



FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Summer 2015

Strong Families Begin At Home

Child & Teen Services Newsletter

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Learn: Young Children & Cheating

Winning and being successful is a drive for all humans, but for young children choosing rule following over self-interest, cheating can be an irresistible temptation.

A recent study looked at cheating behaviors in young children and what might mitigate those behaviors. They found that starting at age 5 years old, a verbal commitment (promise) to not cheat led to a decrease in cheating. But for children younger than 5 years old, the brain is not yet able to regulate emotions and behavior to the point that following those rules outweighs the temptation.

The study looked at 330 children, 4-7 years old, who were asked to play a guessing game (answers hidden but children given opportunity to peek). Through 4 y.o, 80% of children cheated in “no promise not to cheat” scenarios and close to that in “promise” groups. At 5 years old, there was a change. Both promise-not-to-cheat and no-promise-not-to-cheat (but

asked not to cheat) groups showed a decline in cheating behavior. But the baseline of non-cheating with promise was lower, so this indicates that the promise group cheated much less frequently. There were no gender differences.



Repeating the rule not to cheat is very different than a verbal no-cheat promise. When you are playing a board game with your child, make a time before playing for each family member to make a no-cheat promise. Then, as an adult role model, you can say during the game, “Wow, I’m frustrated because I’m losing but I promised not to cheat!” For children younger than 5 years old, you can still repeat the rule and make the promise, but it’s not appropriate to discipline for cheating at this age. (citation online version)

CREATE: Dried Flower Craft

I got this idea from my six-year-old niece who loves to collect things from nature: twigs, flower petals, dirt, leaves, etc. She makes “potions” most of the time. But occasionally, when she finds flowers that are spectacular (like dandelions!) she will press them for a project.

There are many ways to press and dry flowers. Some are more appropriate for older children, or for younger children who are supervised.

Using a heavy book:

Step 1: gather flowers that are clean and dry
*some instructions say to gather in morning when wet with dew as this aids in pressing and if you wait until later in the day flowers are more prone to fading. Other instructions say the opposite. Experiment!

Step 2: open a heavy book to the middle pages and place parchment paper on either side. You can also try coffee filters.

Step 3: put flowers in between the parchment sheets and close the book.

Step 4: close the book and wait. Flowers

should be ready in 7-10 days. If they aren't you may need to change the filters.

Ok, for those of you whose children can't wait 7-10 days (um, everyone?)

Press flowers with an iron (from BHG.com): “Heat an iron to a low setting. Empty any water from the iron and do not add water. You do not want to add moisture with steam.”

Prepare the flower for pressing by placing it between two sheets of absorbent paper. Flatten the flower with a heavy book first, then press the warm iron on top of the upper sheet of paper for 10 to 15 seconds. You don't need to make a gliding motion as if ironing. Wait for the paper to cool for another 10 to 15 seconds, then repeat. Check occasionally by very carefully lifting the paper to see if the flower is stiff and dry.

When flowers are dried, you can use them for collages or notecards/invitations, posters, etc.



PLAY: Tube Ball

This activity is from *The Outside Play and Learning Book*, by Karen Miller.

It's simple to make and will keep your toddler coming back over and over again. The cause-and-effect is fascinating to them, and it's reminiscent of “peek-a-boo” because of the appear/disappear quality of the game.

You can do this inside or outside.



Materials:

- Large paper tube (like from gift wrap) or a PVC pipe
- Balls that will fit through the tube (tennis balls, large jacks balls, ping pong balls, etc.) Small cars, marbles, etc. can work too.
- String
- A box or basket (optional)
- A fence (ideally), or somewhere to adhere or tie the tube. A banister, or even a wall will work if you are creative.

Tube ball, continued



You can (hopefully) see from this image, that the tube has been affixed to the wall with

duct tape. There is a basket below the bottom end of the tube. When the ball rolls down the tube it ends up in the basket if the basket is positioned correctly and the ball doesn't bounce out. The basket isn't necessary but can add an element of fun for your toddler if the ball bounces out.

You could instead tie the tube to a outside fence or downstairs banister. This picture shows the tube pretty high up on the wall; make sure your toddler can reach to the top of the open tube so they can place the ball inside!

This tube is a poster tube with both ends removed.

RELAX: Stress Reduction Strategies

There are both helpful and not-so-helpful stress reduction strategies. Unfortunately, many of the not-so-helpful strategies can be easier to choose and also can lead to more harmful outcomes over the long term.

Having a list of your own, positive strategies can be a wonderful way to role model stress management with your child. When your child is about 6 years old, you can start listing their strategies too, maybe even a family poster to remind each other what works for each member.



Unhelpful strategies usually fall into distraction, avoidance or escapism. None of these are harmful in small doses; but when they are your only strategies (watch lots of TV, eat ice-cream, and never problem solve) they can lead to negative outcomes.

Helpful strategies will create a feeling of calmness and focus, will build resiliency for

better handling future stress, and/or will actually solve/resolve the problem. Here are some suggestions of things you can start to create an environment for in your family:

Relaxation Strategies

- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Meditation
- Quiet time
- Yoga
- Time in nature

Cognitive Strategies

- Cultivate optimism
- Practice problem solving steps
- Try new things
- Set goals
- Learn assertiveness skills

Also:

- Good nutrition
- Recuperative sleep/naps
- Physical activity

For more ideas, see www.parenttrust.org/smartonline

MOVE: Swim Safety

In the heat of the summer, swimming is frequently the outdoor activity of choice. So when is a child old enough for lessons and how can you reduce the risk of water accidents?



There is no clear consensus on how old a child should be for formal swim lessons. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no formal lessons before 4 years old, although swim time with parent holding baby as young as a year is OK. Center for Disease Control concurs, but the YMCA National recommends formal lessons as young as 3 years old. There are many swimming lesson companies that offer “baby safety swim lessons” for children as young as 6 months; the AAP and the Red Cross have no comment on this, other than to say there hasn’t been enough research to

show if this is helpful or not. Although infants have a natural reflex that causes them to hold their breath when under water, they aren’t born knowing how to swim.

So, ask yourself:

Is your child emotionally and physically ready? Are they interested in swimming and do they enjoy the water? Is your family frequently near water? Are there any allergy concerns of chlorine for your child?

Keep in mind the CDC recommendations:

Always supervise your child in water, even if they’ve had lessons. Teach the buddy system. Supervisors shouldn’t drink alcohol. And don’t ever throw your child in the water. Wait for them to be ready on their own. Here is a really thorough fact sheet from the CDC:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.html#prevented>

Parent Trust Reads: Book Review

When Sophie Gets Angry...Really, Really Angry
By Molly Bang
Ages: preschool

Sophie is a little girl who has a BIG temper tantrum. When Sophie’s sister grabs a toy Sophie wants, Sophie sees red. She is a volcano, ready to explode. Anyone who has seen a toddler tantrum will relate!



But Sophie knows what to do when she is angry...really, really angry. She runs and runs and then she cries, and then she looks around

her, and listens...and then climbs the beech tree, etc. Sophie’s anger gently drifts away, she returns home and her family of course, still loves her. Everything is back to normal. Anger is normal. Frustration is normal. It’s how anger is expressed that is important. And Sophie, albeit loud (!) knows how to calm herself down. This book naturally leads into a discussion with your child about what do they do when they are angry/frustrated and need to calm down—as well as what YOU do to. And the illustrations are lovely!

For more book recommendation:

<http://www.parenttrust.org/parent-trust-reads>

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