



ECD Support Services Program News

We're Moving!

On April 9th we will be in our new office space at #200, 12345—121 street located in the Community Options building. We are excited to be able to provide trainings, host meetings and house our wonderful Resource Library within this new space and look forward to you visiting us. Our office phone number will remain the same (780) 428-9465.

Our mailing address will now be:
ECD Support Services
946 Chahley Crescent
Edmonton, AB
T6M 0E2

Thank You!

Thank you for your responses for the 'Working Together For Our Children's Future' conference. If you would still like to give some feedback please see the link to the survey on our web page at:

www.ecdss.ca. The responses were very positive, which encourages us as we plan for our October 20, 2008 full day workshop. Keep posted to our website for further details.

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Upcoming Events



AHVNA Network Meeting

Date: April 11, 2008

Time: 10 – 3:30

Location: Black Knight Inn, Red Deer

Home Visitation Team Leaders' Meeting

Date: April 15, 2008

Time: 9—12pm

Location: Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

ECDI Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: May 12, 2008

Time: 1:30 – 4:00

Location: Norwood Family Resource Centre

Home Visitation Ops Committee Meeting

Date: May 13, 2008

Time: 1:30—4pm

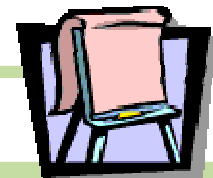
Location: Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society

HOMES/Evaluation Update

During the next few months Tracy and Christi would like to visit all of the ECD funded programs we are supporting. We are in the process of reviewing and planning what supports and training opportunities are needed for programs in the upcoming year. We will send your program some questions to ponder before we meet regarding **HOMES data collection needs/issues, staff training needs, program evaluation plans and a few more.** We have sent you an email to set up a time, please respond to let us know what time works for you. If you have

any questions call Tracy Bridges at 905-5986 or Christi Lein at 818-0060.

Thanks and see you soon.



Professional Development

3-Day Family Outreach Training

Outreach Work is personal work done professionally. Challenging aspects of Outreach Work include engaging families and setting up successful support services for parents. This training focuses on areas which enhance and prepare professionals for individualized support with families.

Topics covered during the training include:

- Engaging Families
- Successful Parent Involvement
- Parent Groups
- Working Alone in Community
- Boundaries
- Home Visits
- Self Care

Date: April 14-16, 2008

Time: 9-4pm

Location: 12345—121st

Cost: \$150

Lunch included with registration.

2-Day Mental Health First Aid Training

This two day training will provide a comprehensive introduction to common mental health disorders that impact many of the families supported by ECD programs. While practitioners are often well versed in physical first aid, there is often a lack of understanding related to mental health first aid. Four sessions will cover areas including common mental health problems, addictions, anxiety disorders, depression and psychotic disorders.

Date: May 12-13, 2008

Time: 9-4pm

Location:

Cost: \$75

Lunch included with registration

5-Day Core Home Visitation Training

Essential to the success of any such program is the training of those members from the community who will be conducting the home visits. This training focuses on areas that enhance and prepare professionals for individualized support to families in a variety of programs.

Topics covered during the training include:

- Engaging Families
- Children's Services
- Working Alone in Community
- Boundaries
- Reflective Practice
- Goal Setting and Planning
- Self Care

Date: May 12-16, 2008

Time: 9-4pm

Location: 12345—121st

Cost: \$250

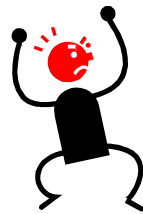
Lunch included with registration.

Temper Tantrums

Tantrums are a normal part of children's development and don't have to be seen as something negative. A temper tantrum is a child's way of expressing anger and frustration when feeling overwhelmed. Tantrums are a normal part of growing up, and although dealing with them can be very challenging for parents, it is a chance to help your child learn how to deal with his emotions in a healthy way.

Understanding Your Child's Development

The number of temper tantrums peaks between the ages of 2 and 3. Children this age feel mad, sad and glad. Frustration is common and is often expressed as anger. These feelings can be felt very strongly, yet children often don't have the words to express them. These feelings are new experiences and can sometimes overwhelm a child. Children at this age can only control their emotions about 45 percent of the time. No matter how calm and gentle a parent you are, your child will probably have some tantrums. Children have their own unique temperaments and some children are more likely to get frustrated than others. Remember, it is a normal part of growing up.



Causes of Temper Tantrums

Understanding what causes temper tantrums can help you deal more effectively with the outbursts when they do happen. Tantrums are most likely to happen when:

- Your child wants to do something on his own and you must stop him for his own safety and well-being. This is the age when children begin to realize that they are their own person, separate from you. Your child wants to be able to do things his own way. He may be very angry at what he sees blocking his way - and often as not, that is you.
- Your child wants to do something, but doesn't yet have the needed skills. In this important developmental stage, your child needs to have control over her world. Power struggles and tantrums are common when toddlers think they can do more than they are capable of.
- Your child can't tell you how he feels or what he needs. Children this age have only basic language skills and don't always have the words that help adults understand what they need and want. When these feelings become too much, they express them the only way they can at this point - in a physical tantrum.
- Your child is totally exhausted or sick and is overwhelmed by his feelings
- Your child feels left out, lonely or ignored and is looking for the attention he needs
- Your child has too few limits or too many choices. When a child is used to getting everything she wants, she may not understand if an adult sets a limit. Too many choices can be overwhelming. Young children are not able to think through other choices they may have.

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Think Prevention



Although not always possible, some tantrums can be avoided:

- Know what is normal for your child's age. This helps you to have realistic expectations about what your child can and cannot do.
- Watch your child; you will learn what frustrates him and then be able to think about how you can avoid those situations.
- Break tasks down into smaller steps.
- Make your home child friendly (e.g.: a sturdy, little stool at the sink, cups where he can reach them, jacket hooks at his level).
- Find ways for your toddler to express his feelings. Because he can't always tell you how he feels, he may need your help. Give words to his feelings. "I see you are very frustrated" or "You seem very angry". He will soon learn to link what he is feeling with the words you are using and will begin to use the words himself.
- Provide lots of physical activity. Running in the park, throwing the ball, climbing or taking walks are all great ways to release emotional stress.
- If the tantrums seem to be related to hunger or tiredness, you may need to look at your child's eating and sleep patterns. (A snack between meals or supper an hour earlier, arrange your day so she can get the sleep she needs).

Some children need regular routines around feeding and eating, while other children are more flexible. Planning outings around their routine will help. Carry extra, nutritious snacks with you when you are away from home.

- It is a fine balancing act to know when to set limits and when to be flexible. Find that balance point that is right for your own family. When toddlers can make choices, they feel they have some control over their life. Offer choice between two things when you can (e.g. Would you like the red cup or the blue one?"), but make it clear that some things are not negotiable and they have no choice (e.g. the time to go to bed, safety issues).

Coping With Tantrums

- Stay calm. A child having a tantrum is upset and needs to know that you are calm and in control. Seeing a parent lose control of their own emotions is frightening for a young child and will only make matters worse.
- Never resort to physical punishment. Your child can't control her emotional outburst and physical punishment will only send her the message that using force is okay.
- Make sure your child is safe. Remove your child to a safe place if she is likely to hurt herself, others, or property. Once she is in a safe place, stay close by until the tantrum is over. Don't try to stop the tantrum or reason with your child. She is out of control. She can neither hear you nor understand your logic, so save your energy. Simply state, "I can see you're very angry. I'll give you time to cool off. Let me know if you need a hug (younger toddler) or want to talk (older toddler)." If you are at home and the child is in a safe place, try to ignore the tantrum while remaining close by.

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Health News for You by Kathy Newman R.N.

- Once you see the tantrum start to decrease, offer soothing reassurance in a quiet voice: "It's frustrating, I know" or "You're okay, you can calm down". Once your child will allow it, gentle holding and calm reassurances may be very helpful. Help him by giving his feelings a name.
- Some toddlers feel better if you hold them while they are having a tantrum. Hold firmly, but not too tight, encircling his arms with yours and continue to be calm and talk quietly. If your child is hitting you, firmly take his hands in yours and state "You may not hit me". Other children do not want to be touched when having a tantrum. Still others won't want you to hold them when they having an angry tantrum, but may find a cuddle is just what they need when they are having one because they are exhausted. Look for the reason behind the tantrum. It will help guide you on which technique to use.
- After the tantrum is over, let it go. Do not punish your child - he is just learning how to cope with his emotions. Let him know that you understand his frustration, but that he needs to learn to tell you with his words. Let your child know that you will stop him from hurting himself or others because you love him. Try to understand what lead up to the tantrum so you can help to prevent it from happening again.

Most importantly:

If your child is having a tantrum because he wants something, **do not** give in and give it to him. If you do, your child will learn **very quickly** that throwing a tantrum is a great way to get what he wants. Remember - this is a chance for him to learn how to deal with his emotions - a lesson that will last a lifetime!

If You Are Concerned

If you are concerned, you may want to talk to your doctor or public health nurse, especially if:

- You have questions about what your child is doing or how you are handling his tantrums.
- You are uncomfortable with your feelings or responses.
- You are unable to stay calm.
- You keep giving in to the tantrum.
- The tantrums are causing a lot of bad feelings.
- The tantrums are increasing in number, are becoming more severe or are lasting longer.
- If after a few weeks of trying, your child's behavior has not changed or has gotten worse.

Set a good example

Your child is watching and learning from you every day. How you deal with frustration and anger will teach him much more than what you tell him. If you model healthy ways to deal with your own emotions, that is what your child will learn. But remember, they are learning and it takes time. Be patient.



Story of the Month — Just because it's not wrong doesn't make it right . From toddlers to teen, teaching kids to think and act ethically.

By Barbara Coloroso—This book is available in the ECDSS Resource Library

AGES AND STAGES

The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there. —L.P. Hartley,
Prologue to the Go-Between

Through children's early interactions and dialogues with their parents, caregivers, and peers they learn how to care deeply, share generously, and help willingly. During the various ages and stages of childhood, children develop their own moral sensibilities and concerns about fairness, honesty, kindness, and injustice. Their emotional responses, and those they evoke in others by their behavior, help them to develop a range of emotions that facilitate rather than hinder thinking and acting ethically.

INFANTS

Morality is not something that can be imposed on children. Instead, it is nurtured and grown from within human social relationships. The first relationship we experience is between mother and child. When a mother takes care of herself and creates a home that is welcoming before her child is born, she signals to her infant that he or she is cared for deeply. The infant takes it from there.

It is in us to care. Babies only a few days old respond to another baby who is not just cranky but truly in distress. Infants appear to have the inborn capacity to vicariously experience the feelings of others. Since they lack the clear distinction between themselves and the person who is in distress, they respond as though they themselves were in distress. In his book *Empathy and moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*, Martin L. Hoffman describes this empathic distress, or "reactive cry", and refers to it as "the spark of human concern for others, the glue that makes social life possible. It may be fragile but it has, arguably, endured throughout evolutionary times."

It is this spark of human concern that needs to be nurtured in order for children to develop empathy, sympathy, compassion, and healthy guilt—which in turn become the emotional underpinnings for prosocial behavior.

The loving-kindness a parent demonstrates by nurturing the infant and responding compassionately to the infant's distress help newborns begin to construct the patterns of moral internalization that will enable them to develop, in the months and years to come, the ability to more fully care for and about others, to feel responsible (able to respond) and connected to others.

TODDLERS

Between one and two years old, children begin becoming aware of their own emotional states, and the potential for acting on those states. Children at this age can tell if someone else is hurt or sad—they can read, albeit not always accurately, the physical and psychological states of other human beings.

Toddlers are able to empathize—that is, they have the emotional capacity to effectively experience (be moved by) another person's emotional state and see that person's emotional state as separate from their own. Although they can see that the distress is separate from their own, they will often try to relieve that stress by doing what they know would relieve their own distress. Seeing Beth crying when her mom leaves the room, Jeff hands her his teddy bear. Since the bear is what comforts Jeff, he assumes it will comfort Beth.

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Since toddlers can roughly interpret the psychological states of others, they can tell by your body language, as well as by your words and actions, if they have failed to live up your expectations. If a child is regularly humiliated or shunned or isolated or punished, he is likely to feel ashamed. This shame is not healthy guilt. Healthy guilt develops naturally in later childhood and is a part of the underpinnings of inner discipline and self-evaluation. Shame, on the other hand, is dependent on the perceived or real evaluation of others, especially of important adults in that child's life. Shame interferes with a child's ability to acquire the sense of self-control and agency that is so critical to a child's moral development.

PRESCHOOLERS

By three years old, children are able to discern another's inner states as being independent of their own. They can more accurately discern what might be of comfort or help to the adult or child in distress. Their repertoire of caring behaviors is growing and tends to be more appropriate to the situation.

It is at this age that comforting, sharing, and helping become staples in a child's interactions with adults, siblings, and peers. The more opportunities you can give your child to do all three, the more she begins to know herself as capable of caring, sharing, and helping: "You can fill the dog's water dish so he won't get thirsty."

It is also at this age at which children truly interact with their peers, thus the inevitable conflict, selfish actions, and declarations of "That's not fair." It is time to actively socialize your child to consider others—their feelings, their needs, and their wants: "It hurts Sarah when you tell her she can't play with any of the toys. You don't have to give her your favorite doll, but you need to let her play with one of the others."

Interacting with peers helps kids at this age to begin to realize that others have claims, and that sometimes those claims compete with theirs. They also begin to learn the "rules" of social propriety, and simple rules for games. Don't be surprised or shocked if they bend the rules in their favor. It may disappoint you to see your child "cheating," but just as Hartley spoke of the past as a foreign country, in childhood, they do things differently.

Parents can only give good advice or put them on
the right paths, but the final forming a person's
character lies in their own hands.

—ANNE FRANK, *The Diary of a Young Girl*

