene and milestones include: creating a bedtime schedule and routine, nighttime awakenings, and your child learning to self-soothe.

Toddlers average 12 – 14 hours sleep including 1.5 - 3.5 napping hours. Morning naps will reduce and give your child more time to learn and explore. Developmental sleep milestones include: following bedtime routines, falling asleep independently, and transitioning to a bed. It is important for security objects, daily bedtime schedules, and the bedroom environment to remain the same each night.

Prepared by Sally Park-Hageman, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, Fall River County, South Dakota State University

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics & National Sleep Foundation

Books and Baby – Tips for Reading to Infants and Toddlers

Simple, everyday events tell young children their parents love and value them. For example, a parents’ presence, a smile, a gentle touch, sitting close and pointing out objects or pictures in a book say “I love you” to a child. These nurturing activities help “build a baby’s brain”.

Try these successful tips when reading to infants and toddlers:

- Snuggle with your child with her favorite blanket or toys as you read.
- Read slowly. This gives the child time to think about what you are reading.
- Read with expression using different voices for different characters.
- Emphasize rhythms and rhymes in stories. Give your toddler opportunities to repeat rhyming phrases.
- Talking about what is shown in the picture develops speaking vocabulary.

- Encourage your child to repeat what you say or comment on it. Encourage your child to ask questions. Provide models of interesting questions and examples of possible answers. "I wonder what is going to happen next. I think the rabbit will get lost because he is not paying attention to where he is going. What do you think?"



- Look for books that are about things that interest your toddler. For example, does your child like cars, insects, or animals?
- Make reading a habit before bedtime, after lunch, or after naptime.
- If baby wants to grab and chew on the book, give them a chew toy and calmly go on with the story.

- Give your child a chance to choose his own books.
- Read stories again and again. Your toddler enjoys repetition and it helps him become familiar with the way stories are organized.
- Be sensitive to the signs that babies and toddlers interests are waning from the book. It isn’t necessary to finish every book you start.

It's never too soon to start reading to your children! If your child learns early to associate reading with pleasure, they are more likely to enjoy reading on their own when older.

Prepared by Ellyn Eddy, Extension Educator/Family and Consumer Sciences, Davison County, South Dakota State University

Source: National Education Association; Better Kid Care.

Parenting 24/7

Parenting 24/7 is a "one-stop" source of news, information, and advice on parenting and family life from University of Illinois Extension. Designed for parents and grandparents of children from birth through the teens, it provides feature articles with research-based information, video clips of parents and experts, breaking news and commentary, newsletters, and recommendations to the best parenting resources on the web. The web site is www.parenting247.org

The site includes video clips of real parents on the challenges they face and the strategies they use to solve problems, as well as parent ratings and comments on feature articles. Topics include childrearing challenges (such as tantrums, toilet training, discipline, and sleeping), "pep talks" (remembering the joys of parenting, sharing success stories), and strategies for fostering a strong family life (including coping with stress, family traditions and rituals, and managing couples relationships).



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Prepared by Nancy Pauly, Extension Educator/Family & Consumer Sciences, Bennett County, South Dakota State University

The **Bright Start UpDate** is a monthly publication for South Dakota parents with young children under the age of five. It is brought to you as part of Governor Rounds Bright Start Program, an early childhood initiative with a number of different programs. **Bright Start UpDate** is published by the Office of the Governor 4,470 copies of this publication were printed at a cost of \$.46 per copy. You are welcome to make copies and distribute as needed. You can reach us by calling **1-800-305-3064** or check our web site at: <http://www.sdbrightstart.com>

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Bright Start Program
Office of the Governor
500 East Capitol
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