



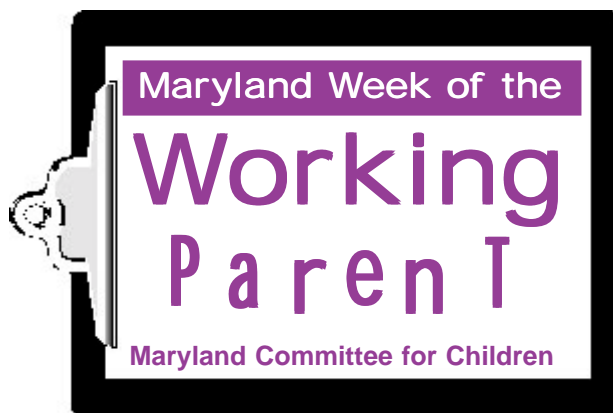
TIPS

for Parents
...and Grandparents



Being a working parent has its own special challenges. In an effort to help parents do a good job both at work and at home, Maryland Committee for Children has developed a series of practical solutions to everyday problems.

The following Tips for Parents come from experts in child development, as well as parents who face the challenges of working and caring for their children each and every day. We hope you find them useful.



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Maryland Committee
for Children



Developing Family Rules & Routines that Work for Everyone

Rules and routines are a healthy part of family life that make busy lives easier. Working together as a family, you can create rules which make your days run more smoothly. Here's how:

- Limit the number of rules you make. It is easier to stick consistently to a few rules. Make the rule primarily those which involve health, safety, and your sanity.
- Involve children in rule-making and be clear about what happens when rules are broken. No one can follow rules they are not aware of, or can't understand.
- Help younger children to develop a routine and learn about the importance of preparing ahead of time by asking them to lay out clothes for the next day on the night before, or helping them set out the breakfast dishes before bedtime.
- Plan ahead as much as possible. For older children, institute a "Thursday night rule" to minimize events sprung on you at the last minute; children who want you to drive them somewhere on the weekend need to make their plans with friends by Thursday night (be prepared to be a bit flexible with this).
- Discuss family responsibilities and expect children to help with chores which they can manage. Let your children know that everyone in the family is responsible for helping keep the household in working order.
- Use simple charts and lists to help children see all that needs to (reasonably) be done, and reinforce the importance of everyone doing their fair share.
- Remember to praise accomplishments when you see them (when children pick up clothes from the floor after being asked)! Sometimes household routines can seem a drudge if there is no positive reinforcement for what you are doing.

The key to developing family rules and routines that work is to let family members know how much their cooperation and support is valued.

Additional Resources:

Crowder, Carolyn. *Eating, Sleeping, and Getting Up: How to Stop Daily Battles with Your Children*. Broadway, 2002.

Crary, Elizabeth. *Pick Up Your Socks...and Other Skills Growing Children Need*. Parenting Press, 1990.

<http://www.wholefamily.com>





Reducing Homework Hassles

Parents want to help their children be successful in school, yet often the issue of homework becomes a battleground. Many everyday homework hassles can be resolved by following these guidelines:

- Help your child select a special place where she can do homework in comfort. Make sure that she has whatever tools nearby she'll need to do her work – pencils, desk lamp, books, computer, etc.
- Explain to your child that homework is his responsibility. Your job is to help him decide how and when he will meet that challenge. Provide choices: does he want to do homework before dinner or right after dinner? Would he rather do it in his room or in the kitchen?
- Make clear rules to minimize distractions and limit competing activities. For instance, insist no radio, stereo, headphones or social phone calls during homework time. Limit “screen time” (playing video games, watching television, or “instant messaging” during homework time.
- Show your own commitment to working responsibly. Talk about any work you bring home. Sit together at the dining room table, or other comfortable location, at “work time” to complete your tasks.
- Show an interest in your child's work. Remember to reward progress, not demand perfection.
- Be available to provide assistance or answer questions, but resist the temptation to hover. Help your child identify sources where they can turn to for additional information (make sure to ask your child's teachers about available resources).

The key to minimizing homework hassles is to encourage and support your child's ability to complete work on his own.

Additional Resources:

Rosemond, John. *Ending the Homework Hassle*. Andrews McMeel, 1990.

Romain, Trevor. *How to Do Homework Without Throwing Up*. Free Spirit, 1997. <http://www.expertparents.com>



Infant Development

The first year of your infant's life is an exciting yet challenging time, as your baby is developing at such a rapid pace. During this first year, there are many things you can do to support your child's development.

- Read to your child every day. This will support her growing understanding of language and appreciation for books.
- Respond quickly to your baby's cry. This not only teaches your child that he is an effective communicator, but also shows him that the world is a safe place and his needs will be met.
- Provide ample opportunity for your child to move freely. Laying a blanket on the floor and placing your baby safely on the blanket allows her to use all of her muscles as she moves and learn how to move her body into many different positions. Remember, though, NEVER leave your child unattended.
- Talk with your child about things that you see. For example, you might take a walk with her and point out things that you see in your neighborhood. This not only builds your child's vocabulary and understanding of the world in which she lives, but also shows her that you value spending time with her.
- Give your baby the opportunity to touch a variety of textures, such as soft fabric, sandpaper and bubble wrap. By doing this, you are showing him that he can learn about his world by using his senses.
- Talk with your baby during routine care times such as feeding, diapering and bathing. When you do this, you are helping your child to understand his world and experiences and build his vocabulary.

A key to infant development is understanding that infants grow in relationship to the rich relationships that they develop with their parents and primary caregivers.

Additional Resources:

Segal, Marilyn. *Your Child at Play, One to Two Years: Exploring, Daily Living, Learning, and Making Friends*. Newmarket, 1998.

<http://www.cfw.tufts.edu/> (Child & Family Web Guide)

<http://www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/parents-body.html> (birth - 36 months)





Toddler Development

As your child enters toddlerhood, there often seems to be little resemblance to the tiny, helpless infant that you met just a year ago. Your toddler is becoming more independent and self-assured, as he is learning more and more about his world and how he fits in it. There are many things you can do to continue to support his rapid development.

- Continue to read to him. This not only increases his vocabulary and understanding of the world, but reinforces his self-worth as you spend time with him
- As often as you can, offer your child a choice, such as “Do you want to wear your green shirt or your red shirt today?” or “Do you want an apple or a banana for snack?” It is important for your toddler to exert his independence and the more you are able to provide him with opportunities for choice, the more control he will feel that he has.
- Support your toddler’s developing self-help skills by allowing him the opportunity to do things on his own, such as put on his own coat or feed himself.
- Put on some music and dance with your toddler. This will allow her to use her muscles as she moves her body and show her that you enjoy being with her.
- Provide your toddler the opportunity to spend time with other children. She may not play with them, but she will likely play next to them, and it is important for her to begin getting used to other people.

The key to toddler development is understanding that toddlers begin to separate themselves from their significant others (parents, caregivers), and the “no” that one hears isn’t rejection, it is a beginning way to approach independence.

Additional Resources:

Miller, Karen. *Simple Steps: Developmental Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Two Year Olds*. Gryphon House, 1999.

<http://www.parentsoup.com>

<http://www.familyedge.com>



Maryland Week of the Working Parent was designed to:

- ★ Underscore the invaluable contributions of parents in the workforce and the economy of Maryland.
- ★ Highlight the importance of the availability of quality child care.
- ★ Provide employers with practical approaches to addressing family needs within their companies.
- ★ Give employers a way to say “thank you” to their working parent employees.

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