

May, 2018

Topic of the Month

Free - Help Yourself!

## Food Fights!



Suddenly, Busy Bee has opinions about eating, and those opinions may differ from yours. Can food debates be settled without a clash of wills? Here are tips from the book [Food Fights](#).

- 1. Vow not to fight over food.** Instead, decide which ground rules are most important. Be consistent and patient as you build them into your life.
- 2. Remember that it's not (just) about that bite.** It's also about teaching kids to have healthy *attitudes* about food and eating.
- 3. Never let'em see you sweat.** Adult calmness in the face of kid's refusals or tantrums can go a long way towards helping ground-rules stick.
- 4. Keep food for food's sake.** Offering food as comfort, convenience, or reward can set up hard-to-break habits that can have lifelong impacts.
- 5. If at first you don't succeed...try, try again.** This applies to kids feeding themselves and trying new foods. The goal - a willingness to try a bite.
- 6. Acknowledge likes and dislikes.** Nobody likes everything. As long as *overall* food consumption is healthy, the particulars are less important.
- 7. Eat by example.** Are the food habits kids see the ones you want them to develop? Kids watch and learn from all the "big people" in their lives.
- 8. Opt for out of sight, out of mind.** If you don't want them to eat it, don't buy it, or at least put it where they can't see it. Minimizing TV time will also minimize the number of junk food commercials that they watch.
- 9. Make fun of food.** Don't take food so seriously that it becomes stressful. Let your kids be part of the choosing, preparing, eating, and cleaning up -- and enjoy each other's company!
- 10. Keep a big picture perspective.** It's not what's eaten on any given day that counts, it's the habits that each day is building.

# Talking About Toddlers



## Years 1 - 3 and Busy As Can Be!



No longer infants, but not yet ready for pre-school, toddlers are moving out into their big new world. Here are some tips for you and the little ones you love!

### Yum it Up

Toddlers are active little people that are also growing like weeds. All this action is best fueled by suitable amounts of nutritious food. Remember:

- **Toddlers' stomachs are only about the size of their fists.** A toddler serving size is very different from an adult serving size! Since they can't hold much, they'll need healthy snacks.
- **They don't need special baby food.** As long as the food isn't a choking danger or highly salted or seasoned, they can eat "big people" food. Cut it small or mash it with a fork, and you're ready!
- **Food is brand new and interesting.** Toddlers need to see, feel, smell, as well as taste, this fascinating stuff. Let them explore and do their best as they learn to feed themselves and use a cup.
- **They probably won't like everything right off the bat** - then suddenly BINGO - what was hated, now seems delicious. So keep offering (but not insisting on) those healthy options.
- **Nursing toddlers are still getting lots of nutrition** and protection from breast milk, even though they're eating solids now too. Babies that are on formula can be weaned after 12 months, unless your doctor recommends otherwise.
- **Let them decide how much to eat.** They'll stop when they're full. Grown-ups could learn something from them!



### Naps and Nighttime

Just like they need good fuel, little bodies need lots of rest too, between 11-14 hours in a 24 hour period.

- **Toddlers will need at least one nap.** Try to make it earlier in the day, so they're tired when bedtime rolls around.
- Make sure they get plenty of active playtime. Everyone sleeps better when they've had enough physical activity.
- Keep the hour before bedtime calm and relaxing: a warm bath, comfy jammies, and a cuddle with a book can help ease everyone off to sleep.

### Red Alerts

- **Fear of strangers can peak during this time.** Respect your child's needs for personal space and slow introductions.
- **Limit screen time.** For those under 18 months this means only video-chats. Older toddlers should watch no more than 1 hour/day of high-quality programming, and ideally with an adult who'll discuss what they're seeing and how it fits into their lives.
- **Check their environment for safety.** Car seat installed correctly? Choking hazards picked up? Cleaning supplies, poisons, & medicine locked away?

Taking care of ourselves  
can take a lot of support.  
We're here to help!  
Ask a nurse or provider if  
you'd like to talk.



# Potty Practice

There isn't a right age to start potty training, but there is a right time, and that depends on your child's readiness - physically, developmentally, and behaviorally.

How do you know if your child is ready?

Can your child:

- walk to and sit on a toilet?
- pull down her/his pants and pull them up again?
- stay dry for up to two hours?
- understand and follow basic directions?
- communicate when he/she needs to go?
- seem interested in using the toilet?

If you mostly answered "yes," it might be the right time. If mostly "no," waiting would be better, especially if you're about to have any big changes, such as a move or new baby.

**When they're motivated, and you've got some time and energy to practice, here are steps to get started:**

- 1. Get out the potty chair.** Put it in the bathroom, and let your child just practice sitting on it. Maybe empty a dirty diaper in the little potty, then dump everything into the big toilet. Let him flush. Flushing is great fun for toddlers!
- 2. Schedule potty breaks every couple of hours and when they wake up.** Let her sit on the potty for a few minutes, diaper-free. Stay with your child while she looks at books or plays with a toy. Let her get up when she's ready, and let her know that you're proud she's trying. If possible, bring the potty with you if you're going to be away from home.
- 3. Get to the potty - and fast!** Watch for signals that your child might need to use the toilet (squirming, squatting, holding their genital area), then hustle him to the bathroom. Help him to link these signals to the feeling of needing "to go." Thank him for telling you that he needs to use the toilet.
- 4. Teach them good hygiene, too.** Show girls how to wipe from front to back, to keep poop germs from spreading to her vagina or bladder. Make sure everyone washes their hands afterwards!
- 5. Switch to underpants** after a couple of weeks of successful practice runs and dry days. Celebrate! But don't worry if you have to go back to diapers for a bit.
- 6. Remember: Accidents happen, especially at night.** Don't scold or shame your child. They'll get the hang of it. Just keep a change of clothes handy. And remember: night training can take a while, until between ages 5 - 7.

For more information on potty training, check out:

[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

# Tantrum Tips

Tantrums are a normal part of toddlerhood, and lots of things can set them off: hunger, fatigue, not getting what is wanted, or frustration at not yet being able to verbally communicate. Some tantrums can be ignored, but some can't, like when:

- Your child is at risk of hurting him/herself. (running into the street or parking lot, falling down stairs...) Quickly grab your child, hold him close, and move him to safety.
- Your child is hurting someone else. (hitting, biting, scratching...). Calmly, but immediately, remove her from the other person. Let her know that behavior isn't ever acceptable. If hurting someone to get what you want is wrong, that applies to adults too. The upshot - no hitting your child to stop your child from hitting.

Since tantrums are inevitable, here are some survival tips.

- 1. Make sure you're giving your child enough loving attention, and noticing when he's "being good."** Provide specific praise, so he knows exactly what he did right. "Nice way to share your book." "Thanks for using a quiet voice."
- 2. During the tantrum, let her regain a sense of control by making a decision about something small.** "Shall we go quiet down in the living room or your bedroom?" "Would you like your apple slices plain or with peanut butter?"
- 3. Use the power of distraction!** Move to a different room. Find something safer for him to play with. Sing a song.
- 4. Choose your battles, but consistency is key.** If tantrums are effective in getting your toddler what she wants, she'll keep having them.
- 5. Know your child's limits, and "plan for peace."** It's not fair to ask a toddler to push beyond their physical, mental, or emotional breaking points and then get angry when they melt down. Does she freak out when fatigued? Prioritize naps. Is he horrible when hungry? Pack a healthy snack.
- 6. Never ignore violent behavior** (hitting, kicking, biting...). They don't get to hurt other people or animals, no matter how mad they are. Period.
- 7. Be kind to you, too.** If you feel your own tantrum coming on, do your best to stay calm. Ask someone you trust to step in, so you can step away and cool down.

For more tips on toddler development, check out:

[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)