

TOP

tips on parenting



IN THIS ISSUE:

1

Teaching Our Children Discipline Without the Act of Violence

3

Book Review:
2009 Caldecott Medal and Honor Book

4

Release from Mother Guilt

5

Managing Morning Madness

6

Car Seat Crying



TOP is published & produced by:

The Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education at

Utah State UNIVERSITY.

Teaching Our Children Discipline Without the Act of Violence

By Paula Schmitt

I overheard an acquaintance the other day talking about reprimanding their young child. Apparently her wee one had been out of sorts and finally pushed her to the limit, and from the way she spoke, she is all in favor of swatting her child when needed and not afraid to let everyone around her know about it. Her words went something like this.

“I don’t know what has gotten into him lately. I told him no and he kept on doing it so I had to teach him a lesson. First I smacked his hand and said “NO” and do you know what he did next? He hit me back! I yelled at him while spanking his bottom and told him he does not hit me! Honestly, I just don’t know where he gets that?”

HELLO ... I stood there, my mouth gaping wide open, wondering how this mother could possibly just have said what she did. How ignorant could she be? Could she truly believe that she had taught her child a valuable lesson? I was appalled and had to leave the room before I said something I would have regretted. Are there actually parents who use violence as a form of discipline and feel good about themselves afterwards?

My husband and I have raised four boys over the past 16 years, and I am proud to say that not once have we succumbed to “hitting” our children. Don’t get me wrong, I am only human and believe me there have been times when I had to leave the room or sit down and count to 10 or 20! I’m going to be totally honest and admit that there have definitely been moments when I would have liked to choke them, shake them, put them in their bedrooms, lock the door, and throw away the key. That feeling only lasts all of five minutes luckily.

What does it mean to teach your child a lesson by using violence? And to hit your child and wonder why they are hitting you back? Come on, think about it. And when you have your child hitting other children when they feel upset, is this okay? I mean, basically, that is what they are being taught. The child sees that when their mommy or daddy gets upset, to get their point across, act out by hitting and that it’s okay.

“This is actually negative discipline, just without the violent acts.”

continued on page 2 ...



Teaching Our Children ...

... continued from page 1

There are so many other forms of positive or non-violent negative discipline with our children that are productive instead of turning to hitting, swatting, or spanking. Do we want our children to fear their parents? Does spanking really “teach” our children not to do something they shouldn’t or does it show them that if they are upset, turning to violence is the correct way to solve an issue?

I don’t feel that children who are spanked as a form of discipline as they are growing up are going to be terrible parents themselves later in life, nor do I feel that spanking a child is a necessary form of discipline.

Some different non-violent forms of discipline are time-outs and re-directing our children, which I think as a parent we have all heard of before, whether we faithfully practice this style or not. With our boys, especially now that they are a bit older, after talking about the issue at hand, they understand that something that is important and valuable to them is going to be taken away for a certain period of time, whether it be doing something with friends, going to an activity they enjoy, or it may even be taking away computer time for a few days. This is actually negative discipline, just without the violent acts. We, personally, do feel that a non-violent form of negative discipline is not necessarily bad.

These positive and non-violent negative forms of discipline are so crucial in raising our children. Since there is so much violence already in the world we live in, shouldn’t we, as responsible parents, raise our children where violence is not “taught” as a means to convert bad behavior in to good?

~Paula Schmitt, award-winning author of *Living in a Locker Room: A Mom’s Tale of Survival in a Houseful of Boys* (2005), has been published in hundreds of publications. She has appeared on numerous radio talk shows and in print publications such as *American Baby*, *Family Circle*, *Parenting*, and *Adoption Today* magazines, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Boston Herald*, *The Burlington Free Press* and many others. She is the founder and CEO of *Mom Writer’s Productions, LLC*, founder and editor of *The Mom Writer’s Literary* magazine (2005) — “A literary magazine for mom writers who have something to say,” and founder, host, and executive producer of her radio talk show, *Mom Writer’s Talk Radio* which was launched fall of 2005. www.paulaschmitt.com

question corner

“I have been encouraging my 4-year-old child to participate in new activities, but he will not even try. He says, “I can’t.” What can I do to help my child feel more competent?”

— George in Florida

Children are willing to explore new opportunities and take on new challenges when they feel confident about their skills and abilities. You can encourage your child to feel more confident by observing the child and introducing new activities when your child is ready. Provide the child with enough time to carry out the activity by himself before offering your help. Try to avoid doing things for the child that he can do for himself and do not dictate how to perform the task or skill. If the child is having difficulty, you may want to show the child using yourself as a model. Provide the child with encouragement as he is working on a task and support the child if he comes up with an idea for how a problem should be solved. When you choose activities to introduce to your child, be sure to take into consideration the child’s interests, age, and individual abilities. The child will begin to enjoy taking on a new challenge and feel confident about doing it.

~Heidi Malloy, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at Metropolitan State University.

question corner features questions posed by parents to early childhood experts who provide brief responses in this newsletter. If you have any questions you would like answered, please send an e-mail to eejcenter@cc.usu.edu or mail to EEJ Center for Early Childhood Education, Utah State University, 6705 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-6705.





Book Review

2009 Caldecott Medal and Honor Books

by Alicia M. Martin

Each January the American Library Association announces the Caldecott Medal and Honor books. These children's books are recognized for their excellence in illustrations. This year's books are beautifully illustrated and have interesting and imaginative stories.

The Caldecott Medal Winner: *The House in the Night*

Illustrated by Beth Krommes, written by Susan Marie Swanson

This fun, imaginative story is written after the manner of the classic tale, *The House that Jack Built*. Each simple sentence of the story builds on the previous, creating this imaginative tale. A young girl is given a key to the house, reads a book, and using her imagination to soar above the town in the night sky. The detailed, yet simply beautiful illustrations are done in black, white, and gold. Young readers will enjoy this fanciful story.

Caldecott Honor Books: *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever*

Illustrated and written by Marla Frazee

This is the story of James and Eamon and the adventurous week they have while visiting James' grandpar-

ents. The two attend a nature day-camp, spend every minute together, and use their imaginations as they enjoy their vacation. The colorful fun illustrations are essential to the silly humor that readers will enjoy. This book will delight readers of all ages. Young readers will relate to the two active boys, and adults will enjoy the behaviors of the loving grandparents.

How I Learned Geography

Illustrated and written by Uri Shulevitz

This book is a true story of how the author learned geography as he used his imagination and endured the difficult times brought on by war. The illustrations vary from a few muted colors and depressing scenery to colorful depictions of tropical forests, busy cities, and cold, snowy mountains. The story is a serious one with a subtle message of endurance.

A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams

Illustrated by Melissa Sweet and written by Jen Bryant

Collages of colorful pictures and descriptive words create the beautiful depictions of William Carlos Williams' life and writings. The story describes Williams' life as a student and doctor while he dreams of being a poet. Adults will enjoy the story line and information provided about Williams. Young

readers will be entertained as they examine the beautiful illustrations. The message this reader took from the book: it is never too late to pursue your dreams.

Resources

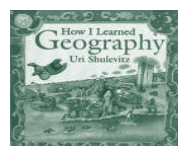
Bryant, J. (2008). *A river of words: The story of William Carlos Williams*. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers: Grand Rapids, MI.

Frazee, M. (2008). *A couple of boys have the best week ever*. Harcourt: New York.

Shulevitz, U. (2008). *How I learned geography*. Farrar Straus Giroux: New York.

Swanson, S. (2008). *The house in the night*. Houghton Mifflin Company: New York.

~Alicia M. Martin was an elementary classroom teacher for seven years and has taught K-5th grades. She has a master's degree in Education and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at Utah State University.





Release from Mother Guilt

By Patricia Morgan

Why do many parents, mothers in particular, feel guilty when they take time for themselves? First let's examine the feeling of guilt. There is healthy and unhealthy guilt. Healthy guilt has sadness underlying it, a sense of true regret for a chosen behaviour that created harm or some problem, often for others. Unhealthy guilt is a feeling of shame, that we aren't okay as we are, that we should be different than we are and should make different choices. We have beliefs like, "We should put everybody else first." There are some healthy 'shoulds' that are actually values, virtues, and morals in action. We really should look after the earth, avoid racism, and care for our elderly, disabled, and disadvantaged. It is the unhealthy 'shoulds' that create the disease and stress in ourselves and our families.

Many parents believe they should make their children happy. They are told "You make your children so happy" or "You broke her heart." The reality is that we have influence on one another, including our children, but we do not have the power to make anyone feel anything. We may trigger a reaction but there it ends. Of course we aim to be sensitive to each other's tender spots and choose to use respectful language. John Gray in *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* explains that men tend (there are exceptions) to have success feelings when they think they made their wife and children happy. Meanwhile women tend to feel responsible for everyone and all their feelings. Training of the female in my era reinforced this habit. I remember my mother repeatedly giving me the plate of sweets at socials with the instructions to "make sure everyone is happy and has what they want." She trained me to be on the watch for others' needs, not to consider taking a sweet for myself until others were looked after and not to question that my brothers were off playing and "being boys."

Then there are those voices of people from our past or in our circle with their 'shoulds.' "You should stay home with your

children" or "You shouldn't be staying at home with children after your parents paid for all that education." Don't let people 'should' on you. Just because some people are uncomfortable with our decisions does not mean that we should live our lives so they can feel right. Moreover, observe and censor your own menu of shoulds. Being driven in life through unhealthy, and usually meaningless, shoulds can create resentment and meaninglessness.

Here is an exercise to transform your guilt and unhealthy should messages into self care.

1. Complete these two sentences as many times as you can.
I feel guilty about ...
I feel guilty when ...
2. Take each issue in the above sentences and complete the following sentences.
 - a) What I resent (about other people's behavior, words, lack of support or pressure) is ...
 - b) What I regret (doing or not doing: saying or not saying) is ...
3. Take your a) list of resentments and tell yourself. "I don't have control over other people. I will now let go."
4. Take your b) list of regrets and complete the following sentence:
In order to take better care of myself from now on I will ...

~Patricia Morgan is a counselor and speaker who helps parents and others lighten their load and brighten their outlook. She has authored *Love Her As She Is: Lessons from a Daughter Stolen by Addictions* and *She Said: A Tapestry of Women's Quotes*. www.lightheartedconcepts.com

"Meanwhile women tend to feel responsible for everyone and all their feelings."



Managing Morning Madness

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of *Kid Cooperation* and *Perfect Parenting*

Are your mornings rushed, chaotic and disorganized? Then it's time to get control and make morning a good start to a wonderful day! When your morning activities run smoothly, and you're out the door on time it can make your whole day feel better. To create a peaceful morning routine, follow these steps:

Start your morning — at night!

A real key to smoothing out your morning is to prepare as much as you can the night before. This means choosing the day's clothing, packing lunches, gathering homework, signing permission slips and setting the table for breakfast.

Post a calendar.

Buy the biggest wall calendar you can find and hang it in a central location. Write down events and appointments for everyone. Use different color marking pens to code items for easy reading. (As an example: ball practice in red, carpool in green, doctors/dentists in purple). Keep the calendar up to date and you'll be more organized.

Create a drop box.

Have a labeled box for each family member by the door. Use this to store shoes, keys, backpacks, coats and anything else that goes out the door with you in the morning. Plastic tubs or decorated crates make great drop boxes.

Use a morning list.

Sit down and analyze a typical morning. Make a list of everything that needs to be done. Create a poster-sized list of the standard morning activities listed in order to be done.

If you have a child who gets easily distracted and ignores the morning chart, don't give up. Just make a small mini-size chart, laminate it, put it on a chain and let your child wear it as his "morning necklace!" Your part is to make a few gentle reminders, "How are you doing on your chart this morning?"

Check out sleep time.

If your child has trouble getting up in the morning and sticking to his schedule

take a look at what time he or she goes to bed. Without adequate sleep a child won't be able to follow a morning routine successfully.

Fix problems with a family meeting.

If problems persist take the time to sit down with your children and talk about it. Let everyone have a turn talking, and then work to arrive at solutions that will benefit everyone.

Get up 15 minutes earlier.

You'd be amazed at the difference 15 minutes can make to your morning. It can mean a peaceful pace instead of a rushed frenzy. Try it!

Praise successes.

Remember, your words of praise will encourage your children to continue to meet their goals.

~Reprinted by permission of Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Parent Tips*, *Perfect Parenting* and *Kid Cooperation*. Copyright 1999.



Give TOP as a Gift!

TOP: *Tips on Parenting* newsletter Subscription Gift Certificates are available for purchase. To obtain a gift certificate, please call (435) 797-8629 or send e-mail to ejccenter@cc.usu.edu. You may also download a gift certificate in Adobe PDF format from our web site at <http://www.coe.usu.edu/ecc/web/top.html>

TOP Gift Certificates make great baby shower, birthday, thank you, and holiday gifts! An annual subscription to TOP (for yourself or for a gift) is only \$5.00.





Car Seat Crying

By Elizabeth Pantley, Author of Gentle Baby Care

Some babies fall asleep almost before you're out of the driveway, but others won't spend five happy minutes in their car seats. Usually, this is because your baby is used to more freedom of movement and more physical attention than you can provide when she's belted into her seat.

Hearing your baby cry while you are trying to drive is challenging. Even though it's difficult to deal with, remember that you and your baby's safety are most important. Parents sometimes take a crying baby out of the car seat, which is extremely dangerous and makes it even more difficult for the baby to get used to riding in the car seat. Some parents make poor driving decisions when their babies are crying, which puts everyone in the car at risk. Either pull over and calm your baby down, or focus on your driving. Don't try to do both.

The good news is that a few new ideas and a little time and maturity will help your baby become a happy traveler. (I know, because three of my babies were car-seat-haters!)

The trip to car seat happiness

Any one of the following strategies may help solve your car seat dilemma. If the first one you try fails, choose another one, then another; eventually, you'll hit upon the right solution for your baby.

Make sure that your baby is healthy

If car seat crying is something new, and your baby has been particularly fussy at home, too, your baby may have

an ear infection or other illness. A visit to the doctor is in order.

Bring the car seat in the house and let your baby sit and play in it

Once it becomes more familiar in the house, she may be happier to sit there in the car.

Keep a special box of soft, safe car toys that you'll use only in the car

If these are interesting enough, they may hold her attention. (Avoid hard toys because they could cause injury in a quick stop.)

Tape or hang toys for viewing

You can do this on the back of the seat that your baby is facing or string an array of lightweight toys from the ceiling using heavy tape and yarn. Place them just at arm's reach so that your baby can bat at them from her seat. (Don't use hard toys that could hurt your baby if they come loose in a quick stop.)

Make a car mobile

Link a long row of plastic baby chains from one side of the backseat to the other. Clip soft, lightweight new toys onto the chain for each trip. Make sure they are secure and keep an eye on these so that they don't become loose while you are driving.

Hang a made-for-baby poster on the back of the seat that faces your baby

These are usually black, white, red and bold primary colors; some even have pockets so you can change the pictures. (Remember to do this, since changing the scenery is very helpful.)

Experiment with different types of music in the car

Some babies enjoy lullabies or music tapes made especially for young children; others surprise you by calming down as soon as you play one of your favorites. Some babies enjoy hearing Mom or Dad sing, more than anything else! (For some reason, a rousing chorus of "Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer" has always been a good choice for us, even out of season!)

Try "white noise" in the car

You can purchase CDs of soothing nature sounds or you can make a recording of your vacuum cleaner!

Practice with short, pleasant trips when your baby is in a good mood

It helps if someone can sit near her and keep her entertained. A few good experiences may help set a new pattern.

Try a pacifier or teething toy

When your baby has something to suck or chew on he may be happier. Just make sure it doesn't present a choking hazard. Keep to small toys.

Hang a mirror

That way your baby can see you (and you can see your baby) while you are driving. Baby stores offer specialty mirrors made especially for this purpose. When in her seat, she may think that you're not there, and just seeing your face will help her feel better.

Put up a sunshade in the window

This can be helpful if you suspect that sunshine in your baby's face may be

continued on page 7 ...



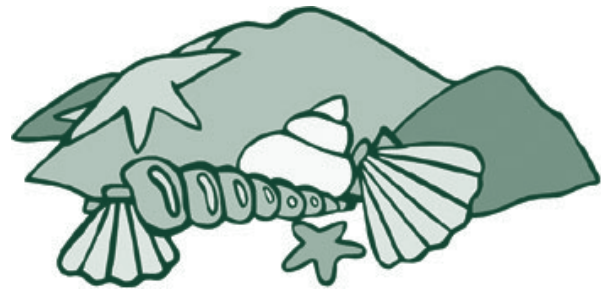
activity corner

Collectibles

Starting a collection helps children with the concepts of sorting and classification. Collections do not need to be bought at the store. Nature provides many items that can be collected. Children will enjoy collecting shells, seeds, wood, flowers, leaves, and rocks as they take a walk with you around the neighborhood or as they search for treasures at the park.

Materials:

- Paper bag
- Tape
- Paper
- Pencil
- Plastic sandwich bags
- Magnifying glass
- Nonfiction books or
- Internet websites
- Collectibles-shells, seeds, wood, flowers, leaves, and rocks.



Directions:

Before you begin the activity, talk to your child about what type of items he or she would like to collect. Ask the child to put the items found into a paper bag. After the child has a collection of at least ten items, take the items back home and spread them out on a table. Talk with your child about the similarities and differences of the items she or he has collected. Show your child how to use a magnifying glass to closely examine the properties of each item. Children can learn more about the collection by looking at nonfiction books or internet sites. By reading about the collection, the child can learn the names, properties, and origins of the items collected. Ask the child to write key concepts down on a sheet of paper in words or pictures. Tape an item collected onto the piece of paper and put it into a plastic sandwich bag. Go out on a second walk to collect more items and ask the child to sort the items into the plastic sandwich bags. The collection can continue to grow and grow!

Car Seat Crying

... continued from page 6

a problem. Use the window-stick-on types, and avoid any with hard pieces that could become dislodged in a quick stop.

Try to consolidate trips

Trip-chaining is effective, especially if you avoid being in the car for long periods of time, and you don't have many ins-and-outs.

Make sure your baby hasn't outgrown her car seat

If her legs are confined, or her belts are too tight, she may find her seat to be uncomfortable.

Try opening a window

Fresh air and a nice breeze can be soothing. If all else fails ... take the bus!

This article is an excerpt from *Gentle Baby Care* by Elizabeth Pantley. (McGraw-Hill, 2003)

Reprinted by permission of Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Gentle Baby Care*. Copyright 2003.



Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education
 College of Education and Human Services
 Utah State University
 6705 Old Main Hill
 Logan, UT 84322-6705

TOP: tips on parenting

is published quarterly by the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education at Utah State University.

Editor: DR. HEIDI MALLOY FRANKARD
 (651) 999-5829 • heidi.malloy@metrostate.edu

Managing Editor: NISSA BOMAN
 (435) 797-8629 • nissa.boman@usu.edu

TOP Article Review Panel:

- DR. JIM BARTA Utah State University
- DR. DEBORAH BYRNES Utah State University
- DR. MARTHA DEVER Utah State University
- DR. BARBARA DEBOER Utah State University
- DR. BILLIE ENZ Arizona State University
- DR. RENEE FALCONER George Mason University
- DR. THOMAS LEE Utah State University
- DR. D. RAY REUTZEL Utah State University

Submission inquiries should be directed to Heidi Malloy Frankard. Please direct all other questions, suggestions, or comments to Nissa Boman. TOP's web site is:
<http://www.cehs.usu.edu/ecc/web/top.html>

Postmaster: Please send address changes to EEJCECE, USU, 6705 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-6705.

Items in this publication are copyrighted and may not be published or reproduced in any form without the consent of TOP's Editor.

Copyright ©2009 by the Emma Eccles Jones Center for Early Childhood Education. All rights reserved.

Thanks for reading TOP!



tips on parenting

I'd like to subscribe to TOP!

For a one-year subscription to TOP, fill out the following information and send check or money order for \$5.00 (*the cost of printing and distribution*) to:

EEJ Center for Early Childhood Education
 Utah State University
 6705 Old Main Hill
 Logan, UT 84322-6705

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

WHERE DID YOU OBTAIN THIS ISSUE OF TOP?
