

DEFINITION

Negativism is a normal phase most children go through between 18 months and 3 years of age. It begins when children discover they have the power to refuse other people's requests. They respond negatively to many requests, including pleasant ones. In general, they are stubborn rather than cooperative. They delight in refusing a suggestion, whether it's about getting dressed or taking off their clothes, taking a bath or getting out of the bathtub, going to bed or getting up. Unless understood, this behavior can become extremely frustrating for parents. Handled appropriately, it lasts about 1 year.

DEALING WITH A NEGATIVE, STUBBORN TODDLER

Consider the following guidelines for helping you and your child through this phase.

1. **Don't take this normal phase too personally.** By "no" your child means "Do I have to?" or "Do you mean it?" A negative response should not be confused with disrespect. Also, it is not meant to annoy you. This phase is critical to the development of independence and identity. Try to look at it with a sense of humor and amazement.
2. **Don't punish your child for saying "no."** Punish your child for what she does, not what she says. Since saying "no" is not something you control, ignore it. If you argue with your child about saying "no," you will probably prolong this behavior.
3. **Give your child plenty of choices.** This is the best way to increase your child's sense of freedom and control, so that she will become more cooperative. Examples of choices are letting your child choose between a shower or a bath; which book to read; which toys to take into the tub; which fruit to eat for a snack; which clothes or shoes to wear; which breakfast cereal to eat; and which game to play, whether inside or outside, in the park or in the yard. For tasks your child doesn't like, give her a say in the matter by asking, "Do you want to do it slowly or fast?" or "Do you want me to do it, or you?" The more quickly your child gains a feeling that she is a decision maker, the sooner she will become cooperative.
4. **Don't give your child a choice when there is**

none. Safety rules, such as sitting in the car seat, are not open to discussion, although you can explain why the rule must be followed. Going to bed or to day care also is not negotiable. Don't ask a question when there's only one acceptable answer, but direct your child in as kind a way as possible (e.g., "I'm sorry, but now you have to go to bed."). Commands such as "do this or else" should be avoided.

5. **Give transition time when changing activities.** If your child is having fun and must change to another activity, she probably needs a transition time. For example, if your child is playing with trucks as dinnertime approaches, give her a 5-minute warning. A kitchen timer sometimes helps a child accept the change better.
6. **Eliminate excessive rules.** The more rules you have, the less likely it is that your child will be agreeable about following them. Eliminate unnecessary expectations and arguments about wearing socks or cleaning her plate. Help your child feel less controlled by having more positive interactions than negative contacts each day.
7. **Avoid responding to your child's requests with excessive "no's."** Be for your child a model of agreeableness. When your child asks for something and you are unsure, try to say "yes" or postpone your decision by saying "Let me think about it." If you are going to grant a request, do so right away, before your child whines or begs for it. When you must say "no," tell your child that you're sorry and give your child a reason.



CALL OUR OFFICE

During regular hours if

- You or your spouse can't accept your child's need to say "no."
- You or your spouse have trouble controlling your temper.
- Your child has several other discipline problems.
- This approach doesn't bring improvement within 1 month.
- You have other questions or concerns.

The first goal of discipline is to protect your child from danger. Another important goal is to teach your child an understanding of right from wrong. Reasonable limit setting keeps us from raising a "spoiled" child. To teach respect for the rights of others, first teach your child to respect your rights. Begin *external* controls by 6 months of age. Children don't start to develop *internal* controls (self-control) until 3 or 4 years of age. They continue to need external controls, in gradually decreasing amounts, through adolescence.

GUIDELINES FOR SETTING RULES

1. **Begin discipline after 6 months of age.** Young infants don't need any discipline. By the time they crawl, all children need rules for their safety.
2. **Express each misbehavior as a clear and concrete rule.** Examples of clear rules are "Don't push your brother" and "Don't interrupt me on the telephone."
3. **Also state the acceptable or appropriate behavior.** Your child needs to know what is expected of him. Examples are "Play with your brother," "Look at books when I'm on the telephone," or "Walk, don't run."
4. **Ignore unimportant or irrelevant misbehavior.** Avoid constant criticism. Behavior such as swinging the legs, poor table manners, or normal negativism is unimportant during the early years.
5. **Use rules that are fair and attainable.** A child should not be punished for behavior that is part of normal emotional development, such as thumb sucking, fears of being separated from the parents, and toilet-training accidents.
6. **Concentrate on two or three rules initially.** Give highest priority to issues of safety, such as not running into the street, and to the prevention of harm to others. Of next importance is behavior that damages property. Then come all the annoying behavior traits that wear you down (such as tantrums or whining).
7. **Avoid trying to change "no-win" behavior through punishment.** Examples are wetting pants, pulling their own hair, thumb sucking, body rocking, masturbation, not eating enough, not going to sleep, and refusal to complete schoolwork. The first step in resolving such a power struggle is to withdraw from the conflict and stop punishing your child for the misbehavior. Then give your child positive feedback when he behaves as you'd like.
8. **Apply the rules consistently.** After the parents agree on the rules, it may be helpful to write them down and post them.

- From birth to 6 months: no discipline necessary
- From 6 months to 3 years: structuring the home environment, distracting, ignoring, verbal and nonverbal disapproval, physically moving or escorting, and temporary time-out
- From 3 years to 5 years: the preceding techniques (especially temporary time-out) plus natural consequences, restricting places where the child can misbehave, and logical consequences
- From 5 years to adolescence: the preceding techniques plus delay of a privilege, "I" messages, and negotiation via family conferences
- Adolescence: logical consequences, "I" messages, and family conferences about house rules; time-out and manual guidance (see below) can be discontinued

2. **Structure the home environment.** You can change your child's surroundings so that an object or situation that could cause a problem is eliminated. Examples are installing gates, locks, and fences to protect the child.
3. **Distracting your child from misbehavior.** Distracting a young child from temptation by attracting his attention to something else is especially helpful when the child is in someone else's house or a store (e.g., distract with toys, food, or games).
4. **Ignore the misbehavior.** Ignoring helps to stop unacceptable behavior that is harmless—such as tantrums, sulking, whining, quarreling, or interrupting.
5. **Use verbal and nonverbal disapproval.** Mild disapproval is often all that is required to stop a young child's misbehavior. Get close to your child, get eye contact, look stern, and give a brief "no" or "stop."
6. **Physically move or escort ("manual guidance").** Manual guidance means that you move a child from one place to another (e.g., to bed, bath, car, or time-out chair) against his will and help him as much as needed (e.g., carrying).
7. **Use temporary time-out or social isolation.** Time-out is the most effective discipline technique available to parents. Time-out is used to interrupt unacceptable behavior by removing the child from the scene to a boring place, such as a playpen, corner of a room, chair, or bedroom. Time-outs should last about 1 minute per year of age and not more than 5 minutes.
8. **Restrict places where a child can misbehave.** This technique is especially helpful for behavior problems that can't be eliminated. Allowing nose picking and masturbation in your child's room prevents an unnecessary power struggle.
9. **Use natural consequences.** Your child can learn good behavior from the natural laws of the physical world; for example, not dressing properly for the weather means your child will be cold or wet,

DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES (INCLUDING CONSEQUENCES)

1. **Techniques to use for different ages are summarized here.** The techniques mentioned here are further described after this list.

- or breaking a toy means it isn't fun to play with anymore.
10. **Use logical consequences.** These should be logically related to the misbehavior, making your child accountable for his problems and decisions. Many logical consequences are simply the temporary removal of a possession or privilege if your child has misused the object or right.
 11. **Delay a privilege.** Examples of work before play are "After you clean your room, you can go out and play" or "When you finish your homework, you can watch television."
 12. **Use "I" messages.** When your child misbehaves, tell your child how you feel. Say, "I am upset when you do such and such." Your child is more likely to listen to this than a message that starts with "you." "You" messages usually trigger a defensive reaction.
 13. **Negotiate and hold family conferences.** As children become older they need more communication and discussion with their parents about problems. A parent can begin such a conversation by saying, "We need to change these things. What are some ways we could handle this? What do you think would be fair?"
 14. **Temporarily discontinue any physical punishment.** Most out-of-control children are already too aggressive. Physical punishment teaches them that it's acceptable to be aggressive (e.g., hit or hurt someone else) to solve problems.
 15. **Discontinue any yelling.** Yelling and screaming teach your child to yell back; you are thereby legitimizing shouting matches. Your child will respond better in the long run to a pleasant tone of voice and words of diplomacy.
 16. **Don't forget to reward acceptable (desired) behaviors.** Don't take good behavior for granted. Watch for behavior you like, and then praise your child. At these times, move close to your child, look at him, smile, and be affectionate. A parent's attention is the favorite reward of most children.
- punishments are less effective because young children forget why they are being punished. Punishment should occur very soon after the misbehavior and be administered by the adult who witnessed the misdeed.
4. **Make a one-sentence comment about the rule when you punish your child.** Also restate the preferred behavior, but avoid making a long speech.
 5. **Ignore your child's arguments while you are correcting him.** This is the child's way of delaying punishment. Have a discussion with your child at a later, more pleasant time.
 6. **Make the punishment brief.** Take toys out of circulation for no more than 1 or 2 days. Time-outs should last no longer than 1 minute per year of the child's age and 5 minutes maximum.
 7. **Follow the consequence with love and trust.** Welcome your child back into the family circle and do not comment on the previous misbehavior or require an apology for it.
 8. **Direct the punishment against the misbehavior, not the person.** Avoid degrading comments such as "You never do anything right."



CALL OUR OFFICE

During regular hours if

- Your child's misbehavior is dangerous.
- The instances of misbehavior seem too numerous to count.
- Your child is also having behavior problems at school.
- Your child doesn't seem to have many good points.
- Your child seems depressed.
- The parents can't agree on discipline.
- You can't give up physical punishment. (*Note:* Call immediately if you are afraid you might hurt your child.)
- The misbehavior does not improve after 1 month of using this approach.

GUIDELINES FOR GIVING CONSEQUENCES (PUNISHMENTS)

1. **Be unambivalent.** Mean what you say and follow through.
2. **Correct with love.** Talk to your child the way you want people to talk to you. Avoid yelling or using a disrespectful tone of voice. Correct your child in a kind way. Sometimes begin your correction with "I'm sorry I can't let you . . ."
3. **Apply the consequence immediately.** Delayed

RECOMMENDED READING

- Edward R. Christophersen: *Little People*. Westport Publishers, Kansas City, Mo., 1988.
- Don Dinkmeyer and Gary D. McKay: *Parenting Young Children*. American Guidance Service, Circle Pines, Minn., 1990.
- Michael Popkin: *Active Parenting*. Harper and Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1987.
- Jerry Wyckoff and Barbara C. Unell: *Discipline Without Spanking or Shouting*. Meadowbrook, Dcephaven, Minn., 1984.

DEFINITION

Time-out consists of immediately isolating a child in a boring place for a few minutes whenever she misbehaves. Time-out is also called quiet time, thinking time, or cooling-off time. Time-out has the advantage of providing a cooling-off period to allow both child and parent to calm down and regain control of their emotions.

Used repeatedly and correctly, the time-out technique can change almost any childhood behavior. Time-out is the most effective consequence for toddlers and preschoolers who misbehave—much better than threatening, shouting, or spanking. Every parent needs to know how to give time-out.

Time-out is most useful for aggressive, harmful, or disruptive behavior that cannot be ignored. Time-out is unnecessary for most temper tantrums. Time-out is not needed until a child is at least 8 months old and beginning to crawl. Time-out is rarely needed for children younger than 18 months because they usually respond to verbal disapproval. The peak ages for using time-out are 2 to 4 years. During these years children respond to action much better than to words.

CHOOSING A PLACE FOR TIME-OUT

- **A time-out chair.** When a chair is designated for time-out, it gives time-out a destination. The chair should be in a boring location, facing a blank wall or a corner. Don't allow your child to take anything with her to time-out, such as a toy, pacifier, security blanket, or pet. The child shouldn't be able to see television or other people from the location. A good chair is a heavy one with side arms. Placed in a corner, such a chair surrounds the child with boundaries, leaves a small space for the legs, and reduces thoughts of escape. Alternatives to chairs are standing in a particular corner, sitting on a particular spot on the floor, or being in a playpen (if the child is not old enough to climb out of it).

Usually the chair is placed in an adjacent hallway or room. Some children less than 2 years old have separation fears and need the time-out chair (or playpen) to be in the same room as the parent. When you are in the same room as your child, carefully avoid making eye contact with the child.

- **A time-out room.** Children who refuse to stay in a time-out chair need to be sent to a time-out room. Confinement to a room is easier to enforce. The room should be one that is safe for the child and contains no valuables. The child's bedroom is often the most convenient and safe place for time-out. Although toys are available in the bedroom, the child does not initially play with them because he or she is upset about being excluded from mainstream activities. Forbid turning on the radio, stereo, or video games during time-out in the bedroom. Avoid any room that is dark or scary (such as some basements), contains hot water (bathrooms), or has filing

cabinets or bookshelves that could be pulled down on the child.

- **Time-out away from home.** Time-out can be effectively used in any setting. In a supermarket, younger children can be put back in the grocery cart and older children may need to stand in a corner. In shopping malls, children can take their time-out sitting on a bench or in a restroom. Sometimes a child needs to be taken to the car and made to sit on the floor of the back seat for the required minutes. If the child is outdoors and misbehaves, you can ask her to stand facing a tree.

HOW TO ADMINISTER TIME-OUT

- **Deciding the length of time-out.** Time-out should be short enough to allow your child to have many chances to go back to the original situation and learn the acceptable behavior. A good rule of thumb is 1 minute per year of age (with a maximum of 5 minutes). After age 6, most children can be told they are in time-out "until you can behave," allowing them to choose how long they stay there. If the problem behavior recurs, the next time-out should last the recommended time for their age.

Setting a portable kitchen timer for the required number of minutes is helpful. The best type ticks continuously and rings when the time is up. A timer can stop a child from asking the parents when he or she can come out.

- **Sending your child to time-out.** Older children will usually go to time-out on their own. Younger children often need to be led there by their wrist, or in some cases carried there protesting. If your child doesn't go to time-out within 5 seconds, take her there. Tell your child what she did wrong in one sentence (such as, "No hitting"). If possible, also clarify the preferred behavior (such as, "Be kind to George"). These brief comments give your child something to think about during the time-out.
- **Requiring quiet behavior in time-out.** The minimum requirement for time-out completion is that your child does not leave the chair or time-out place until the time-out is over. If your child leaves ahead of time, reset the timer.

Some parents do not consider a time-out to be completed unless the child has been quiet for the entire time. However, until 4 years of age, many children are unwilling or unable to stay quiet. Ignore tantrums in time-out, just as you should ignore tantrums outside of time-out. After age 4, quiet time is preferred but not required. You can tell your child, "Time-out is supposed to be for thinking, and to think you've got to be quiet. If you yell or fuss, the time will start over."

- **Dealing with room damage.** If your child makes a mess in his room (e.g., empties clothing out of drawers or takes the bed apart), she must clean it up before she is released from time-out. Toys that were misused can be packed away. Some damage

can be prevented by removing any scissors or crayons from the room before the time-out begins.

- **Releasing your child from time-out.** To be released, your child must have performed a successful time-out. This means she stayed in time-out for the required number of minutes. Your child can leave time-out when the timer rings. If you don't have a timer, she can leave when you tell her, "Time-out is over. You can get up now." Many parents of children over 4 years old require their children to be quiet at the end of time-out. If a child is still noisy when the timer rings, it can be reset for 1 minute.

BACK-UP PLANS

- **The younger child who refuses to stay in time-out.** In general, if a child escapes from time-out (gets up from the chair or spot), you should quickly take the child back to time-out and reset the timer. This approach works for most children. If a child refuses to stay in time-out, the parent should take action rather than arguing or scolding the child. You may temporarily need to hold a strong-willed, 2- or 3-year-old child in time-out. Holding your child in time-out teaches your child that you mean what you say and that she must obey you. Place your child in the time-out chair and hold her by the shoulders from behind. Tell your child that you will stop holding her when she stops trying to escape. Then avoid eye contact and any more talking. Pretend that you don't mind doing this and are thinking of something else or listening to music. Your child will probably stop trying to escape after a week of this approach.

A last resort for young children who continue to resist sitting in a chair is putting them in the bedroom with a gate blocking the door. Occasionally a parent with carpentry skills can install a half-door. If you cannot devise a barricade, then you can close the door. You can hold the door closed for the 3 to 5 minutes it takes to complete the time-out period. If you don't want to hold the door, you can put a

latch on the door that allows it to be temporarily locked. Most children need their door closed only two or three times.

- **The older child who refuses to stay in time-out.** An older child can be defined in this context as one who is too strong for the parent to hold in a time-out chair. In general, any child older than 5 years who does not take time-out quickly should be considered a refuser. In such cases the discipline should escalate to a consequence that matters to the child. First, you can make the time-out longer, adding 1 extra minute for each minute of delay. Second, if 5 minutes pass without your child going to time-out, your child can be grounded. "Grounded" is defined as no television, radio, stereo, video games, toys, telephone access, outside play, snacks, or visits with friends. After grounding your child, walk away and no longer talk to her. Your child becomes "ungrounded" only after she takes her regular time-out plus the 5 minutes of penalty time. Until then, her day is very boring. If your child refuses the conditions of grounding, she can be sent to bed 15 minutes earlier for each time she breaks the grounding requirements. The child whose behavior doesn't improve with this approach usually needs to be evaluated by a mental health professional.

PRACTICING TIME-OUT WITH YOUR CHILD

If you have not used time-out before, go over it with your child before you start using it. Tell your child it will replace spanking, yelling, and other forms of discipline. Review the kinds of negative behavior that will lead to placement in time-out. Also review the positive behavior that you would prefer. Then pretend with your child that he has broken one of the rules. Take him through the steps of time-out so he will understand your directions when you send him to time-out in the future. Also teach this technique to your babysitter.

DEFINITION

Some parents become discouraged with time-out. Their child repeats misbehavior immediately after release from time-out. Some children refuse to go to time-out or won't stay there. None of these examples means that time-out should be abandoned. It remains the best discipline technique for 2- to 5-year-old children. If you use time-out repeatedly, consistently, and correctly, your child will eventually improve. The following recommendations may help you fine-tune how you are using time-out.

- 1. Give your child more physical affection each day.** Be sure your child receives two time-ins for every time-out each day. A time-in is a positive, close, brief human interaction. Try to restore the positive side of your relationship with your child. Catch him being good. Try to hold your child for 1 or 2 minutes every 15 minutes when he is not in time-out or misbehaving. Play with your child more. Children who feel neglected or overly criticized don't want to please their parents.
- 2. Use time-out every time your child engages in the behavior you are trying to change (target behavior).** Use time-out more frequently. For the first 2 or 3 days you may need to use time-outs 20 or more times a day to gain a defiant toddler's attention. Brief time-outs are harmless and there is no upper limit on how many times you can use them as long as you offset them with positive interactions.
- 3. Use time-out. Don't just threaten to use time-out.** For aggressive behaviors, give no warnings; just put your child in time-out. Better yet, intercept your child when you see him starting to raise his arm or clench his fist and before he makes others cry. For other behaviors, remind your child of the rule, count to three, and if he doesn't stop immediately, put him in time-out.
- 4. Put your child in time-out earlier.** Put your child in time-out before his behavior worsens. Your child is more likely to accept a time-out calmly if he's put in early rather than if he's put in late (and screaming). Also, putting him in early means you will be more in control of your emotions. Try to put your child in time-out before you become angry. If you are still yelling when you put your child in time-out, it will not work.
- 5. Put your child in time-out quickly.** Don't talk about it first. When your child breaks a rule, have him in time-out within 10 seconds.
- 6. Don't talk to your child during time-out.** Don't answer his questions or complaints. Don't try to lecture your child.
- 7. Ignore tantrums in time-out.** Don't insist on quietness during time-out because it makes it harder to finish the time-out.
- 8. Return your child to time-out if he escapes.** Have a back-up plan for further discipline, for example, holding a young child in the time-out chair or grounding an older child.
- 9. Consider increasing the length of time-out.** If your child is over 3 years old and needs to be placed in time-out more than 10 times each day, a longer time-out may be needed to get his attention. A preschooler with a strong-willed temperament may temporarily need a time-out that lasts 2 or 3 minutes per year of his age. Children younger than 3 years should receive only brief time-outs (1 minute per year of age) because it is difficult for them to stay in time-out any longer.
- 10. Make the time-out place more boring.** If your child doesn't seem to mind the time-outs, eliminate sources of entertainment. Move the time-out chair to a more boring location. If you use your child's bedroom, close the blinds or shades. Temporarily remove all toys and games from the bedroom and store them elsewhere.
- 11. Use a portable timer for keeping track of the time.** Your child is more likely to obey a timer than to obey you.
- 12. Be kinder in your delivery of time-out.** This will help reduce your child's anger. Say you're sorry he needs a time-out, but be firm about it. Try to handle your child gently when you take him to time-out.
- 13. Praise your child for taking a good time-out.** Forgive your child completely when you release him from time-out. Don't give lectures or ask for an apology. Give your child a clean slate and don't tell his father or relatives how many time-outs he needed that day.
- 14. Don't punish your child for the normal expression of anger.** If he is saying angry things or looking angry, don't be too alarmed. Don't try to control your child too much.
- 15. Give your child more choices about how he takes his time-out.** Ask, "Do you want to take a time-out by yourself or do you want me to hold you in your chair? It doesn't matter to me." (For older children, the choice can be, "By yourself or do you want to be grounded?")
- 16. Give your child the option of coming out of time-out as soon as he is under control rather than taking the specified number of minutes.** Some children feel overly controlled.
- 17. Use a variety of consequences for misbehavior.** Ignore harmless behaviors. Also use distraction for bad habits. Use logical consequences—such as removal of toys, other possessions, or privileges—for some misbehavior.
- 18. Clarify with your child what you want him to do.** Also clarify the house rules. Review this at a time when your child is in a good mood. This will help him be more successful.
- 19. Use time-out with siblings when appropriate.** If siblings touch the timer or tease the child in time-out, they should also be placed in time-out.
- 20. Teach all caretakers to use time-out correctly and consistently.**

PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT (SPANKING)

The place of physical punishment in discipline is controversial. There are several good arguments for not using corporal punishment at all. We can raise children to be agreeable, responsible, productive adults without ever spanking them. All children need discipline on hundreds of occasions, but there are alternatives to spanking, such as redirecting (distracting) the child, taking away a privilege, or sending a child to her room. Spanking carries the risk of triggering the unrelated pent-up anger that many adults carry inside them. This anger could escalate the well-intentioned spanking and end in child abuse. Parents who turn to spanking as a last resort for "breaking their child's will" may find that they have underestimated their child's determination. In addition, physical punishment worsens aggressive behavior because it teaches a child to lash out when she is angry. Other forms of discipline can be more constructive, leaving a child with some sense of guilt and contributing to the formation of a conscience.

SAFE SPANKING

We would prefer that you not use spanking to discipline your children.

If you occasionally feel the need to spank your child, follow these guidelines for safe physical punishment:

- Always use other techniques (such as time-out) first. Use spanking only for behaviors that are dangerous or deliberately defiant of your instructions.
- Hit only with an open hand. Hit through clothing. It is difficult to judge how hard you are hitting your child if you hit her with an object other than your hand. Paddles and belts may cause bruises.
- Spanking should never leave more than temporary redness of the skin.
- Hit only on the buttocks, legs, or hands. Hitting a child on the face is demeaning as well as dangerous; in fact, slapping the face is inappropriate at any age. Your child could suddenly turn her head and the slap could damage her vision or hearing.
- Give only one swat; that is enough to change behavior. Hitting your child more than once may relieve your anger but will probably not teach your child anything additional.
- Don't spank children less than 18 months of age. Spanking is absolutely inappropriate before your child has learned to walk. Spanking should be unnecessary after the age of 6 years because you can use negotiation and discussion to resolve most differences with school-age children.
- Avoid shaking children, because of the serious risk of causing blood clots on the brain (subdural hematomas).
- Don't use physical punishment more than once each day. The more your child is spanked, the less effect it will have.
- Learn alternatives to physical discipline. Isolating a child in a corner or bedroom for a time-out is much more civilized and effective. Learn how to use other forms of discipline. Spanking should never be the main form of discipline a child receives.
- Never spank your child when you are out of control, scared, or drinking. A few parents can't stop hitting their child once they start. They can't control their rage and need help for themselves, such as from Parents Anonymous groups. They must learn to walk away from their children and never use physical punishment.
- Don't use physical punishment for aggressive misbehavior, such as biting, hitting, or kicking. Physical punishment under such circumstances teaches a child that it is all right for a bigger person to strike a smaller person. Aggressive children need to be taught restraint and self-control. They respond best to time-outs, which give them an opportunity to think about the pain they have caused. If you are not using time-outs, read more on how to make them work for you.
- Don't allow babysitters, child-care staff, and teachers to spank your children.

- that is important (such as that he can't pull on your earrings).
4. **Do not allow tantrums to work.** Children throw temper tantrums to get your attention, to wear you down, to change your mind, and to get their way. The crying is to change your "no" vote to a "yes" vote. Tantrums may include whining, complaining, crying, breath holding, pounding the floor, shouting, or slamming a door. As long as your child stays in one place and is not too disruptive or in a position to harm himself, you can leave him alone at these times. By all means, don't give in to tantrums.
 5. **Don't overlook discipline during quality time.** If you are working parents, you will want to spend part of each evening with your child. This special time spent with your child needs to be enjoyable but also reality based. Don't ease up on the rules. If your child misbehaves, remind him of the existing limits. Even during fun activities, you occasionally need to be the parent.
 6. **Don't start democratic child rearing until your child is 4 or 5 years old.** Don't give away your power as a parent. At 2 years of age, be careful not to talk too much with your toddler about the rules. Toddlers don't play by the rules. By 4 or 5 years of age, you can begin to reason with your child about discipline issues, but he still lacks the judgment necessary to make the rules. During the elementary school years, show a willingness to discuss the rules. By 14 to 16 years old, an adolescent can be negotiated with as an adult. At that time you can ask for his input about what rules or consequences would be fair.

The more democratic the parents are during the first 2 or 3 years, the more demanding the children tend to become. Generally, young children do not know what to do with power. Left to their own devices, they usually spoil themselves. If they are testing everything at age 3, it is abnormal. If you have given away your power, take it back (i.e., set new limits and enforce them). You don't have to explain the reason for every rule. Sometimes the only reason needed is just because "I said so."
 7. **Teach your child to get herself unbored.** Your job is to provide toys, books, and art supplies. Your child's job is to play with them. Assuming you talk and play with your child several hours each day, you do not need to become your child's constant playmate, nor do you need to constantly provide him with an outside friend. When you're busy, expect your child to amuse himself. Even 1-year-olds can keep themselves occupied for 15-minute blocks of time. By 3 years, most children can entertain themselves half the time. Sending your child outside to "find something to do" is doing him a favor. Much good creative play, thinking, and daydreaming come out of solving boredom. If you can't seem to resign as social director, enroll your child in a preschool.
 8. **Teach your child to wait.** Waiting helps children better deal with frustration. All jobs in the adult world carry some degree of frustration. Delaying immediate gratification is a trait your child must gradually learn and it takes practice. Don't feel guilty if you have to make your child wait a few minutes now and then (e.g., don't allow your child to interrupt your conversations with others). Waiting doesn't hurt him as long as he doesn't become overwhelmed or unglued by waiting. His perseverance and emotional fitness will be enhanced.
 9. **Don't rescue your child from normal life challenges.** Changes such as moving and starting school are normal life stressors. These are opportunities for learning and problem solving. Always be available and supportive, but don't help your child if he can handle it for himself. Overall, make your child's life as realistic as he can tolerate for his age, rather than going out of your way to make it as pleasant as possible. His coping skills and self-confidence will benefit from this practice.
 10. **Don't overpraise your child.** Children need praise, but it can be overdone. Praise your child for good behavior and following the rules. Encourage him to try new things and work on difficult tasks, but teach him to do things for his own reasons too. Self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment come from doing and completing things that he is proud of. Praising your child while he is in the process of doing something may make him stop at each step and want more praise. Avoid the tendency (common with the first-born child) to overpraise your child's normal development.
 11. **Teach your child to respect parents' rights and time together.** The needs of your children for love, food, clothing, safety, and security obviously come first. However, your needs should come next. Your children's wants (e.g., for play) and whims (e.g., for an extra bedtime story) should come after your needs are met and as time is available on that day. This is especially important for working parents where family time is limited. It is both the quality and quantity of time that you spend with your children that are important. Quality time is time that is enjoyable, interactive, and focused on your child. Children need some quality time with their parents every day. Spending every free moment of every evening and weekend with your child is not good for your child or your marriage. You need a balance to preserve your mental health. Scheduled nights out with your mate will not only nurture your marriage but also help you to return to parenting with more to give. Your child needs to learn to trust other adults and that he can survive separations from you. If your child isn't taught to respect your rights, he may not respect the rights of other adults.

DEFINITION

A spoiled child is undisciplined, manipulative, and unpleasant to be with much of the time. He has many of the following behaviors by age 2 or 3:

- Doesn't follow rules or cooperate with suggestions
- Doesn't respond to "no," "stop," or other commands
- Protests everything
- Doesn't know difference between his needs and wants
- Insists on having his own way
- Makes unfair or excessive demands on others
- Doesn't respect other people's rights
- Tries to control other people
- Has a low frustration tolerance
- Frequently whines or throws tantrums
- Constantly complains about being bored

Causes

The main cause of spoiled children is a lenient, permissive parent who doesn't set limits and gives in to tantrums and whining. If the parent gives the child too much power, he will become more self-centered. Such parents also rescue the child from normal frustrations (such as waiting and sharing). Occasionally, the child of working parents is left with a nanny or babysitter who spoils the child by providing constant entertainment and giving in to unrealistic demands.

The reason some parents are overly lenient is that they confuse the child's needs (e.g., for demand feeding) with the child's wants or whims (e.g., for demand play). They do not want to hurt their child's feelings or to cause any crying. In the process, they may take the short-term solution of doing whatever prevents crying, which in the long run causes more crying. The child's ability to deliberately cry and fuss to get something usually doesn't begin before 5 or 6 months of age. There may be a small epidemic of spoiling in the United States because some working parents come home feeling guilty about not having enough total time for their children and so spend their free time together trying to avoid any friction or limit setting.

Confusion exists about the differences between giving attention to children and spoiling children. In general, attention is good for children. Indeed, it is essential for normal development. Attention can become harmful if it is excessive, given at the wrong time, or always given immediately. Attention from you is excessive if it interferes with your child's learning to do things for himself and deal with life's frustrations. An example of giving attention at the wrong time is when you are busy and your child is demanding attention. Another wrong time is when a child has just misbehaved and needs to be ignored.

Expected Outcome

Without changes in child rearing, spoiled children run into trouble by school age. Other children do not

like them because they are too bossy and selfish. Adults do not like them because they are rude and make excessive demands on them. Eventually they become hard for even the parent to love because of their behaviors. As a reaction to not getting along well with other children and adults, spoiled children eventually become unhappy. Spoiled children may show reduced motivation and perseverance in school-work. Because of poor self-control they may become involved with adolescent risk-taking behaviors, such as drug abuse. Overall, spoiling a child prepares that child poorly for life in the real world.

HOW TO PREVENT A SPOILED CHILD

1. **Provide age-appropriate limits or rules for your child.** Parents have the right and responsibility to take charge and make rules. Adults must keep their child's environment safe. Age-appropriate discipline must begin by the age of crawling. Saying "no" occasionally is good for children. Children need external controls until they develop self-control and self-discipline. Your child will still love you after you say "no." If your children like you all the time, you are not being a good parent.
2. **Require cooperation with your important rules.** It is important that your child be in the habit of responding properly to your directions long before entering school. Important rules include staying in the car seat, not hitting other children, being ready to leave on time in the morning, going to bed, and so forth. These adult decisions are not open to negotiation. Do not give your child a choice when there is none.
Child decisions, however, involve such things as which cereal to eat, book to read, toys to take into the tub, and clothes to wear. Make sure that your child understands the difference between areas in which he has choices (control) and your rules. Try to keep your important rules to no more than 10 or 12 items and be willing to go to the mat about these. Also, be sure that all adult caretakers consistently enforce these rules.
3. **Expect your child to cry.** Distinguish between needs and wants. Needs include crying from pain, hunger, or fear. In these cases, respond immediately. Other crying is harmless. Crying usually relates to your child's wants or whims. Crying is a normal response to change or frustration. When the crying is part of a tantrum, ignore it. Don't punish him for crying, tell him he's a crybaby, or tell him he shouldn't cry. Although not denying your child his feelings, don't be moved by his crying. To compensate for the extra crying your child does during a time when you are tightening up on the rules, provide extra cuddling and enjoyable activities at a time when he is not crying or having a tantrum. There are times when it is necessary to temporarily withhold attention and comforting to help your child learn something

DEFINITION

A temper tantrum is an immature way of expressing anger. No matter how calm and gentle a parent you are, your child will probably throw some tantrums. Try to teach your child that temper tantrums don't work and that you don't change your mind because of them. By 3 years of age, you can begin to teach your child to verbalize his feelings ("You feel angry because . . ."). We need to teach children that anger is normal but that it must be channeled appropriately. By school age, temper tantrums should be rare. During adolescence, tantrums reappear, but your teenager can be reminded that blowing up creates a bad impression and that counting to 10 can help her regain control.

RESPONSES TO TEMPER TANTRUMS

Overall, praise your child when she controls her temper, verbally expresses her anger, and is cooperative. Be a good model by staying calm and not screaming or having adult tantrums. Try using the following responses to the different types of temper tantrums.

1. Support and help children having frustration- or fatigue-related tantrums. Children often have temper tantrums when they are frustrated with themselves. They may be frustrated because they can't put something together. Young children may be frustrated because their parents don't understand their speech. Older children may be frustrated with their inability to do their homework.

At these times your child needs encouragement and a parent who listens. Put an arm around her and say something brief that shows understanding such as "I know it's hard, but you'll get better at it. Is there something I can do to help you?" Also give praise for not giving up. Some of these tantrums can be prevented by steering your child away from tasks that she can't do well.

Children tend to have more temper tantrums when they are tired (e.g., when they've missed a nap) because they are less able to cope with frustrating situations. At these times put your child to bed. Hunger can contribute to temper tantrums. If you suspect this, give your child a snack. Temper tantrums also increase during sickness.

2. Ignore attention-seeking or demanding-type tantrums. Young children may throw temper tantrums to get their way. They may want to go with you rather than be left with the babysitter, want candy, want to empty a desk drawer, or want to go outside in bad weather. They don't accept rules for their safety. Tantrums for attention may include whining, crying, pounding the floor or wall, slamming a door, or breath holding. As long as your child stays in one place and is not too disruptive, you can leave her alone.

If you recognize that a certain event is going to push your child over the edge, try to shift her

attention to something else. However, don't give in to your child's demands. During the temper tantrum, if her behavior is harmless, ignore it completely. Once a tantrum has started, it rarely can be stopped.

Move away, even to a different room; then your child no longer has an audience. Don't try to reason with your child—it will only make the tantrum worse. Simply state, "I can see you're very angry. I'll leave you alone until you cool off. Let me know if you want to talk." Let your child regain control. After the tantrum, be friendly and try to return things to normal. You can prevent some of these tantrums by saying "no" less often.

3. Physically move children having refusal-type tantrums. If your child refuses something unimportant (such as a snack or lying down in bed), let it go before a tantrum begins. However, if your child must do something important, such as go to bed or to day care, she should not be able to avoid it by having a tantrum. Some of these tantrums can be prevented by giving your child a 5-minute warning instead of asking her suddenly to stop what she is doing. Once a tantrum has begun, let your child have the tantrum for 2 or 3 minutes. Try to put her displeasure into words: "You want to play some more, but it's bedtime." Then take her to the intended destination (e.g., the bed), helping her as much as is needed (including carrying).

4. Use time-outs for disruptive-type tantrums. Some temper tantrums are too disruptive for parents to ignore. On such occasions send or take your child to her room for 2 to 5 minutes. Examples of disruptive behavior include

- Clinging to you or following you around during the tantrum
- Hitting you
- Screaming or yelling for such a long time that it gets on your nerves
- Having a temper tantrum in a public place such as a restaurant or church (Move your child to another place for her time-out. The rights of other people need to be protected.)
- Throwing something or damaging property during a temper tantrum

5. Hold children having harmful or rage-type tantrums. If your child is totally out of control and screaming wildly, consider holding her. Her loss of control probably scares her. Also hold your child when she is having tantrums that carry a danger of self-injury (such as if she is violently throwing herself backward).

Take your child in your arms, tell her you know she is angry, and offer her your sense of control. Hold her until you feel her body start to relax. This usually takes 1 to 3 minutes. Then let her go. This comforting response is rarely needed after 3 years of age.

DEFINITION

Biting another child is one of the more unacceptable aggressive behaviors in our society. The parent of the child who has been bitten is usually very upset and worried about the risk of infection. If it happens in a child-care setting, the other parents want the biter to be expelled. If it happens in another's home, the child is often told never to return. Adults tend to forget that some biting behavior in a group of toddlers is to be expected. Most children first learn to bite by doing it to their parents in a playful manner. It is important to try to interrupt this primitive behavior at this early stage.

Causes

Biting is usually a chance discovery around 1 year of age, at a time when teething and mouthing are normal behaviors. It often continues because the parents initially think it is cute and the child considers it a type of game to get attention. Later, children may use it when they are frustrated and want something from another child. At this age for children with minimal verbal skills, biting becomes a primitive form of communication. Only after 2 or 3 years of age can it become a deliberate way to express anger and intimidate others.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEALING WITH BITING

1. **Establish a rule.** "We never bite people." Give your child a reason for the rule, namely, that biting hurts. Other reasons (that won't interest him at his age) are that bites can lead to infection or scarring.
2. **Suggest a safe alternative behavior.** Tell your child if he wants something he should come to you and ask for help or point to it, rather than bite the person who has it. If he bites when he is angry, tell him "If you are mad, come to me and tell me." If your child is at the chewing everything stage (usually less than 18 months), help him choose a toy that he can bite rather than telling him that he cannot bite anything. A firm toy or teething ring will do. Encourage him to carry his "chewy" with him for a few days.
3. **Interrupt biting with a sharp "no."** Be sure to use an unfriendly voice and look your child straight in the eye. Try to interrupt him when he looks like he might bite somebody, before he actually does it, leaving the victim hurt and screaming. Extra close supervision may be necessary until the biting has stopped.
4. **Give your child a time-out for biting others.** Send him to a boring place for approximately 1

minute per year of age. If he attempts to bite you while you are holding him, say "no," always put him down immediately, and walk away (a form of time-out). If time-out does not work, take away a favorite toy for the remainder of the day.

5. **Never bite your child for biting someone else.** Biting back will make your child upset that you hurt him and may teach him that it is okay to bite if you are bigger. Also do not wash his mouth out with soap, pinch his cheek, or slap his mouth. In fact, if your child tends to be aggressive, avoid physical punishment in general (e.g., spanking). Also eliminate "love bites," since your child will be unable to distinguish them from painful biting.
6. **Praise your child for not biting.** The most important time to praise him is when he is in situations or with particular children where he used to frequently bite. Initially give him a kind reminder just before these high-risk visits. Then praise him afterward for good behavior.
7. **Prevention.** The best time to stop a biting behavior from becoming a habit is when it first starts. Be sure that no one laughs when he bites and that no one treats it like a game. (This includes older siblings.) Also never "give in" to your child's demands because of biting. Since biting commonly occurs in child-care settings, be sure the providers understand your approach and are willing to apply it.
8. **Biting in child-care settings.** Biting behavior is common in child-care settings. The preceding approach should be used by day care staff to eliminate the behavior in their setting. Provide careful supervision and quickly place the biting child in time-out, even when he acts like he might bite someone. In general, biting is harmless since most bites by younger children don't puncture the skin. Calling the parent at work is pointless since the problem should be dealt with immediately by whoever witnesses it.



CALL OUR OFFICE

IMMEDIATELY if

- Biting causes a puncture or a cut that completely breaks the skin.

During regular hours if

- Biting behavior lasts for more than 4 weeks with this approach.
- Your child bites or hurts himself.
- Your child has several other behavior problems.
- You have other questions or concerns.

DEFINITION

Some aggressive behaviors that children experiment with are hitting, slapping, pinching, scratching, poking, hair pulling, biting, kicking, shoving, and knocking down. Since these behaviors are unacceptable in the adult world and potentially harmful, they should not be allowed between children.

Causes

Many children fight when they are angry. They do not like something another child did and they retaliate. They want something another child has and see force as the easiest way to get it. Most children try aggressive behaviors because they see this behavior in playmates or on television. If children get their way through hitting, it will only become more frequent. Occasionally children become excessively aggressive because they receive lots of spankings at home or witness spouse or sibling abuse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Establish a rule.** "Do not hit because it hurts. We do not hurt people."
2. **For aggressive behavior give your child a brief time-out in a boring place.** Being in time-out helps a child learn to cool down (rather than blow up) when she is angry. When it looks as if your child might hurt someone, intervene immediately. Stop the behavior at the early threatening or shoving stage. Do not wait until the victim is hurt or screams. If a time-out does not seem to be effective, also take away your child's favorite toy or television time for the remainder of the day.
3. **Suggest acceptable ways to express anger.** In the long run you want your child to be able to verbalize her anger in a calm but assertive way. Encourage your child to come to you when she's angry and talk about it until she feels better. A second option is to teach your child to stop and count to 10 before doing anything about her anger. A third option is to help her learn to walk away from a bad situation. Giving your child a time-out is one way of teaching her to walk away from anger. Younger children (less than 3 or 4 years old) with limited expressive language need time to develop these skills. When they are in time-out, don't be surprised if they pout, mutter to themselves, yell in their room, or pound on their door. If these physical outlets for anger are blocked, a more aggressive outburst may occur. As long as the behavior is not destructive, ignore it. Teaching your child how to control anger provides her with a valuable resource.
4. **Verbalize your child's feelings for her.** If your child can't talk about her anger, put it into words

for her: "I know that you feel angry." It is unrealistic to expect your child not to feel anger. You may need to make an understanding statement such as "You wish you could punch your brother, but we cannot hurt other people."

5. **Teach your child acceptable ways to get what she wants.** Teach her how to negotiate (ask for) what she wants, rather than taking it. Teach her how to take turns or how to trade one of her toys to gain use of another child's toy.
6. **Give special attention to the victim.** After putting your child in time-out, pick up the child who has been injured and give him extra sympathy and attention. It is especially helpful if you can rescue the victim before he is hurt. In your child's mind the attention she wanted is now being given to the other person and that should give her some "food for thought." If fighting is a pattern with certain playmates or siblings, be sure the "victim" isn't "setting up" the "perpetrator" to gain attention.
7. **Never hit your child for hitting someone else.** Hitting your child only teaches her that it is fine to hit if you are bigger. If your child tends to be aggressive it's critical to eliminate all physical punishment (such as spanking). You can use many other consequences (such as time-out) to teach your child right from wrong.
8. **Praise your child for friendly behavior.** Praise her for being nice to people, playing with age mates in a friendly way, sharing things, and helping other children. Remind your child that people like to be treated kindly, not hurt. Some children respond to a system of receiving a treat or a star on a chart for each day they go without any "hitting" type of behavior.
9. **Prevention.** Set a good example. Show self-control and verbal problem solving. Avoid playmates who often tease or other situations in which your child frequently gets into fights. When your child becomes tired or hungry, leave the play setting until these needs are met.



CALL OUR OFFICE

During regular hours if

- The aggressive behavior is very frequent.
- Your child has seriously hurt another child.
- Your child can't keep friends.
- Your child seems very angry.
- The misbehavior lasts more than 4 weeks with this approach.
- You have other questions or concerns.

DEFINITION

Some aggressive behaviors that children experiment with are hitting, slapping, pinching, scratching, poking, hair pulling, biting, kicking, shoving, and knocking down. Since these behaviors are unacceptable in the adult world and potentially harmful, they should not be allowed between children.

Causes

Many children fight when they are angry. They do not like something another child did and they retaliate. They want something another child has and see force as the easiest way to get it. Most children try aggressive behaviors because they see this behavior in playmates or on television. If children get their way through hitting, it will only become more frequent. Occasionally children become excessively aggressive because they receive lots of spankings at home or witness spouse or sibling abuse.

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8. **Praise your child for friendly behavior.** Praise her for being nice to people, playing with age mates in a friendly way, sharing things, and helping other children. Remind your child that people like to be treated kindly, not hurt. Some children respond to a system of receiving a treat or a star on a chart for each day they go without any "hitting" type of behavior.
9. **Prevention.** Set a good example. Show self-control and verbal problem solving. Avoid playmates who often tease or other situations in which your child frequently gets into fights. When your child becomes tired or hungry, leave the play setting until these needs are met.



CALL OUR OFFICE

During regular hours if

- The aggressive behavior is very frequent.
- Your child has seriously hurt another child.
- Your child can't keep friends.
- Your child seems very angry.
- The misbehavior lasts more than 4 weeks with this approach.
- You have other questions or concerns.

SIBLINGS' ARGUMENTS AND QUARRELS

DEFINITION

Most siblings argue and bicker occasionally. They fight over possessions, space on the sofa, time in the bathroom, the last donut, and so on. Quarreling is an inevitable part of sibling relationships. On some days, brothers and sisters are rivals and competitors, but on most days they are friends and companions. The positive side of this sibling rivalry is that it gives children a chance to learn to give and take, share, and stand up for their rights.

COPING WITH SIBLING QUARRELS

1. **Encourage children to settle their own disagreements.** Have a rule: "Settle your own arguments but no hitting, property damage, or name calling." The more you intervene, the more you will be called on to intervene. When possible, stay out of disagreements as long as they remain verbal. Children can't go through life having a referee to resolve their differences. They need to learn how to negotiate with people and find the common ground. Arguing with siblings and peers provides this experience. The only exception is if they are both under 2 or 3 years of age and one of them is aggressive. At this age they do not understand the potential dangers of fighting and they need to be supervised more closely.
2. **If they come to you, try to stay out of the middle.** Try to keep your children from bringing their argument to you for an opinion. Remind them again to settle it themselves. If you do become involved, help them clarify what they are arguing about. To achieve this, try to teach them to listen better. Encourage each child to describe the problem for 1 or 2 minutes without being interrupted by the other. If they still don't understand the issue, reframe it for them. Unless there's an obvious culprit, do not try to decide who is to blame, who started it, or who is right. Interrogation in this area can be counterproductive because it may cause them to exaggerate or lie. Also do not impose a solution. Since it's their problem, let them find their own solution whenever possible.
3. **If an argument becomes too loud, do something about it.** If the arguing becomes annoying or interferes with your ability to think, go to your children and tell them "I do not want to hear your arguing. Please settle your differences quietly or find another place to argue." If they do not change at that point, send them to the basement, outdoors, or to time-out in separate rooms. If they are arguing over an object such as the television, take it away. If they are arguing over who gets to sit in the front seat of the car, have them both sit in the back seat. If they are arguing about going somewhere, cancel the trip for both.
4. **Do not permit hitting, breaking things, or name calling.** Under these circumstances punish both of your children. If they are hurting each other, send them both to time-out in separate places no matter who you see doing the hitting when you come on the scene. That may not be the person who took the first swing or provoked it. Name calling or teasing hurts people's feelings and should never be allowed (e.g., calling a child who is not good in school "dummy"; one who is not athletic "clumsy"; or one who wets the bed "smelly"). Derogatory comments such as these can be harmful to self-esteem and should not be permitted.
5. **Stop any arguing that occurs in public places.** If you are in a shopping mall, restaurant, or movie theater and your children begin arguing, you need to stop them because it is annoying to other people. If the arguing continues after a warning, separate them (e.g., by sitting between them). If that doesn't work, give them a brief (2- to 5-minute) time-out outside or at an out-of-the-way spot. If they are over 4 or 5 years old, you can sometimes tell them to stop or they will get a 30-minute time-out (or 30-minute loss of television time) on arrival at home. Sometimes you will have to leave the public setting and take them home.
6. **Protect each child's personal possessions, privacy, and friendships.** When children argue over toys, if the toy belongs to one of the children, return it to that child. Although children don't have to share their possessions, warn them that sharing works both ways. For family "toys" (such as video games or board games) teach taking turns. Also teach sharing toys when friends come over. Sharing is a skill they will need in order to have friends and get along in school. Younger siblings often intrude on older siblings' friendships and play. It is helpful if the younger sibling is provided with a playmate or special activity when your older child has a friend over. Your child's study time also deserves protection from interruption. Designating a study room often helps.
7. **Avoid showing favoritism.** It is critical that all punishment for arguing or fighting be "group punishment." Parents must avoid the myth that fighting is always started by the brother rather than the sister, by the older child rather than the younger one, or by one child who is the "troublemaker." Rivalry will be intense if the parent shows favoritism. Try to treat your children as unique and special individuals. Do not take sides. Do not compare them and do not polarize them into good ones and bad ones. Do not listen to tattling. If one of your children complains about your not being fair, either ignore this comment or restate the rule that has been broken. If you're feeling guilty, remind yourself that "it all balances out."
8. **Praise cooperative behavior.** Catch your children "being good," namely, playing together in a friendly way. Give "group praise" whenever possible. Compliment them for helping each other and settling disagreements politely.

CALENDAR FOR TRACKING TARGET BEHAVIORS

Fill in your calendar each day.

Please bring it with you at your next appointment.

Name _____

Date begun _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1st Week							
2nd Week							
3rd Week							
4th Week							
5th Week							
6th Week							
7th Week							
8th Week							

SIBLING RIVALRY TOWARD A NEWBORN

DEFINITION

Sibling rivalry refers here to the natural jealousy of children toward a new brother or sister. Older siblings can feel jealous when a new baby arrives until they are 4 or 5 years old. Not surprisingly, most children prefer to be the only child at this age. Basically, they don't want to share your time and affection. The arrival of a new baby is especially stressful for the first-born child and for those less than 3 years old.

The most common symptom of sibling rivalry is lots of demands for attention: The older child wants to be held and carried about, especially when Mom is busy with the newborn. Other symptoms include acting like a baby again (regressive behavior), such as thumb sucking, wetting, or soiling. Aggressive behavior—for example, handling the baby roughly—can also occur. All of these symptoms are normal. Although some can be prevented, the remainder can be improved within a few months.

PREVENTION OF SIBLING RIVALRY

During Pregnancy

- Prepare the older sibling for the newcomer. Talk about the pregnancy. Have him feel your baby's movements.
- Try to find a hospital that provides sibling classes where children can learn about babies and sharing parents. Try to give your older child a chance to be around a new baby so that he has a better idea of what to expect.
- Encourage your older child to help you prepare the baby's room.
- Move your older child to a different room or new bed several months before the baby's birth so he won't feel pushed out by the new baby. If he will be enrolling in a play group or nursery school, start it well in advance of the delivery.
- Tell your child where he'll go and who will care for him when you go to the hospital, if he won't be home with his father.
- Read books together about what happens during pregnancy as well as after the baby is born.
- Look through family photographs and talk about your older child's first year of life.

In the Hospital

- Call your older child daily from the hospital.
- Try to have your older child visit you and the baby in the hospital. Many hospitals will allow this.
- If your older child can't visit you, send him a picture of the new baby.
- Encourage Dad to take your youngster on some

special outings at this time (e.g., to the park, zoo, museum, or fire station).

Coming Home

- When you enter your home, spend your first moments with the older sibling. Have someone else carry the new baby into the house.
- Give the sibling a gift "from the new baby."
- Ask visitors to give extra notice to the older child. Have your older child unwrap the baby's gifts.
- From the beginning, refer to your newborn as "our baby."

The First Months at Home

- Give your older child the extra attention he needs. Help him feel more important. Try to give him at least 30 minutes every day of exclusive, uninterrupted time. Hire a babysitter and take your older child outside or look through his baby album with him. Make sure that the father and relatives spend extra time with him during the first month. Give him lots of physical affection throughout the day. If he demands to be held while you are feeding or rocking the baby, try to include him. At least talk with him when you are busy taking care of the baby.
- Encourage your older child to touch and play with the new baby in your presence. Allow him to hold the baby while sitting in a chair with arms. Avoid such warnings as "Don't touch the baby." Newborns are not fragile, and it is important to show your trust. However, you can't allow the sibling to carry the baby until he reaches school age.
- Enlist your older child as a helper. Encourage him to help with baths, dry the baby, get a clean diaper, or find toys or a pacifier. At other times encourage him to feed or bathe a doll when you are feeding or bathing the baby. Emphasize how much the baby "likes" the older sibling. Make comments such as "Look how happy she gets when you play with her" or "You can always make her laugh."
- Don't ask the older siblings to "be quiet for the baby." Newborns can sleep fine without the house being perfectly quiet. This request can lead to unnecessary resentment.
- Accept regressive behavior, such as thumb sucking or clinging, as something your child needs to do temporarily. Do not criticize him.
- Intervene promptly for any aggressive behavior. Tell him that "we never hurt babies." Send your child to time-out for a few minutes. Don't spank your child or slap his hand at these times. If you hit him, he will eventually try to do the same to the baby as revenge. For the next few weeks don't leave the two of them alone.
- If your child is old enough, encourage him to talk about his mixed feelings about the new arrival. Give him an alternative behavior: "When you're upset with the baby, come to me for a big hug."