

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.**¹ 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 with parents
- **Lower** cognitive ability
- **Substance** abuse
- **More** fighting
- **Weaker** moral values
- **Delinquent** behavior
- **More** mental health problems
- **Lower** self-esteem
- **More** antisocial behavior
- **Lower** self-control²

- Spanking **lowers IQ.**

The University of New Hampshire found that American children who are spanked at ages 2-4 have **5 less IQ points** than non-spanked children, even years later. Children spanked at ages 5-9 have **2.8 less IQ 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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1. Tomoda, A., Suzuki, H., Rabi, K., Sheu, Y., Polcari, A., & Teicher, M.H. (2010). Reduced prefrontal cortical gray matter in young adults exposed to harsh corporal punishment. *Neuroimage*, 47(Suppl. 2), T66–T71.

2. Gershoff, E. T., & Grogan-Kaylor, A. (2016). Spanking and child outcomes: Old controversies and new meta-analyses. *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





Tips for Parents of Young Toddlers

(12-24 months)

DANGER – (TOUCHING STOVE/ELECTRICITY/ RUNNING INTO STREET/LEAVING WITHOUT AN ADULT)

Toddlers are very curious and learn by touching and exploring. Toddlers are too young to understand danger. Baby-proof home by keeping valuables and dangers such as cords, toys with small parts, medicines, cleaning supplies away from the toddler. Identify a safe location in your house where toddler can safely explore.

WHINING

Toddlers whine for a variety of reasons. Whining is an attempt to self soothe. A toddler may be bored, hungry or tired or may just want to connect with you.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY ...

“I can’t understand you when you talk like this

- “I would like to hear you. Come, sit next to me.”

“Don’t make me give you something to cry about.”

- Try distraction: “Look at this, we have [object, snack]!” OR
- “You would like for me to listen, and you sound very frustrated.”

SAYING “NO” WHEN YOU ASK THEM TO DO SOMETHING

It is normal for toddlers to say “no” a lot, even if child means “yes”. It is still important to have rules and set limits.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY ...

“Clean up this mess right now!”

- “Let’s see how fast you can put all the [toys] away!” OR Let’s clean this mess up together!

“Don’t disobey me!”

- “Let’s put all the [toys] away so we can [watch a movie].” I can tell you are feeling impatient. We’ve been waiting a long time.

TEMPER TANTRUMS

Toddlers often have temper tantrums when they are hungry or tired. Sometimes they have tantrums out of frustration when they cannot use words to say what they want. Your child needs your help to calm down and to feel heard.

INSTEAD OF SAYING...

TRY ...

“Stop crying right now!”

- “I know it’s hard to leave [the playground] when you’re having fun.” Or, I know you really want that [toy]. Let play with it later” OR Let’s try again. Take a deep breath.

“You are so bad!”

- “I see that you are really mad because [...]” OR I hear how really angry you are.

“I really hate when you act like this.”

- “Let’s go over here where it’s quieter.” OR
- “Those words and actions don’t help us find a solution. Would you be willing to...”

Sometimes the best option is to just quietly and calmly stay with your child as your child is not hurting herself or anyone else.

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!”

- “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 are a bad boy/girl!”

- “You had something important you wanted to say.”
- “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.”

GETS INTO THINGS

A toddler learns by exploring and touching. Prevention is best. Place temptations out of sight and reach. Child-proof using cabinet latches or use distractions.