



Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#53 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

HEALTHY PARENTING



- Enjoy your child!
- Teaching your child to listen
- Healthy discipline
- How to comfort your crying baby
- How to get help



• Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
• Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
• 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health

Enjoy Your Child!

Love and attention are as important as food and a place to live.

- Children whose parents enjoy them feel safe, loved and valued.
- You don't have to wait for *just the right moment* to give your child what he needs. What your child needs most is YOU.
- Make ordinary things count! Have fun with your child at the corner store, in the park, at the supermarket.
- Sometimes all your child needs is a touch or a smile to show her you care.

Teaching Your Child to Listen

1. Get your child's attention.

- Get close. Make eye contact.
- Children are more likely to listen when you are close by.

2. Tell your child what to DO (instead of what NOT to do).

- Change "*don't*" to "*do*."
- Say: "***Please walk instead of running.***"
Instead of: "*Don't run.*"

3. Be clear and specific.

- Say: "***Put your toys in this basket.***"
Instead of:
"*Be good and clean up.*"
- Say: "***Put on your jacket and bring your backpack.***"
Instead of:
"*Get ready to go.*"



4. Use fewer words.

- Kids tune out when adults ramble on.
- Keep it simple!
 - "***Wash hands before dinner.***"
 - "***Homework first, then TV.***"

5. Don't back yourself into a corner.

- Try "*when*" instead of "*if*."
- Say: "***When you finish your lunch, you can go outside.***"
- Instead of: "*If you don't finish your lunch, you can't go outside.*"

6. Use a normal tone of voice.

- The louder you get, the less effective you are.
- When adults yell, children know you're out of control. They stop listening.



Healthy Discipline

Try time-out for ages 2 to 6 years.

- Time-out is a way to discipline your child for misbehavior without raising your hand or your voice.
- Time-out removes a child from the good stuff in life. They don't like it.
- Use no more than one QUIET minute per year of age. (The most time-out for a 3-year-old would be 3 quiet minutes.)
- Use a convenient location that is safe for your child. There should be no TV, no toys and no fun.
- For more information about Time-out, visit parenting.org.

Loss of privileges for older children and teenagers.

- Catch your children behaving well and tell them how much you like that. Reward behavior you want to encourage.
- Conflict is normal for teenagers. Choose your battles!
- It's okay to withhold privileges – loss of TV or computer time, for example, or an earlier curfew.

How to Comfort Your Crying Baby

1. Try a diaper change, a feeding, or a pacifier.
2. Cut the stimulation. Turn down the lights, and turn the TV off.
3. Speak or sing to your baby softly, or play comforting music.
4. Rock your baby. Or walk around holding your baby close.
5. Put your baby in a stroller and take a walk around the block.
6. When all else fails, put your baby in the crib and walk into another room. It's okay to let your baby cry for awhile. Check back every few minutes to make sure your baby is safe.



About to Lose It? How to Calm Down

1. STOP AND STEP BACK.

- Say: "Mommy needs a time-out. *I will be right back.*"
- Go out of the room and away from your child.
- If you need to leave the house or apartment, get another adult to stay.

2. Take 5 deep breaths.

Inhale and exhale s-l-o-w-l-y.
Count to 10 or 20 or 30. Or say the alphabet.

3. Call a trusted friend, relative or neighbor.

Say, "*I really need to talk.*" Or "*I need you to help me calm down.*"
Ask someone to come over and keep you company.

4. Exercise or go for a walk.

Ask a neighbor to watch the children.

5. Pick up a pen or go to the computer and write down your thoughts.

Don't hold back, write anything you want.

6. Join a support group.

When you're stressed out make a phone call, go to a meeting, or read some literature.

Abuse Is Not Discipline

Never shake or handle your baby roughly.

- Shaking can cause permanent brain damage or even kill your baby.
- Some types of play, such as throwing a baby into the air, can also be dangerous.

Don't withhold basic needs.

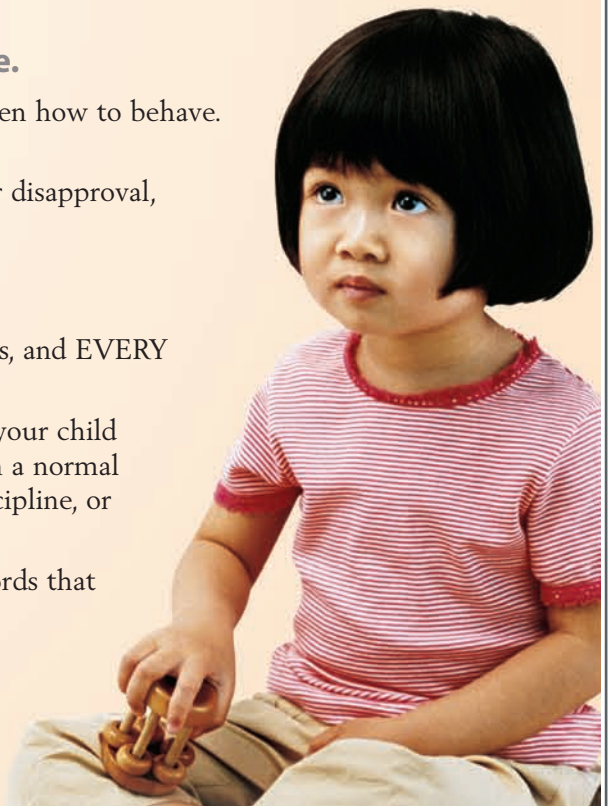
- Never withhold food or water as punishment. Children need a healthy diet to grow.
- Never deny shelter, clothing, medical care or education.

Hitting teaches violence.

- Hitting doesn't teach children how to behave. Hitting teaches violence.
- Use *words* to show praise or disapproval, without raising your voice.

Yelling doesn't help.

- Most parents yell sometimes, and EVERY parent feels like it.
- Yelling makes it harder for your child to understand you. Speak in a normal tone of voice when you discipline, or speak softly.
- Use words that *help*, not words that hurt or insult a child.



HELP IN A CRISIS | ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT

1. Someone is hurting you or your child.

- **Call 311** for the Domestic Violence Hotline.
- **Or call direct: 1-800-621-HOPE** (1-800-621-4673) TDD (Hearing Impaired): 1-866-604-5350.
- **Call 911** in an emergency.

Break the Cycle

Many parents who hurt their children were abused themselves. Just because it happened to you doesn't mean it's okay. It's up to YOU to break the cycle.

Help Is Available

2. You can't cope. You need to talk.

- **Call 311** for the Parent Helpline, **or call direct: 1-800-342-7472**. Someone will help you.
- Online help: www.preventchildabuseny.org.

3. This is an emergency. You can't care for your child.

- Call the Family Crisis Center and Crisis Nursery for help and emergency child care: **1-888-435-7553**
 - Temporary safe haven for children from birth to age 10. Parents can visit any time.
 - Children are loved and cared for while parents get help. Parents get services, too.
 - Located at New York Foundling, 590 Avenue of the Americas in Manhattan.
- **Drop off your newborn – no questions asked.**
Call 1-866-505-SAFE (1-800-505-7233) for information.
 - The Abandoned Infant Protection Act is a New York State law.
 - It allows parents, guardians and other legally responsible persons to leave a newborn they can't care for in a *safe place with an appropriate person*.
 - Safe places include hospitals and police and fire stations.
 - You don't have to give your name.

More Information and Help

- Report child abuse and neglect: 1-800-342-3720
- Help for depression, alcohol and drug problems: 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638) or call 311 and ask for **LifeNet**
- 'Take Good Care of Your Baby! What Everyone Can Do' (booklet): Call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health.
- Services for children and parents: Call 311 for Administration for Children's Services (ACS) or visit nyc.gov/acs.

**DIAL
311**

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HEALTHY PARENTING

**DIAL
311**

For Non-Emergency New York City Services
Telephone Interpretation in More Than 170 Languages