

Positive Parenting...

Guidelines for parents

Information for Parents

***Positive Parenting Package
Information for Parents***

...copy this information and distribute it to parents

...post the information on your bulletin board

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex protects and cares for children at risk and is committed to the healthy development of children and the strengthening of families.

***Preventing Child Abuse
and Neglect in our
Community***

Information for Professionals

Working Together

...copy this information and distribute it to staff

...post the information on your bulletin board

*...remind staff about their duty to report child
abuse and neglect to the Children's Aid Society
455-9000*

...Making A Difference

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex protects and cares for children at risk and is committed to the healthy development of children and the strengthening of families.

Child maltreatment...a community responsibility

Child maltreatment is a community problem. No single agency has the necessary knowledge, skills, resources or mandate to provide the assistance to abused and neglected children and their families that they need.

Communities should develop and implement programs to strengthen families and prevent the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Abusive parents...who are they?

Most parents do not intend to harm their children. Abuse and neglect may be the result of a combination of psychological, social, situational and societal factors.

Abusive parents have

- often been abused themselves as children
- never had a role model to show them positive parenting skills
- lack knowledge of normal child development

Many abusive adults have the capacity to change their behaviours with help, counselling, support and resources.

Intervention must be sensitive to culture, values and religion. The response to abusive and neglectful families must first consider the safety of the child and then help the family in a non punitive and non critical manner.

If you suspect that a child you know is being abused or neglected contact the Children's Aid Society at 455-9000

Children should remain with family

Wherever possible, children should grow up in their own family as long as their safety can be assured.

Many families need advice and referral to a community service that can provide support, mentoring, education or relief from the ongoing demands of family life.

A referral to the children's aid society can provide an assessment of the safety of the child and a protection plan to provide support to the child and the family.

If parents cannot or will not meet the needs of the child, the CAS may have to remove the child from the home.

It is the responsibility of all persons in the community to report their suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the CAS

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Preventing child abuse and neglect

Prevention of child abuse and neglect is delivered through

public awareness activities parent education programs
skills based curricula for children home visitation

Public awareness

During October, the London CAS will be sponsoring public service announcements and advertisements in the local media and will be distributing information kits to professionals in the community. The package will include information about child abuse and neglect along with positive parenting pamphlets for families. Persons should contact the CAS if they believe that a child is in need of protection, or to refer to another community service if they believe the child or family needs assistance.

Parenting education

Parenting programs focus on decreasing the parental practices and behaviours that are associated with child abuse and neglect. Such programs usually target young parents and families dealing with a great deal of stress. The programs address

- developing and practicing positive discipline techniques
- learning about child development and age appropriate behaviours and milestones
- promoting positive play and interaction between parents and children

Many of these programs exist in London and Middlesex, but, sadly they are under funded. They rely on the United Way and other funds to support their operations.

You can help by supporting the United Way and other fundraising efforts.

Skills development for children

Many schools and community services teach children about personal safety strategies that focus on physical safety, healthy lifestyle choices and inappropriate touching.

These programs include

- school lessons and teaching
- puppet shows and role play
- films, videos, story books and comics

Home visitation

Home visitation programs emphasize the health and well-being of children and families. They offer a variety of family-focused services to pregnant mothers and/or families with new babies.

Programs cover such issues as

- positive parenting practices
- child development
- referral to other social and support services
- developing a safe environment



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What is discipline?

What is punishment?

What is punishment?

Punishment involves a sanction or penalty as a consequence of a child's unacceptable behaviour and is used to extinguish behaviour. Punishment combines control, force and physical pain to get children to behave in acceptable ways. It is characterized by external control and can involve force or coercion. Punishment does not necessarily require mutual respect or trust between the parent/child.

Some examples of physical punishment are

- punching, kicking, shaking, harsh spankings or slaps
- throwing objects that can injure a child
- threatening a child with physical harm
- placing a child in a locked or confined space
- deprivation of basic needs

There is a significant risk of injury to the child when a parent uses physical punishment.

Punishment can cause physical harm, permanent physical disabilities and occasionally death. There is a risk of emotional problems developing in the future. Many children who have been punished as a child grow up to become abusive to their children and their family as an adult.

*Effective discipline
can be achieved
without physical
punishment*

What is discipline?

Discipline covers all methods used to train and teach children self-control and socially acceptable behaviour. Discipline does not inflict physical or psychological harm to a child.

Discipline is a necessary part of the parent/child relationship.

Discipline

- involves the process of education, guidance and learning to help children develop self-control
- is characterized by mutual respect and trust
- includes a belief that the child will be willing to change because of respect or with greater understanding
- has as its goal the development of internal controls that helps the child relate to others in a positive and responsible way

*A child can learn self-discipline if he/she is supported,
treated with respect and experiences tolerance of feelings.*

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What is discipline?

What is punishment?

Expectations should be consistent with the age and stage of the child's development. Good disciplinary practices include

- *positive reinforcement*
- *praise*
- *modeling*
- *structure and routine*
- *setting and maintaining limits*
- *realistic expectations*
- *follow through*
- *verbal and non-verbal cues*
- *time outs*
- *logical consequences*
- *problem-solving*

What will CAS do if I call them about a child that is being physically harmed by the parents?

- London CAS will investigate cases where there is credible evidence that a child has been physically harmed or is at risk of physical harm
- CAS will investigate and take appropriate steps to protect the child
- CAS will offer counselling on different and appropriate methods of child management

If the child is not safe in the family home, then the Children's Aid Society must make a plan to protect the child.

Wherever possible, the Children's Aid Society works with the child in the context of his own family home.

There are more than 850 children in the care of the London and Middlesex Children's Aid Society.

The London and Middlesex Children's Aid Society works with many more children in their own family homes.

Need help?

*contact CAS
at 455-9000*



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CAS Mandate

Children's aid societies (CASs) in Ontario are mandated by the Child and Family Services Act to

- *investigate allegations or evidence that children who are under the age of 16 may be in need of protection*
- *protect children where necessary*
- *provide guidance, counselling and other services to families for protecting children or preventing the circumstances requiring the protection of children*
- *provide care for children assigned or committed to its care*
- *supervise children assigned to its supervision*
- *place children for adoption*

Child in Need of Protection

The CAS must investigate complaints where children are alleged to be "in need of protection" in accordance with the *Child and Family Services Act*. The definition of a child in need of protection focuses on acts or omissions of either a parent or the person who has charge of the child that cause harm or create a risk of harm to a child.

Definition of a Child

A child is a person who is under 16 years of age. Children actually or apparently 16 years of age or older, but under 18 are considered a child only if they are the subject of an existing order under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

Duty To Report

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a CAS. If a person has made a previous report about a child, and has additional reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, they must report this to a CAS. The person must make the report directly to the CAS and must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.

What are reasonable grounds?

"Reasonable grounds" are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgement, would suspect.

*Concerned about a child
contact CAS
at 455-9000*

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Reports by professionals

Persons working closely with children have a special awareness of the signs of child abuse and neglect, and a responsibility to report their suspicions. Any professional or official who fails to report a suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection where the information on which that suspicion is based was obtained in the course of his or her professional or official duties, is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1,000.

Role of the CAS in protecting children

When a referral or complaint is received, the CAS must determine whether a child is in need of protection according to the legal definition, initiate necessary interventions or services if a child requires protection and offer support and counselling to the family.

When a referral or complaint is received, the CAS documents the call and immediately determines whether the situation described meets the eligibility requirements for an investigation. Many calls to a CAS do not meet eligibility requirements--these families are provided with information and referred to other community support services. An investigation starts immediately for those situations where the child is believed to be at immediate or serious risk, where there is an injury to the child, or where evidence is likely to be available only at the time of investigation. Investigation of other situations will begin within 7 days.

The investigation includes interviews with the parents and others who are caring for the child and interviews with the identified child and his/her siblings. Siblings, relatives, neighbours, community professionals, etc. who may have information about the need for protection of the child may also be interviewed. CAS past records are checked and parents are requested to sign consents to seek information from other community services.

Safety of the child

The question of whether the child is safe is determined at the initial contact. If the safety of the child cannot be guaranteed, the CAS has the authority to take the child to a "place of safety". If CAS removes the child without the consent of the parent, the CAS must bring the matter before the court within five days to provide evidence as to why the CAS removed the child. The judge makes a determination as to the short term and long term plans for the child.

Who is involved in the investigation?

Child protection workers investigate child abuse and child neglect complaints. The CAS refers all serious allegations of child abuse to the police. The child protection worker has the prime responsibility for determining if a child requires protection and providing a plan for the protection of the child. The police officer has the prime responsibility for investigating the offence and laying any charges under the Criminal Code or other legislation.

Where child abuse resulting in an injury is presented, then the CAS requires a medical examination of the child and his/her siblings.

Generally, within 30 days of the original complaint, the CAS will determine whether the child is in need of protection and whether the child is at risk of future abuse or neglect.

Conclusion of the investigation

Parents and the child, where appropriate will be informed by the child protection worker of the outcome of the investigation and the ongoing role of the CAS if any. Referral sources will be informed of the outcome of the investigation if the family consents. Verified child abuse will be reported to the Ontario Child Abuse Register.



Reasons not to hit children

Physical punishment is unnecessary

There are many proven, age appropriate ways that are effective in guiding children's developing sense of self-responsibility and setting limits on unacceptable behaviour. Physical punishment may stop children in their tracks but it does not contribute positively to the child's long-term social development.

Physical punishment does not teach children how to behave well

Children learn:

- by being shown how to behave well
- by receiving clear messages about what is expected of them
- by being loved and valued
- by being praised when they get it right

Physical punishment models violence

Children learn by example. When they see adults expressing their anger and control of others by hitting, they learn how to hit out themselves.

Losing control of yourself is not an acceptable excuse for hitting others

Parents often hit children when they lose control of themselves or get angry—rather than because they have chosen hitting as a way to influence behaviour positively. We do not accept this as an excuse for an adult to hit an adult, so why should we accept it as an excuse for an adult to hit a child?

Harsh physical punishment can lead to problems in later life

Most people who physically punish children explain it as discipline. When it does not work, the degree of physical punishment inflicted on a child can escalate and children can be injured. The harsher the punishment gets, the more likely it is that the child will grow up with problems associated with:

- low self-esteem
- delinquency
- mental illness
- violent behaviour

Source...Children are unbeatable kit—EPOCH-USA

If you know of a child who is being abused or neglected contact the Children's Aid Society at 455-9000

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Guidelines for raising a well-behaved child

The goal of discipline is to teach children acceptable behaviour. Hitting children does not teach acceptable behaviour. It teaches children that "might makes right" and hitting is a way to solve problems

- whenever possible, teach rather than punish
- view children's misbehaviour as a mistake in judgment...It will be easier to think of ways to teach more acceptable behaviour
- whenever possible, make consequences relate to misbehaviour...If a child makes a mess, he/she should clean it up
- have behaviour rules but make sure they are few in number, reasonable and appropriate to the child's age and development
- make sure that consequences for misbehaviour are reasonable and clear
- do not argue or nag children about rules. If a rule is broken, remind the child of the rule and the consequence for not following the rule. When you give a command, speak in a firm voice and repeat the command
- if your child has many behaviours that concern you, do not try to change all of them at once. Choose one behaviour of concern. Explain why the behaviour is a problem, provide consequences for misbehaviour and praise the behaviour opposite of the misbehaviour when your child demonstrates it
- distract infants and toddlers when they are doing something you do not like or remove them from the situation. Infants and toddlers do not understand right and wrong and should not be hit or shaken
- use good manners when talking to children about their behaviour. Be sure to use "I am sorry", "May I?" and "Excuse me" when they are appropriate. Be a good model for your children in your speech and actions
- catch your child being good! Your praise will increase appropriate behaviour.

Source...Centre for Effective Discipline, Columbus, Ohio

Catch your child being good...a hug, a smile and soft words will show your approval!

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Child abuse and neglect...what is it?

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when a child is hurt intentionally, or when a parent or caregiver fails to protect a child in their care. It is against the law.

Child abuse is a misuse of parental power and can lead to life long negative consequences.

There are different kinds of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action (usually by a parent or caregiver) that results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. It is different from what is considered reasonable discipline.

What is reasonable discipline?

The law presently allows parents to use "reasonable force" to discipline children. What is reasonable depends on the situation, but many forms of physical punishment used in the past are unacceptable today, such as hitting with an object or tying/ locking children up. Any form of physical discipline that requires medical attention, or results in bruising, welts or broken skin, is not considered reasonable discipline. Using belts, electrical cords or other objects to discipline a child can cause serious harm.

Physical discipline of babies is unacceptable. Handling babies roughly – whether in anger or playfulness – is extremely dangerous. Shaking can cause serious injury, including brain damage, blindness and even death.

Physical punishment can also lead to physical abuse when parents or caregivers lose control and strike their children in anger.

Alternatives to physical discipline

Good disciplinary practices include:

- positive reinforcement
- praise
- modelling
- structure and routine
- setting and maintaining limits
- realistic expectations and following through
- verbal and non-verbal cues
- time outs
- logical consequences
- problem-solving

*If you are aware of a
child who may be
abused or neglected...*

*Contact the CAS at
455-9000*

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Child abuse and neglect...what is it?

What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse. This is what distinguishes it from sexual exploration with peers. It is against the law to

- touch a child for a sexual purpose
- encourage or force a child to touch another person in a sexual way
- encourage or force a child to participate in any sexual activity
- tell a child to touch him or herself for an adult's or older child's sexual purposes

Sexual abuse of children can take many forms. This includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, allowing a child to look at, or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution.

What is emotional abuse?

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring, or isolating the child. It also includes failure by a parent or caregiver to provide their children with love, emotional support, and guidance.

What is neglect?

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education, and protection from harm. This can occur when parents do not know about appropriate care for children, when they cannot adequately supervise their children or when they are unable to plan ahead.

Young children should never be left unattended. This includes leaving a child alone in a car even if you lock the doors and are gone for only a few minutes.

If a child tells you about abuse

- *stay calm*
- *listen to the child*
- *let the child know that you believe him or her*
- *reassure the child*
- *tell the child you are sorry it happened*
- *let the child know it is not his or her fault*
- *do not promise to keep it a secret*
- *do not say everything will be fine now—it may take a long time before it is*

*Contact the CAS at
455-9000*



Encouraging good behaviour

Most children will learn how to behave well if the environment in which they grow up is nurturing and caring.

The idea that “punishment” has an important place in the rearing of children is misleading. Too often punishment is used to satisfy the need of adults to get back at the child. The child often cannot understand what they have done wrong. Frequently, children fail to learn from being punished.

Punishment can give rise to anger and resentment. These feelings do not encourage improved behaviour.

Parental disapproval of the behaviour not the child may help a child learn how to behave acceptably. Where the environment a child is raised in is a positive one, parents' approval and disapproval are powerful tools. A secure and well-loved child will usually want to please the people she/he loves.

A happy relationship between a parent and a child is the most important foundation on which to build acceptable behaviour.

Provide a positive environment

Children are more likely to grow up behaving well if they are:

- loved, valued and told how important they are
- shown how to behave well because the adults around them behave well
- not expected to behave in ways which are beyond their developmental capacities
- given clear rules and parents are consistent about them
- supervised well and kept occupied with appropriate activities
- provided with predictable and sensible routines
- having their physical and emotional needs well attended to

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Encouraging good behaviour

Things that encourage good behaviour

- positive attention (hugs and praise) given for acceptable behaviour is more effective than criticism and punishment for things the child gets wrong
- ignore minor misbehaviour and intervene only when there are serious problems or a child is in danger. Children learn to tune out or turn off when they are constantly “got at”. Their self-esteem suffers if they never get anything “right”
- ensure the child understands what is right not just what is wrong. Do not just describe what the child has done wrong. Tell him/her how to do it right
- clear communications is basic to effective discipline. If children do not hear or understand our message, they cannot do what is asked of them. Therefore, it is important to gain the child’s attention and to keep the message short and specific

Each child has a different personality and a different set of needs.

Adults need to adapt to these, avoid comparisons as much as possible and learn from the child as they grow.

No child is well-behaved all the time.

As adults, we have a responsibility to guide children's behaviour so that they learn from their mistakes and experience the pleasure of our approval.

Source...EPOCH NZ Website



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Child abuse and neglect in Ontario

Child abuse and neglect investigations

- During 1998, there were 64,745 (estimated) child maltreatment investigations conducted in Ontario
- This is an estimated rate of 27 investigations per 1,000 children age 0-15 years in the population
- 38% of these investigations were substantiated by child protection workers

Physical abuse

- 36% of the investigations had physical abuse as the primary reason for investigation (23,610)
- of these investigations, 32% were substantiated, while 19 percent remained suspected, and 49% were unsubstantiated

Sexual abuse

- 10% of the investigations had sexual abuse as the primary reason for the investigation (6,166)
- of these investigations, 29% were substantiated, 25% were suspected and 46% were unsubstantiated

Neglect

- neglect was the most frequently investigated category of maltreatment
- 23,263 or 36% of the investigations involved allegations of neglect as the primary reason for investigation
- 31% of the cases were substantiated, 22% were suspected and 47% were unsubstantiated

Emotional Maltreatment

- 18% of the investigations had emotional maltreatment as the primary reason for investigation (23,626)
- 50% of the cases were substantiated, 30% remained suspected and 20% of the cases were unsubstantiated

Alleged perpetrators

- most investigations involved allegations against parents—biological mothers—59%, biological fathers—38%, stepfathers/common-law partners—10% and stepmothers/common-law partners—3%
- investigations where the biological mother was alleged to be the perpetrator were substantiated in 34% of the cases
- investigations where the biological father was alleged to be the perpetrator were substantiated in 39% of the cases
- investigations where stepfathers were alleged to be the perpetrator were substantiated in 39% of the cases
- investigations where stepmothers were identified to be the alleged perpetrator were substantiated in 25% of the cases

Abused children--difficulties

- in physical abuse cases, behaviour problems, negative peer involvement, depression or anxiety, violence toward others and developmental delays were identified most often
- in sexual abuse cases, depression, behaviour problems, age-inappropriate sexual behaviour, negative peer involvement and developmental delays were identified most often
- in neglect cases, behaviour problems, irregular school attendance, negative peer involvement, developmental delays and running was reported most often

Source...The Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-1998



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Family violence in Canada

Children witnessing family violence

According to the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization

- children heard or saw one parent assaulting the other in an estimated 461,000 households
- this represents 37% of all households with spousal violence in the five year period preceding the survey
- in cases where children witnessed spousal violence, they were more likely to witness assaults against their mothers (70%) than against their fathers (30%)
- assaults witnessed against mothers tended to be more serious
- over half of the female victims in these cases feared for their lives because of the violence

Children who witness family violence

According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, children who are exposed to adults or teenagers physically fighting in the home were more likely to

- exhibit physical aggression
- show indirect aggression
- have emotional disorders
- be hyperactive
- commit delinquent acts against property

Spousal violence

There was a decline between 1993 and 1999 in rates of spousal violence against women in most provinces. At the same time there was an upward trend in the use of criminal justice and social services by victims.

Marital separation

- marital separation does not necessarily mark the end of a violent relationship
- according to the 1999 GSS, 37% of women and men with a former violent marriage or common-law relationship reported that the violence continued after the couple separated
- marital separation is a factor that elevates the rate of spousal homicide for women but not for men. Between 1991 and 1999, women were killed by estranged husbands at a rate of 39 per million couples compared to a rate of 5 per million killed by current husbands

Children in shelters for abused women

- the proportion of children in shelters for reasons of abuse increased from 1998 to 2000
- children housed in shelters for reasons of abuse tend to be very young; 41% of the children were under the age of 5 and 32% of the children were between 5 and 9 years

Homicide of children and youth

In 1999, the rate of children and youth killed by family members fell to an all time low in 26 years.

- family members were responsible for 63% of 1,990 solved homicides of children and youth recorded by police in Canada between 1974 and 1999

Source...

Family Violence in Canada:

A Statistical Profile 2001

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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Talk to your children

Talk with and listen to your child...

Effective parent-child communication is the foundation for building your child's self-esteem and fostering loving, supportive relationships with others. Keep the lines open and listen actively to what your child has to say...

- get your head physically on the same level as your child's when you talk
- use words and phrases that your children understand
- avoid including too many ideas in your messages
- paraphrase what you heard your child express
- give clear and consistent instructions defining the exact behaviour you want
- make sure your nonverbal messages do not interfere with or contradict your verbal messages
- make your messages complete and specific
- pay full attention to your child and maintain eye contact with him or her to enhance communication
- avoid thinking about your reply before listening to everything your child has to say
- teach your children not to interrupt and model that behaviour yourself
- ask what, how and why questions that promote discussion rather than questions requiring only yes or no answers
- be alert to body language and respond in kind just as you do with friends

Praise your child for asking questions...

Don't be afraid to say "I don't know"

prepare yourself for discussing some of the toughest questions that have to do with the "facts of life" and with death

Activities

- *ask what your children like about a show rather than whether they like the show*
- *plan family times to talk*
- *play a treasure hunt game with pictures or words as the clues*
- *make signs and label everything in the backyard or living room for a day*
- *take time every day with young children to cuddle and talk*
- *repeat the sounds a young baby makes and express your joy with smiles and hugs*
- *play a game of acting out feelings and trying to guess them*

Encourage responsibility...

- allow your children to solve as many of their own problems as they can
- let your child answer some of his/her own questions
- do not do things with a child that he/she can do for himself
- encourage your child to take risks
- praise accomplishments
- invite and consider your child's thoughts, feelings, and opinions on a topic
- allow your child to make mistakes
- assist your child in weighing choices and examining consequences
- communicate your support to your child
- increase your child's responsibilities
- praise your child without words by using smiles and hugs



Talking to your teen

Some tips for parents...

- teens deserve respect
- adults should respect their teens and expect it in return
- adults should show respect for a teenagers friends
- never berate or belittle a teen in front of his/her peers
- think about how often you ask teens questions and seek their opinions

One of the biggest problems during adolescence is the power struggle that develops between teens and adults.

Recognize it for what it is...the result of teens wanting to feel powerful in an adult world...find ways of working through it together.

...catch them doing something good and praise them...

communicate...

communicate...

communicate...

Conversations with teens can be refreshing and insightful...they should be a part of each day.

Most conversations take place in the presence of other people...so find occasions to talk with your teen alone, away from brother, sister and anyone else.

Make sure you listen to what is being said and what is not being said.

Effective communications is the key to healthy relationships.

...teens are apprentice adults, and they need time to breath and learn...

...it is up to the adult to balance freedom and independence with good judgement about when to step in...

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Your child's stages of development

One year olds...

Children grow and change so rapidly from birth to age one, it is difficult to describe them. By age one, most children

- identify and react to others' emotions
- play games like pattycake and peek-a-boo
- sit up without support
- imitate sounds
- recognize their name
- wave bye bye
- crawl
- may walk
- have no sense of caution
- pull themselves to a standing position
- feed themselves small pieces of food
- show interest in other children

Two year olds...

Two year olds are struggling to be independent, yet they are still very dependent. General traits of a two year old are

- assert independence
- demand attention
- favourite word...NO!
- has tantrums
- hits and bites
- easily distracted
- self-centred and possessive
- need help dressing and undressing
- affectionate
- may develop fears
- constantly on the go
- can jump
- can throw a ball
- learn many new words
- adorable, although for some, this is only when they sleep!

Three year olds...

Children want to please their parents, particularly from around age three and a half to puberty. General traits are

- still say no a lot, but are more cooperative
- favourite word is WHY?
- attention span is increasing
- begin to play with other children
- active imagination
- can repeat short nursery rhymes and understand simple stories
- speak in short sentences
- learning to share and wait for their turn
- imitate others
- very active
- need help in dressing
- can wash and dry hands and face

While two years olds are at one of the cutest stages, they can be a real trial to live with. This is the age of transition between infancy and childhood.

Three year olds are learning to do more things for themselves. They want to please their parents. It is critical they be able to please you.

If you are too difficult to please, they give up and become rebellious or withdrawn.



Your child's stages of development

*Four year olds are easier to manage than
twos and threes
...unless you have become locked
into a power struggle*

Source
Child Welfare League of
America Website

Four year olds...

General traits of four year olds are

- able to express themselves in words, complete sentences and conversations
- ask constant questions
- very imaginative
- recognize colours
- can match sizes, shapes and colours
- play well with other children
- boss and criticize others
- may be afraid of the dark, thunder and animals
- enjoy playing with puppets, dolls, dress-up and cars
- learning right from left
- like physical activity
- can go up and down a short ladder
- throw balls overhand
- balance is good
- can dress alone, manage buttons and shoelaces
- able to cut with scissors
- begin to form letters, sometimes backwards

Five year olds...

General traits of five year olds

- can speak clearly
- memory improving
- attention span longer
- generally cooperative and reliable
- want to help
- count well
- can learn own phone number and address
- play cooperatively with friends
- want to fit in and feel accepted
- curious
- gaining self-control
- sensitivity to others increasing
- still have fears
- can print own name
- can retell stories and make up stories
- have good balance and physical coordination
- able to work with tools
- beginning to tie shoelaces

*Remember...these are just guidelines...
children develop at their own pace*

04/2003



Children's Aid Society
LONDON & MIDDLESEX
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Section 43 of the Criminal Code

Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada sanctions the use of physical force against children by parents, teachers and parent substitutes, providing such force is reasonable and is used for the purpose of correction. This Criminal Code states

...every schoolteacher, parent or persons standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstance.

The section 43 defence has existed in Canadian legislation since 1892. The purpose of the section is to authorize the physical punishment of children, including spanking, hitting, and slapping. The law also allowed the use of corporal punishment by husbands against wives, by employers against adult servants and by masters against apprentices. The right of a master to use such force on his apprentices was removed from the law in 1955. The corporal punishment of criminals, by whipping was permitted only until 1972.

Over time, our thinking on issues related to husbands hitting their wives and employers hitting servants has changed. We now consider these actions to be assaults.

Retaining Section 43 of the Criminal Code effectively discriminates against children. It makes them the only group of Canadian citizens who can be lawfully assaulted.

On January 15, 2002, the Court of Appeal for Ontario upheld the constitutionality of Section 43 of the Criminal Code. While expressing concern about the past application of section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada, the Court upheld the constitutionality of the Section.

At the same time, the Court of Appeal appears to have narrowed the scope of Section 43 as a defence against the assault of children by their caregivers and teachers.

In the Judgment, the Court of Appeal has attempted to identify the parameters or guidelines for assisting a court in deciding whether the physical force applied to a child was "reasonable" in the circumstances.

Some examples are as follows

- it is improper to hit a child under the age of two
- it is improper to use corporal punishment on teenagers
- it is improper to use implements in administering corporal punishment
- it is improper to inflict a slap or blow to the head
- it is improper to cause injury which is tantamount to child abuse
- spanking, absent of any resulting injury, is not child abuse

The decision regarding the constitutionality of Section 43 of the Criminal Code was reviewed by the Supreme Court of Canada in the spring of 2000. A decision of the Supreme Court is expected in late 2003 or early 2004.

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Children's Aid Society
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Section 43 of the Criminal Code

The decision of the Court of Appeal for Ontario still leads to confusion concerning the rights of parents to use physical discipline in respect of their children. Section 101 of the *Child and Family Services Act* states

...no service provider shall inflict corporal punishment on a child or permit corporal punishment to be inflicted on a child in the course of the provision of a service to the child.

Under these provisions, a CAS social worker has a legal duty both to prevent foster parents from using corporal punishment on children in their care and to prevent parents in the community from using corporal punishment on their children when the families are receiving CAS services.

Corporal punishment is a risky and ineffective form of discipline to use with children. Parental reliance on corporal punishment is strongly linked to child maltreatment. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (Health Canada, 2001) reported that 69% of the substantiated investigations of physical abuse involved some form of inappropriate punishment. Even when children are not physically injured during these punishments, research has demonstrated that this is a potentially harmful form of discipline, which may result in serious mental and emotional consequences for the child.

The risks of corporal punishment have been clearly recognized in many countries around the world. All European countries have prohibited corporal punishment in all schools and other institutions. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Austria, Cyprus, Croatia and Latvia have existing civil laws that prohibit corporal punishment. In Italy, the use of violence for child rearing or educational purposes is no longer lawful.

It should not hurt to be a child.

The repeal of section 43 of the Criminal Code would provide an important statement about the rights of children not to be hurt by their parents, teachers or caregivers.

Reference	Bernstein, Marvin Continuing the Constitutional Challenge to Section 43 of the Criminal Code OACAS Journal, July 2002
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Why do parents use physical punishment?

Some parents believe that physical punishment is a good way to teach children. Hitting often has an immediate effect. We believe there are better ways to teach children than by hurting them.

Many of us were physically punished by our parents when we were children. Spanking was more accepted in the past than it is today. Some parents hit their children because they are angry and have lost their temper.

What is wrong with physical punishment?

Hitting may have an immediate effect but it does not teach children self-control. Parents who hit may have to hit harder the next time to get the same result.

Repeated or severe physical punishment can hurt your child, physically and emotionally.

Physically punished children are more aggressive and often have more problems in school.

Physical punishment teaches children that hitting people is okay. Hitting also teaches children to be afraid and hide what they are doing from you.

Physical punishment can lead to injury and abuse. It is easy to lose control and hurt someone when we are angry.

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What is discipline?

Parents discipline their children to teach them how to behave, be safe and get along with other people

How can I teach my children good behaviour?

- be prepared to work at it!
- children often misbehave to test the limits and learn what they can get away with
- teaching good behaviour takes time and patience
- talk and listen to your child. Trust and communication are even more important as children grow older

What is physical punishment?

Hurting children to control their behaviour.

Physical punishment includes hitting, slapping, kicking, strapping, belting, caning, hair-pulling, pinching, etc.

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How can I prevent misbehaviour?

Getting started

- make your home a safe place for your child to play in and explore
- keep forbidden and dangerous objects out of the reach of young children
- take toys and snacks when going out
- do not let your child get too hungry, tired or bored

Make fair and simple rules

- set clear limits on your child's behaviour with a few simple rules
- focus on safety. The rules should allow children to explore and learn in a safe way

Communicate

- make sure your child understands what you expect
- explain the reason for the rule if the child is old enough to understand
- listen to what your child tells you

Be positive

- focus on what to do, instead of what not to do
- positive language makes it more likely that children will respond positively. Instead of saying "you cannot watch television until you finish your schoolwork" try saying "you can watch television after you finish your schoolwork"
- teasing, name-calling and insults can hurt as much as hitting. Do not compare your child negatively to other children

Give children time to respond

- children do not like to stop doing things they enjoy. Give children a chance to prepare for change. For example, "in five minutes, it will be time to turn off the television and start your schoolwork"

Reward correct behaviour

- praise and encourage your children when they behave—for example "I like it when you help your little sister"
- show your approval with hugs, kisses and smiles
- make sure that good behaviour gets more of your attention than bad behaviour

Be a good role model

- live what you teach...for example—it does not make sense to hit a child for hitting someone else

Ignore minor incidents

- learn to accept some noise, clutter and attention-seeking behaviour
- remember...mistakes happen!

*Think
before you act!*



WITH BABIES

- never shake or toss a baby, even playfully. A baby's neck is weak and shaking can result in brain damage or death
- respond to your baby's crying. Babies cry to communicate their needs, such as for food, comfort or a clean diaper
- develop a daily routine around feeding, sleeping and play to help your baby feel safe and secure
- encourage your baby to trust you. Show your love and affection. Cuddle, talk and sing to your baby
- babies are too young to understand limits and rules

WITH ONE AND TWO YEAR OLDS

Remind

- young children have short memories. Gently remind them about the rules to help them learn

Distract

- give your child a toy or another activity

Gentle touch and tantrums

- if your child begins to lose control, move close and put your arm around the child. (This is also a good way to deal with hitting, biting, or kicking.)
- if necessary, gently hold your child with just enough force to keep the child from getting hurt
- if holding makes the child more angry, then let go, remain calm and wait until your child calms down. This may be hard to do but it often works
- tantrums are frightening for children

Be ready to comfort your child when the anger turns to tears.

What to do if your child misbehaves

WITH TWO AND THREE YEAR OLDS

Redirect

- if your child is frustrated and unable to solve a problem, try a different activity
- for example, take a child outside for some physical activity

Consequences

- let children experience the consequences of their actions if it is safe to do so. For example, "if you cannot play with the blocks without throwing them, the blocks will be put away." Then follow through and put the blocks away if the child continues to throw them
- if your child is doing something that is unsafe, you can explain the consequences later, but remove your child from danger immediately

Time out

- Time out is when a parent removes a child from a situation for refusing to follow the rules. It can be effective with children between the ages of 2 and 12.
- take your child to a safe, quiet place where the child can calm down and regain control
 - briefly explain that you are having a time out because of the child's misbehaviour. Do not argue or discuss at this point
 - when the child feels ready to try again (or when five minutes have passed), bring the child back to play
 - praise the child's first acceptable behaviour after time out



What to do if your child misbehaves

WITH OLDER CHILDREN

Problem-solving and making choices help prepare children for their teenage years.

Offer choices

- choices help children learn how to make decisions. Offer simple choices, but do not threaten. For example, "you can wash the dishes or dry them. You decide."

Teach problem-solving

- help your child to define the problem. Ask questions, such as "what would happen if you tried to....?"
- together, think of solutions
- choose the best one
- try it
- afterwards, talk about what worked and what you could try next time

Solve problems together

- as children approach the teen years, they still need clear limits but parents should be willing to negotiate a little
- when children start thinking for themselves, their talking back may anger you. However, to keep communicating, parents must do more listening and more explaining with older children
- talk to the parents of your child's friends about reasonable limits on clothing and curfews
- work with your children to solve problems together

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This pamphlet is also available in the following languages:

- french
- italian
- croatian
- arabic
- portuguese
- chinese
- vietnamese
- polish
- somali

If you are concerned about a child in your community...if you believe that a child may be in need of protection...

**Contact the
Children's Aid Society
at
455-9000**



Is my child being sexually abused?

What are the warning signs?

Do you notice some of the following behaviours in children that you know well?

- nightmares, trouble sleeping, fear of the dark, or other sleeping problems
- extreme fear of “monsters”
- spacing out at odd times
- loss of appetite, or trouble eating or swallowing
- sudden mood swings, rage, fear, anger or withdrawal
- fear of certain people or places i.e. a child may not want to be left alone with a baby-sitter, a friend, a relative or some other child or adult, or a child who is usually talkative and cheery may become quiet and distant when around a certain person
- stomach illness all the time with no identifiable reason
- an older child behaving like a younger child, such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking
- sexual activities with toys or other children, such as simulating sex with dolls or asking other children/siblings to behave sexually
- new words for private body parts
- refusing to talk about a “secret” he/she has with an adult or older child
- talking about a new older friend
- suddenly having money
- cutting or burning herself or himself as an adolescent

Some of these behavioural signs can show up at other stressful times in a child's life such as divorce, the death of a family member, friend or pet, or when there are problems in school, as well as when abuse is involved.

Any one sign does not mean that the child is abused, but several of them mean that you should be asking some questions.

Physical warning signs a child may have been sexually abused

Does a child close to you have

- unexplained bruises, redness, or bleeding of the child's genitals, anus or mouth?
- pain at the genitals, anus or mouth?
- genital sores or milky fluids in the genital area?
- if you said yes to any of these examples, take your child to the doctor

Source... STOP IT NOW, MA

If you have questions about these or other signs, contact the CAS at 455-9000

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Children's Aid Society
LONDON & MIDDLESEX
La Société d'aide à l'enfance

Is my child being sexually abused?

Things to watch out for when adults are with children

Have you ever seen someone playing with a child and felt uncomfortable with it?

Did you think that you might be over-reacting? Did you think that he/she didn't really mean it?

Do not ignore the behaviour; learn how to ask more questions about what you have seen.

The statistics are alarming and conservative estimates say that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys have been sexually abused before age 18.

Who are the abusers?

They are men and women, teenagers and adults of all ages. 90% of the victims of child sexual abuse know their abusers. They are the fathers, mothers, siblings, close relatives, friends or other caretakers of children.

They are rarely the monsters lurking around the corners of our playgrounds, or driving by in their car with the offer of candy!

Use this checklist

Do you know an adult or older child who

- refuses to let a child set any of his or her own limits?
- insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want the affection?
- is overly interested in the sexuality of a particular child or teen (e.g. talks repeatedly about the child's developing body or interferes with normal teen dating)?
- manages to get time alone or insists on time alone with a child with no interruptions?
- spends most of his/her spare time with children and has little interest in spending time with someone their own age?
- regularly offers to baby-sit many different children for free or take children on overnight outings alone?
- buys children expensive gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason?
- frequently walks in on children/teens in the bathroom?
- allows children or teens to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviours?

If you have answered "yes" to some of these questions, talk to that person. If you are uncomfortable but do not see these signs, be sure to trust your instincts and ask questions.

For information and advice on how to talk to someone, call the CAS at 455-9000.



Teach your children about sexual abuse

It is important to teach children about safety. It is just as important to teach ourselves what we need to know in order to keep our children and communities safe. Here are some things that you and your family can do to prevent the sexual abuse of your children.

Adults need to take responsibility

- watch for signs of abuse—many children, especially young ones, are not able to protect themselves sexually
- teach your children that their “no” will be respected, whether it is in playing or tickling or hugging and kissing. If your child does not want to give his grandfather a kiss, let him shake hands
- all members of the family have rights to privacy in dressing, bathing, sleeping and other personal activities. If anyone does not respect these rights, an adult should clearly tell them the family rules
- report anything you know or suspect is sexual abuse. Without help, the abuse will not stop

Adults need to learn, teach and practice

- practice talking to other adults about the difficult topics, say the words out loud so that you become more comfortable with using the words, asking questions, confronting behaviours
- practice talking with both the adults and children in your life about their difficult issues to get them in the habit of talking with you. Show them that you will listen to what they say, even if the subject is embarrassing or related to something they have done wrong
- teach children the proper names of body parts. This helps them to understand their bodies and to ask questions that need to be asked or for telling about sexual abuse
- teach children the difference between OK touching and touching that is not OK—tell younger children to talk to you if anyone, family, friend or anyone else touches their private parts
- teach children that secrets about touching are not okay

Source...STOP IT NOW, MA

Make a plan

- *teach your children about what to do and who to talk with if they are sexually threatened or molested by someone*
- *list for yourself who you can call for advice, information and help if you need it*

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Teach your children about sexual abuse

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information about which it is based to a CAS.

If a person has made a previous report about a child and has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, that person must make a further report to a CAS

The person must make the report directly to a CAS and must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf.

Both professionals and the general public have a duty to report. This is outlined in the Child and Family Services Act.

Any professional who fails to report a suspicion that a child is or may be in need of protection, is liable on conviction to a fine of up to \$1,000.

contact the CAS at 455-9000



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Ways to prevent child abduction

Young children should

- never say they are alone if they answer the phone—they can offer to take a message or say their parents will phone back
- never answer the door if they are alone
- not invite anyone into the house without the permission of a parent or babysitter
- not go into people's houses without letting anyone know where they are
- never get into anyone's car without permission
- not take candy or other gifts from strangers or anyone else without asking the parent first
- never play in deserted buildings or isolated areas
- scream and scatter books and belongings if they are forced toward a building or car
- move away from a car that pulls up beside them if they do not know the driver
- be taught their full telephone number and address
- be taught that it is all right to say "no" to an adult if the person wants them to do something that you have taught them is wrong
- know that no one has the right to touch any part of their bodies that a bathing suit would cover
- tell you, school authorities or a police officer about anyone who exposes private parts
- tell you if someone has asked them to keep a secret from you
- go to the nearest cashier if lost or separated from you in a store or mall

Source...Child Find Ontario

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Ways to prevent child abduction

Teens should

- tell you where they are at all times or leave a written or recorded message at home
- never hitchhike
- avoid shortcuts through empty parks, fields, laneways or alleys
- run home or go to the nearest public place and yell for help if they are being followed
- learn to recognize suspicious behaviour and remember a description of the person or vehicle to give you or the police. Write the plate number in the dirt or snow if nothing else is available
- if attacked for money, jewelry or clothing give it up rather than risk injury
- feel that they can talk to you and call you to pick them up at any time and at any place

Parents should

- avoid clothing and toys with the child's name on it. A child is less likely to fear someone that knows his/her name
- check all potential babysitters and older friends of your child
- never leave a child alone in a public place, stroller or car...not even for a minute
- always accompany young children to the bathroom in a public place and advise them never to play in or around the area
- always accompany your child on door-to-door activities, ie. Halloween, school fundraising campaigns, etc.
- point out safe houses or homes with Block Parent signs where children can go if they are in trouble
- keep an up to date colour photograph of your child, a medical and dental history, and have your child fingerprinted

Source...Child Find Ontario



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Source...Child Find Ontario



Children's Aid Society
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Who can babysit tonight?

The Child and Family Services Act states that "no person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances".

A parent/adult having charge of a child must make reasonable provision for the child's supervision and care, ensuring that the child is safe and well cared for.

Neither the legislation nor the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services provides CASs with any clear direction as to the age at which a child may be left unattended or be able to babysit other children.

What criteria should I use in choosing a babysitter?

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex recommends that children not babysit until they are age 12 or preferably older.

Children and youth who babysit should attend a recognized babysitting course.

Babysitting courses are offered in London by

- Information London
- St. John's Ambulance
- Red Cross Society.

Make sure that the babysitter has information about how to get hold of you in an emergency, along with other emergency numbers...

Parents and adults should consider the following when making a decision regarding a babysitter

- age and developmental levels of the babysitter and the child
- babysitter's level of confidence, knowledge of child care and behaviour towards children
- accessibility of parent/adult in charge/friends and neighbours in case assistance is needed
- ability to obtain assistance by the babysitter
- expectations and amount of responsibility of the babysitter
- number of children
- time of day and length of time children will be with the babysitter

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parents should ensure that the supervision and care is sufficient for their children in their absence



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Who can babysit tonight?

When can I leave my child alone?

The Child and Family Services Act states

...no person having charge of a child less than 16 years of age shall leave the child without making provision for his or her supervision and care that is reasonable in the circumstances...

What should parents do?

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex recommends that children less than 10 years of age not be left alone.

The parent/adult in charge must make sure that the supervision and care is sufficient for the child.

Parents should consider

In considering whether a child under the age of 16 can be left unattended for a period of time, the parent should consider the following

- child's age
- child's developmental level
- child's ability to communicate
- time of day
- length of time the child will be alone
- amount of responsibility required of the child
- child's level of competence
- accessibility of parents/adults/ friends and neighbours if assistance is required
- safety of home environment and neighbourhood
- child's ability to handle previous similar situations

talk to your children...

discuss their feelings about being left on their own...

only you can decide whether they can handle it!



Children's Aid Society
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Never shake the baby

Your baby and crying

All babies fuss and cry. Some babies cry more than others. Whether your baby cries a little or a lot, you will want to do your best to comfort him or her.

Taking care of a baby...a big job!

The word baby suggests warm feelings and tender moments. There can, however, be another side to taking care of a baby that is not talked about much—feelings of being frustrated, alone, and overwhelmed. If you have ever felt this way while taking care of a baby, be assured that it is perfectly normal.

Taking care of a baby is a big responsibility.

- maybe the baby has been crying a lot, and you cannot figure out why
- maybe you are just plain tired and at the end of your rope

While it is OK to feel upset, it is never OK to shake a baby.

Shaking a baby can kill

Babies who suffer injury or death from violent shaking are victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome. It happens when adults take out their anger or frustration on babies by shaking them. Because babies have weak neck muscles and heavy heads, even a few seconds of violent shaking can cause serious damage to them.

Injuries from Shaken Baby Syndrome include:

<i>brain damage</i>	<i>blindness</i>
<i>mental retardation</i>	<i>paralysis</i>
<i>seizures</i>	<i>death</i>

Shaking a baby is child abuse

Tell the people who care for your baby

Looking after a baby is a full time job. Add the stresses of day to day life—fatigue, family problems, financial problems and stress and it is easy to see how someone can be distressed when a baby is being fussy. It happens to mothers, fathers, family members, day care providers and friends and teenagers who are looking after children for only a few hours. Unfortunately, the baby is the one who gets hurt.

If you are a parent, then you should know the dangers of shaking. You need to tell everyone who cares for your child that ***it is never OK to shake a baby.***

When do babies cry?

Babies usually cry because they need something. Normal babies cry when they are

- hungry
- tired
- wet
- uncomfortable

Healthy babies may cry up to two or three hours a day. A baby with colic may cry all day long. Sometimes your baby just wants to be picked up and held.

Things to try

- give the baby a bottle of boiled water after it has been cooled
- gently rub the baby's tummy
- offer a pacifier—sucking is a comfort
- walk or rock the baby snuggled up close to your chest so the baby can feel your heartbeat
- take the baby for a walk in the fresh air
- sing or talk to your baby
- wrap the baby in a soft blanket
- call a friend or relative to talk about your frustration or see if they can relieve you for a while



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Never shake the baby

My baby does not stop crying!

If you have tried everything you can think of and the baby is still crying, wrap the baby in a soft blanket and put the baby in the crib on his/her side. Shut the lights out and leave the room. Give yourself some time to calm down. Letting the baby "cry it out" is much safer than shaking or punishing.

Although it is normal for babies to cry, changes in the way your baby is crying may be important. Pay attention if your baby

- cries constantly
- cries louder than usual
- throws up

If you are worried about crying or your baby's health, contact your doctor. If the doctor is not available, contact your local Public Health Unit.

Even the most patient of parents can get nervous or angry when their baby continues to fuss and cry despite their best efforts. They may even feel like shaking or hitting the baby...if you feel this way

- *take a break from the baby*
- *hand him/her to someone else*
- *put the baby in the crib if there is no one there to help*

Your feelings of anger and frustration are normal, but, you must not take them out on your baby.

Many childhood injuries heal, but a head injury can leave your child handicapped for life.

Make sure that anyone who cares for your baby is aware of the dangers of shaking.

Why you must never shake your baby

If you shake your baby, his/her head will jerk backward and forward. The baby does not have the strength to stop this from happening.

A baby's head is quite large compared to its body and its neck is very weak. This is why it is so important to support a baby's head when picking it up and putting it down.

A baby's brain is very fragile. When it hits the skull as you shake the baby, it begins to bleed. If it bleeds too much, pressure will build up and the baby could go into a coma and die.

Children under 11 months of age are particularly at risk. Older children can also be hurt if they are shaken hard. Even tossing a baby in the air or swinging a baby with an unsupported head can hurt the baby badly.

Shaking can frighten a baby. Not only can this hurt the baby, but the baby can be so frightened, that he/she may cry even harder.

need help? contact the Children's Aid Society at 455-9000

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