



Parenting Booklet for Native Youth

Be the parent every child wishes they'd have

BELONGING
ACTIVITY
LEARNING
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
NURTURING
COMPASSION
ENGAGEMENT

Urban Native Youth Association



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1618 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 1S6
Ph: 604-254-7732, Fax: 604-254-7811, Email: info@unya.bc.ca
Websites: www.unya.bc.ca and www.nativeyouthcentre.ca

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The Urban Native Youth Association is incredibly grateful to the youth who contributed to the final draft of this booklet. Their input has definitely added to the helpfulness of this booklet for Native youth. Thank you to Jenny and Kayleen for sharing their experience and knowledge with us. Their excitement for this manual is both encouraging and inspiring. You are definitely the leaders of tomorrow, and today!

BALANCE

Do you want to be the parent that every child wishes they'd have? Your child needs to have someone who is caring - and shows it; someone who pays attention to them and what they do; and isn't afraid to say I love you. You can be that parent! Trying to be the best parent you can be will be great for both your child and you.

Native culture values the teachings of the medicine wheel which calls for BALANCE in all areas of our life: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. This belief in BALANCE can also be used in parenting so that we are paying attention to many things when raising a child, not just feeding and clothing them. We are using the word B-A-L-A-N-C-E to list many of the important areas that should be focused on when raising a child. The list below can help you to think about what you loved about the way you were raised or what you would have liked to have more of. Thinking about this will help you look through your child's eyes so that you better understand how paying attention to these areas will help her or him grow up to be a happy, safe, and healthy person.

B-A-L-A-N-C-E

Belonging

Your child must feel that they have a family that cares about them and a safe healthy place to be themselves. If they don't grow up feeling like they belong, they may go somewhere else to find a place to belong such as partying with friends, gangs, or with older people who will use their loneliness and unhappiness to get them into a relationship or doing things they wouldn't usually do such as drinking, doing drugs, running away, or bullying others.

Activity

A great way to bond or connect with your child is to do things with them like playing a game in or outside of the house, reading a book, cooking, watching a learning video, visiting family or friends, talking with them about their day or other things that are important to them, cultural activities, going for a walk, or doing homework. Doing things together will help create happy memories that you and your child will remember for a lifetime.

Learning

Learning can be very fun for a child and a way to feel closer to others. Children need to learn new things every day, even if it's as simple as learning a new color or number. Things that are harder take longer to learn such as arts & crafts, spelling or math, catching a ball, or traditional dancing, drumming, or singing. So be patient and encouraging so that your child doesn't want to give up.

Acknowledgment

Remember how much you loved getting compliments or being noticed when you did something good when you were growing up? Well, your child will love that too. So take the time to let her/him know when they do something good, positive, helpful, or kind. Children love making someone else happy with their actions so this is a great way to encourage them to do positive things.

Nurturing

In order for a plant to grow, we need to nurture it by making sure it has enough water and light, and by pulling out weeds which can be harmful to its growth. Children need to be nurtured as well. All children want to be hugged, paid attention to, taken out to do fun things, talked with, told stories, or told that they are loved.

Compassion

Having compassion means you care about how other people are doing or feeling. It means you are not too hard on them when they are unhappy, been hurt by others, or have done something wrong. Having compassion will help your child feel loved and cared for, and will help them to learn to have compassion for others.

Engagement

Engagement is connecting with others by listening, paying attention, and making them feel welcome and valued. Be sure to pay attention when your child is talking to you, let them know you are happy to see them, and never be afraid to tell them that you love them. It is also very important to be engaged in your child's life outside of your home: in other people's homes, at school, or with friends to make sure they are safe, only doing things they are allowed to do, and know that you are there to support them.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PARENTING SKILLS?

Parenting should be a fun, loving, and happy experience, but it is also a big responsibility. It takes work to make sure that our children grow up healthy, safe, happy, fed, housed, learning, compassionate, proud, and confident. We all need to learn different skills to play a game, drive a car, or do crafts. Parenting also requires lots of different skills that we need to learn to do the best job possible for our children. Some of the most important skills are communication (how to talk with them), discipline (not punishment), teaching (helping them learn the alphabet, to read, to write, etc), cooking healthy food, setting healthy boundaries, how to handle disappointment, and many other important things.

What happens if we weren't raised by loving, supportive, and healthy people? We might not know how to give, show, express or teach love and respect to our own children. But the good news is that we can learn how! For most Native people, their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents grew up in a time when they experienced oppression, racism, and the loss of their traditional and cultural ways, including the way they raised their children. They experienced residential schools where they were not cared for by loving, supportive, and caring people. This created a lot of confusion, fear, frustration, hopelessness, and anger. Since they grew up in that environment, they did not learn how to be a good parent. Instead they learned a lot of unhealthy ways to punish children such as shaming, hitting, and hollering instead of using healthy discipline that taught children good lessons. You may be one of the people who were negatively affected and suffered because of this reality, but you can choose to break the cycle and learn healthy parenting skills so that your children grow up healthy and happy and able to be healthy supportive parents to their own children.

I want to be a good role model for my child

A child learns from everything they see and hear from everyone they come in contact with, especially their parents. Being a good role model is one of the most important parts of parenting. Take time every day to talk to and listen with your child and to teach

them about traditional and cultural values. Since you are your child's most important role model, they will do what you do. So you need to be aware of what you are teaching them with what you do, not just what you say. Here are some important things to role model for children:

- How to handle disappointment when they don't get something that they want
- Showing respect, listening and not talking back or interrupting
- Healthy, safe relationships – with friends, family, and dating
- Studying and doing well in school
- Setting goals to reach their dreams
- Being a helpful member of the house by doing their share
- Turning down drugs and alcohol
- Sharing your things, as well as yourself
- Valuing the gift of life – not harming them self or others
- Learning about and practicing hunting, cooking, and craftwork
- Learning about and practicing cultural traditions and beliefs
- Praying to the Creator and participating in ceremonies
- Being patient and supportive of other people
- Saying “I love you.” These words are one of the greatest gifts a child can be given. Hugs and kind words also let them know that they are cared for and it teaches them to value it.

Parents and other caregivers are the main role models in a child's life, so you need to teach them patience and a never-give-up attitude. Children who are supported, know they are loved, have a safe place to be, and feel good about themselves are less likely to turn to alcohol and drugs or other unhealthy things to deal with disappointment, frustration, or anger.

We are not born knowing everything about parenting and being a good parent is not always easy. Ask for help when you need it from friends, family, Elders, counsellors, medicine people, or from a nurse or doctor. Asking for help is not a weakness; it is a great strength to role model for your children.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO BEFORE MY BABY IS BORN?

Quit all unhealthy habits – Smoking, drinking, and using drugs can really hurt your baby before and after they are born. Since you share your blood with your baby before they are born and they are exposed to everything you put into your body when you are breast feeding them, you need to be sure to only eat and drink healthy things. Smoking can cause lung problems, low birth weight, and learning challenges. Drinking can cause Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) effects. Drugs can cause your baby to be born addicted to the same drugs you were using; this is very painful and damaging to their body and brain.

Find a doctor and set up your first appointment

It is sometimes hard to find a doctor or see them quickly, so be sure to set an appointment as soon as possible so that you can find out what foods to eat, what vitamins to take, what exercise you need, and how often you need regular pregnancy check-ups. Talk to them about immunization shots so that you have enough information and time to make a good decision for your child.

Eat healthier – Everything you eat and drink will either help or hurt your baby's development before they are born. Start taking a pre-natal vitamin, your doctor can prescribe this and your medical coverage may pay for it. A doctor or nurse can tell you what types of foods to eat or avoid eating to help ensure you have a healthy pregnancy. You will be your child's role model, so when they are ready to eat solid foods you need to feed them and yourself the healthiest foods you can afford. You can find healthy recipes to cook on a limited budget in UNYA's cookbook 'Eating Healthy on a Budget' on UNYA's website at www.unya.bc.ca or you can pick up a copy at our main office.

Make sure your medical insurance will cover what you need

Doctor's appointments, the birth of your baby, staying in the hospital, and vitamins will all cost you money if you don't have medical coverage. If you don't have medical coverage, call your First Nations Band or BC Medical right away at 1-800-663-7100 to find out how you can get medical coverage.

Read about pregnancy - There are many pregnancy books that you can read for free from the library or that you can buy at a book store. You can also find out more information on the web or from your family, friends, or doctor. The information you learn can help make your pregnancy easier by letting you know what to do when something new and unexpected happens. Each pregnancy may be different, so you may need to learn something new each time.

Let your support system know that you are pregnant – Family, friends, youth workers, social workers, and others may be able to help you with small or large things during and after your pregnancy. So be sure to let others know what would be helpful for you as soon as possible.

Let your other children know – It will help them to understand that there will be changes in your home and in their life, that you will still love them, and that they don't have to be jealous.

First three months (trimester)

Get some comfortable clothes to wear - Stick with baggy clothes at first to save money (you'll likely be wearing them after the pregnancy for awhile anyway). You can get maternity clothes when you get a little bigger.

Sign up for classes – Programs such as Nobody's Perfect or Strengthening Families are great ways to meet other parents and to learn about and prepare for pregnancy, birth, and parenting.

Think about the supplies you will need – Make a list of what you'll need, window shop, and compare prices before the baby is born as you may be too busy and tired to do it once the baby comes. After the baby is born you will know what color and size of clothing you will want for your baby.

Start bonding with your baby – Parents often talk or sing to their baby while they are still in their stomach (uterus) to soothe them and to let them know their voice before they are born. You can also listen to soothing music that will help to keep you both calm.

Start exercising – Walking, swimming, and yoga are all good, safe, and low impact activities. They can help you relax, build your strength and energy, keep in shape, and make your birth easier.

Let your boss know - You don't have to set up maternity leave right away, but your boss will appreciate knowing as soon as possible. This is true, especially if you need to do different duties.

Second Trimester (months 4-6)

Plan the big event - Decide how you will get to the hospital (who will drive you and are they available in the middle of the night?), how will you reach your partner, family, or birth coach, arrange for your other children to be taken care of (are they available to pick them up in the middle of the night or pick them up at school?).

Pre-register at the hospital - This will save you from doing paperwork when you're in labour. You can also ask for a tour.

Third Trimester (months 7-9)

Pack your bag - Babies sometimes come early, so get your bag ready, and put it where you can grab it quickly. These things might be helpful: Hair ties, lip balm, bathrobe, pillow, nightgown, socks, slippers, music, watch, phone & charger, books, camera, glasses, batteries, contacts and solution, toothbrush & paste, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, brush, change of clothing, pads, shoes and socks, a small blanket, money for the cafeteria or vending machine, pen and paper, nursing bra and breast pads, baby's going home outfit and/or outfit for hospital picture, baby blanket, baby socks or booties, and baby hat. Have someone bring baby's car seat when it's time to go home, even if you're taking a taxi.

Get your home ready - You may not feel like cooking, cleaning, or anything else in the first month after your baby is born because it involves so much adjustment. Set up baby's room or bed, get baby clothes and furniture, pay your bills, and run your errands.

Budgeting – Make sure you know how much money you will have after baby is born. You should plan your spending to make sure that you have the things you need and can make a good decision on what is most important to have if you have to choose.

LEGAL THINGS YOU SHOULD DO AFTER BABY IS BORN

Choose a Name

Your baby must have a first name (given name) and a last name (surname). You can also give them one or more middle names. The baby's last name can also be both parents last names together if you'd like (ie: Jones-Brown).

Register Your Baby's Birth

The birth registration creates a legal record of your baby's birth and name. You must fill out the Registration of Live Birth form within 30 days after the birth of your baby. The form is available at the hospital where you give birth, from your midwife, or online at www.vs.gov.bc.ca (click on 'How to Register a Birth')

Applying for Canada Child Benefits & Taxes

When you register your baby's birth, you can also apply for Canada Child Tax Benefits (ie: family allowance) by filling in the section on the back of the Registration of Live Birth form (this has to do with your taxes and you will be giving consent for the info to be sent to the Canada Revenue Agency). Even if you have a low income, you should do your taxes every year so that you can get any tax benefits that you may be entitled to.

How to Order a Birth Certificate: A birth certificate is used for official identification as proof of a person's name, birth date, and place of birth. To order a birth certificate apply online at www.vs.gov.bc.ca and click on "How to Order a Birth Certificate"

"Indian" Status Card – If they are eligible, you can apply for your child's Status Card (you may have to wait until they are two years old) at Indian and Northern Affairs at # 600 - 1138 Melville Street on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only (9:00am - 4:00pm)

Medical Coverage

You must fill out and submit the [Medical Services Plan \(MSP\) Baby Registration Form](#) within 60 days of your baby's birth. It is available at the hospital, from your midwife, or online at www.health.gov.bc.ca/exforms/msp/baby_enrolment.html, then click "Baby Enrolment/Addition of Newborn."

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AFTER BABY IS BORN

It is best to know what will happen after your baby is born so you can prepare for any life changes and learn new skills so that they don't become too stressful. Here are some important things:

- Hospital staff will help you to learn about the best way to breastfeed (nurse) your baby. If you're having problems with nursing, talk to a doctor or nurse as they may be able to help you make sure that your baby is getting enough nutrition.
- Hospital staff will show you how to safely bathe a baby; these tips will also be useful as they grow. Never leave a child alone in or near water and make sure that the water is never too hot as it can cause severe burns to a child's sensitive skin.
- Read "How do I know if my child needs to see a doctor" on page 14 so that you are ready to recognize the ways that a child may become sick and/or need to see a doctor.
- You may get less sleep as baby needs to be fed every few hours when they're small, so they wake up during the night
- It will get harder to find time to take a shower, have a nap, pay attention to your other children, spend time with your partner, or visit with friends or family so be sure to find help when you need it from your partner, family, and friends
- You will have to spend more money on food, diapers, baby sitters, car seat, clothes, and many other things you will need. You will need to learn how to spend your money wisely. You should write a list of all the things you NEED (rent, food, clothing, bus fare, baby toys, cable, hydro, etc) before you spend on things you don't need (movies, junk food, magazines, etc) so that you will have enough food and other things until you get money again.
- Babies grow really fast, so you will always need new clothes and shoes for them. This will be expensive unless you plan ahead to help save money. Buy a few things before they are born, find sales, buy at 2nd hand stores, or get used stuff from family and friends.

- Each child has a different personality, way of learning, energy level, sensitivity, and many other things, so you need to be ready to learn new ways of parenting a new child so that each child's needs are being met. This will help to ensure that no one get stressed out from trying to make the child act exactly like your other child does. Never favor one child over the other as this will cause jealousy, tension, and low self-esteem.
- Having a baby can sometimes really mess with a woman's hormones and cause you to have mood swings from happy to sad and back again or trouble concentrating and sleeping. Some women have mood swings for up to 10 days after having their baby - this is normal. If you feel depressed, don't care about things, or if others are worried that you are different than your normal self, you need to talk to a doctor right away as you may have postpartum depression which could be long lasting and dangerous to your health.
- Who will be your support system when you need a break or other help? Talk to your partner, family, friends, youth worker, or other supportive people before your baby is born so that you are prepared for when you need some help.
- Read all other sections of this booklet as they are all helpful. But if you don't have enough time right now, be sure to read these ones first and the others as soon as possible:
 - ✓ BALANCE
 - ✓ What do I have to do before baby is born?
 - ✓ SIDS prevention, what steps can I take?
 - ✓ How do I know if my child needs to see a doctor?
 - ✓ Why is my baby crying?
 - ✓ My baby / child won't sleep
 - ✓ Why should I worry about my child's babysitter?
 - ✓ Is my home safe for my baby or toddler?
 - ✓ Why should I worry about the playground
 - ✓ I want my child to be safe
 - ✓ Feeling stressed out?
 - ✓ Helpful websites, phone numbers, and programs
 - ✓ Emergencies

WHEN I GROW UP I'LL NEVER SAY THAT TO MY CHILD

Have you ever squeezed out too much toothpaste and tried to get it back in? You can't do it. Out of frustration, we sometimes say things we don't mean. Once the words are out, you can't take them back. Remember how painful it was when you were a child and someone said something mean or hurtful to you? You may not notice, but children are always listening even when you think they are not. So don't say hurtful or negative things about anyone when children are within listening distance. Here are some examples of common things no one should say:

- "Can't you do anything right?" (makes them feel stupid and they start to believe they can't do anything right)
- "My life would be so much better if I didn't have kids" (even if you feel this way at the moment, never say it to your child)
- "Here let me do it, you are doing it all wrong" (instead you could be patient and teach them how to do something new)
- "Everybody else can do it, why can't you?" (comparing them to other people makes them feel less valued and loved)
- "I can't stand you, get out of my sight" (if you are frustrated because of your own low patience level, then work on that don't blame your child)
- "There's no reason to be afraid" (makes children feel stupid for being afraid, rather you should help them understand why they might be afraid and how to calm themselves down)
- "What's wrong with you?" (is never a good thing to say as you are saying there is something wrong about them that they will believe is true even if you are saying it out of anger)
- "Your dad is a ... / your mom is a..." (saying negative things about their other parent is very hurtful to a child. If you have to talk to your child about the other parent's behavior for safety or other reasons, then you should discuss it calmly and focus only on what is not safe and why you are doing certain things)
- "Because of what you did, we broke up" (children can carry guilt through life if they believe that they are the reason their parents broke up)

SIDS PREVENTION - WHAT STEPS CAN I TAKE?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also called crib death, is puzzling. It has no clear symptoms or warning signs. Experts don't know exactly what causes it, or why it can strike healthy infants between 1 and 12 months of age. Some theories show that the baby's upper airway gets blocked making the baby suffocate. What experts do know is that there's a lot you can do to prevent SIDS including the following:

Always put baby to sleep on his or her back

- When babies sleep on their sides or stomachs, their risk for SIDS is higher
- Make sure everyone who takes care of your baby know to always use the back sleep position

Babies are not strong enough to move things that may be blocking or limiting their breathing. To prevent smothering or suffocation:

- Always put baby to sleep on a firm surface, such as a safety-approved mattress with a fitted sheet
- Don't use thick blankets, quilts, pillows, sheepskin, or puffy, pillow-like crib bumpers in baby's crib or bed
- Keep soft toys away from baby when they are sleeping

Don't smoke around your baby

- Smoking when you're pregnant is a major risk factor for SIDS
- Second-hand smoke around your infant also increases the chances of SIDS. So, don't let anyone smoke around you or your baby or in your home or car.

Have your baby sleep nearby, but not with you

- When baby sleeps in the same room as Mom, studies show it lowers the risk of SIDS. But it's dangerous for a baby to sleep with an adult as they may not be able to breathe against your body, against a pillow, or under the blankets. This is true anywhere including a bed, armchair, floor, or couch.
- Do not lie down when breast feeding your baby as you may fall asleep and smother the baby. Babies are not strong enough to wake you up or move away, and they cannot cry if their mouth

is covered. So be safe and always breast feed sitting up and make sure you are fully awake to ensure baby is safe.

Breastfeeding is helpful

- Breastfeeding your baby may lower the risk of SIDS by as much as half, though experts aren't sure why. Some think breast milk may protect babies from infections that increase their risk of SIDS. It is also very helpful in building up your child's immune system and giving them all the vitamins and nutrients they need in their first year of growth.

Consider using a pacifier when putting baby to sleep

Putting baby to sleep with a pacifier may also help prevent SIDS, though researchers aren't sure why. There are a few tips to follow when using a pacifier:

- If you're breastfeeding, wait until your baby is at least one month old before starting to use a pacifier. Introducing a pacifier too soon can lead to nipple confusion, and cause baby to prefer the pacifier's nipple over Mom's.
- Don't force baby to take the pacifier if s/he doesn't want it
- Don't leave or put a pacifier or bottle in baby's mouth after they fall asleep
- Keep the pacifier clean and buy a new one if the nipple is damaged
- Never give honey to a child under one year old. Botulism and the bacteria that cause it may be associated with SIDS.

Keep baby from overheating

- Because overheating may increase a baby's risk of SIDS, dress your infant in light, comfortable clothes for sleeping, don't put too many covers on them, and keep the temperature in their room at a level that's comfortable for an adult.
- If you're worried about baby staying warm, dress them in a "onesie", pyjamas that cover arms, legs, hands, and feet. Remember, don't use a blanket, as baby can get tangled in it, or pull the blanket over his or her face. place a fan in your baby's room pointing at the wall on warmer days to keep air circulating, leave the door open, or open a window if it is safe.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD NEEDS TO SEE A DOCTOR?

Parents should always get professional medical care for their child when worried about their health. Phoning or seeing a nurse or doctor can help you to understand how urgent a health concern is and what you need to do about it. See the 'Parenting Resources' section of this booklet for phone numbers, websites, and other info that can help you help your child when it is not an emergency.

In case of an **EMERGENCY** call '911' immediately.

We cannot list all things to worry about, but these are common things that you should take a baby to the doctor or emergency room for as soon as possible:

- ✓ Any breathing problems (fast, difficult, noisy, long-lasting)
- ✓ Long-lasting or severe pain such as an earache, sore throat, headache, stomach ache, or injury
- ✓ Eye goop that is thick, sticks the eyelids shut, and doesn't get better during the day
- ✓ If they are vomiting or have diarrhoea and aren't able to keep down enough liquids to make them pee at least once every six to eight hours -- this could be a sign of dehydration. **Severe dehydration needs to be treated in the emergency room.**
- ✓ Vomit or diarrhoea that contains blood
- ✓ A stiff neck, extreme lack of energy and the illness seems to be getting worse
- ✓ Has been exposed to a contagious illness such as the flu, chickenpox, measles, or mono
- ✓ High or long-lasting fever (babies up to 3 months old: over 100.4 F or 38C or children 3 months to 3 years: higher than 102 F or 38.8C). Or if the baby is not responding, can't stay awake, and is severely lacking in energy.
- ✓ If you are unable to nurse them or they are not eating or drinking enough food to nourish them

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT DIAPER RASH?

What causes diaper rash?

Enzymes in pee or poop can break down the protective oils on a baby's skin which can lead to the start of a rash. The rash will get worse from contact with moisture (pee) and the rubbing of a diaper on a baby's skin when they move around. It is best to prevent rashes from happening by regularly cleaning and airing out of the area covered by the diaper. If you are not sure how to clean a baby well, ask a doctor, nurse, or another parent.

What does a rash look like?

A regular rash is usually a group of small red bumps that can lead to a painful or infected rash if not taken care of right away. More painful, irritated, or infected rashes will have larger red bumps, larger red areas, and possibly even pus (may need to see doctor).

How is diaper rash treated?

A regular rash can be treated through careful and regular washing and airing out of the entire area covered by a diaper. A rash that is more than just small red bumps or taking more than a few days to heal may need medication (usually a cream) so be sure to check it out with a doctor or nurse as soon as possible. For a regular rash try the following:

- Use a soft baby washcloth and water to gently clean the area of pee and poop (remember that you can't see it all as it may flow or get squished between their butt cheeks or vaginal area. Do not use soaps or packaged wipes as they can strip the skin of its protective oils which can make things worse.
- Since moisture can make a rash worse, it is helpful to leave the diaper off for 15-30 minutes to let the baby's skin dry out.
- You can buy baby creams to help protect a baby's skin between diaper changes. Be sure to ask a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist which is the best one for your baby's rash.
- It is important not to leave baby in a wet or poopy diaper for too long as it can make the rash worse. So be sure to change their diaper regularly.

WHY IS MY BABY / CHILD CRYING?

A baby's cry is their only way of telling you when they need something (diaper change, food, sleep). Responding to their cries meets their needs and gives them a sense of security. Babies always have a reason for crying. As a parent you may feel frustrated and tired, but try to be calm and figure out why they are crying as that will help you meet their needs and stop them from crying for a long time. Do not just pick them up or rock them all of the time as they may become spoiled and that won't help you find out what is really wrong.

- Is baby hungry? Children grow at huge rates during their first few years, so they regularly need lots of nutritious food
- Gas hurts! Gently pat or rub baby's back to help move the air bubbles up for a burp.
- Is baby thirsty?
- Are they too hot or too cold?
- Diaper change? Always change a dirty diaper right away as leaving it can cause soreness and rash.
- Boredom - Your baby may just want some attention or to be stimulated with a story, toys, or talking to them.
- Tiredness - Baby may need a nap.
- Allergy – Some babies have milk allergies which causes bloating that can hurt a baby's tummy. If you're breastfeeding you may have to also cut out milk/dairy products.
- Illness - Baby will show symptoms such as a fever, diarrhoea rash, loss of appetite, holding their ear if it hurts, vomiting, etc.
- Stress - If you're tense and nervous with your baby, he will sense it and it can make him tense too. Try to relax and ask friends and family to help so you have time to relax.
- Teething - Starts at about 5 or 6 months, and may go on until the age of 2 or longer. Baby will need something safe to chew on to help soothe their gums such as a teething ring.
- Terrible twos – This is one of the worst things for you to believe about your child. Although children are more likely to explore, talk, and get into mischief when they are 2-3 years old, it is not a natural thing for them to throw tantrums, misbehave, or talk back. By calling it the Terrible Twos, it makes it easier for the child to get away with misbehaving because we expect them to, so we allow it to happen.

MY BABY / CHILD WON'T SLEEP

Newborns wake up many times during the night to eat as they need lots of food to help with the large amount of growth and development. So you need to make a plan to make it through this time without causing stress for your baby or yourself.

Breastfeeding mothers need help too! - Don't think that because the mother is breastfeeding that it is all easy. It is helpful to have a comfortable chair to sit in when feeding, especially at night as you shouldn't lay down to feed your baby as there is a risk of smothering them if you fall asleep. Nursing moms will greatly appreciate it if their partner gets up to bring the baby to her while she wakes up fully and gets ready in the chair.

Taking turns - Agree before you go to bed at night which one of you will get up with the baby first to change their diaper or feed them if you are using a bottle also.

Some noise is ok - Many people think babies need total quiet around them to be able to sleep, this is not true. Babies get used to having noise around them, so will adjust easily enough. When it is really loud, sudden, angry sounding, or too quiet the baby may be scared awake, but otherwise the noises of daily living are fine.

Learn the different ways your baby likes to be held - Babies like to be held chest to chest, cradled, facing away from you, and many other positions. Find the position that your baby feels most comfortable with and try soothing them in that position.

Don't be embarrassed to sing and talk to your baby - The sound of your voice is very soothing to your baby and it is part of the bonding process (especially for fathers if they aren't bottle feeding the child).

A warm bath - Can soothe baby before bedtime. Always test the bath water before putting baby in to make sure it is not too hot, never leave a child alone in or near water, and have a towel to wrap baby in right away to prevent a cold.

Gentle bouncing rocking - Be careful not to bounce baby too much, too fast, or too hard as you may upset their stomach.

Pacifiers – Can be used sometimes, but should not be used too often as it makes the baby dependent on it.

Make sure they are not sick – Read the “How do I know if my child needs to see a doctor” section for more info.

As your child grows

A lack of sleep can cause a bunch of other problems including poor behaviour, grumpiness, and a lack of concentration. Try these things to help you set a good bedtime and sleeping routine:

- ✓ You need to keep the bedtime routine fairly consistent (same time, place, things that they do, etc), but you need to make sure your child who is over 2 years old knows that sometimes things can't be the same (if you're staying at Gramma's house, if you are on a road trip, if an emergency comes up, etc)
- ✓ Give them a half an hour warning and a routine of putting away toys, books, getting school supplies ready for the morning rush, and putting away clothes and shoes.
- ✓ Spend time unwinding with a quiet activity 15 minutes before bedtime (reading them a story, bath, singing, talking)
- ✓ Allow soft music or a nightlight if they need it
- ✓ Leave the room while your child is still awake and let them know that you will come back to check on them later so that they feel safe and cared about
- ✓ Remain calm, but firm when your child calls for you
- ✓ Have reasonable consequences if your child refuses to go to sleep (ie: no new toy, no tv, etc)

Do not do the following:

- Don't make TV part of the bedtime routine
- Don't give caffeinated sodas or sugary drinks in the evening
- Don't negotiate. Children will talk and talk and talk until they know you won't allow it anymore. You are the one in charge so be firm, but gentle when setting boundaries.
- Don't allow frequent interruptions to the bedtime routine
- Don't make lying down together or rocking your child to sleep a regular part of the bedtime routine as they will always want it

FOOD AND EATING

It is always important for both parents to eat healthy foods while pregnant, while breast feeding, and as your child grows up. Being pregnant or nursing does not mean you can eat as much as you want; instead, you need to make sure you are only regularly eating healthy foods with healthy snacks in between meals when you need it. When your baby is growing inside of you, you are its only source of vitamins and minerals that it needs to grow strong and healthy; when you are breast feeding, your baby is depending on you to pass on nutrition that will help their body and brain grow and to build up their immune system so that they can resist germs and diseases. As they grow, you parents and caregivers need to be good role models and to take care of themselves by eating healthy food that will help them to get the nutrition that they need to stay healthy physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Here are some things to remember when choosing what to eat and preparing snacks or meals:

- ✓ **Focus on fruits and veggies.** Eat at least five servings of fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables each day
- ✓ **Go for the grains.** Two servings at every meal is best, including high-fibre cereal, whole-grain bread, rice or pasta
- ✓ **Calcium for building bones.** You need 1,000 mg a day. Try low-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese; or you can find calcium in some vegetables or as a vitamin.
- ✓ **Pump up the protein.** You need 71 daily grams from lean meats, skinless chicken, cooked fish, and cooked beans
- ✓ **Vitamins.** Ask your Doctor if you need a pre-natal (before birth), multiple-vitamin, mineral supplement, or more calcium to help you take in the nutrition needed to nourish your child and yourself. Remember, your child may need them too.
- ✓ **Choose drinks wisely.** Remember, whatever you drink, your baby drinks too. So drink water, low-fat milk, 100% fruit and vegetable juices, or decaffeinated teas. Do not drink alcohol when you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- ✓ **Only small amounts of sugar** as it is linked to diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and learning difficulties in children. Fake sweeteners such as aspartame are thought to be linked to cancer and many other health issues.

- ✓ **Stay away from junk food** such as pop, chips, chocolate, candies, french fries, hamburgers, and hotdogs as they have very little nutrition, but lots of calories, carbohydrates, fat, and other things that are not good for you or your child's health.
- ✓ **Balance your meals.** Every bite should be full of nutrients to ensure good health for you and your baby. Pregnancy is no time to drastically cut calories or skip meals!
- ✓ **Always wash your hands before preparing food**, especially when preparing baby formula as germs can be passed on to your child and lead to sickness such as diarrhoea.

Pregnant women are advised not to eat certain foods to help avoid any risks of seriously affecting their baby's development. Here are the culprits: E. Coli, Toxoplasmosis, Salmonella, Hepatitis A, and Listeria contamination

Foods to avoid include raw or undercooked meat, some raw vegetables such as sprouts, unpasteurized milk or juice, raw or undercooked chicken or eggs, imported soft, unpasteurized cheeses, smoked fish, pâté, sushi and un-cooked shellfish, and some fish like tuna and swordfish may contain high levels of mercury which is not good for a baby. Ask your doctor what other things you should avoid.

Other things to remember:

- If a baby doesn't finish a bottle or a jar of baby food, throw it away as refrigerating and re-heating it will not remove the harmful bacteria introduced from a baby's mouth
- Do not use perishable items like milk, formula, or food that has been left out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours
- No honey for infants younger than one year old as bacterial spores are present that can cause infant botulism

What foods can babies and children choke on?

Children under four years old do not chew some foods well enough to swallow without choking. Foods that are slippery, round, hard, sticky, or smooth can be hard for a child to chew properly. It is very important for those looking after and feeding children to learn how to help a child if they choke.

Foods such as popcorn, peanuts and other small nuts, sunflower seeds, hard candies or cough drops, gum, grapes, cheese, cereal, raisins, things that can break off in chunks like apples or carrots, and other things like these can easily get stuck in a child's throat causing them to choke and stop breathing.

These are easy ways to make foods safer for your child to eat:

- Things like hot dogs, sausages, fruits, and vegetables should be cut into pieces small enough for a child to swallow easily
- Peanut butter and other thick pastes or sauces should always be spread thinly and not eaten off the spoon in blobs
- Stringy foods like celery, spaghetti, or noodles should be cut into smaller pieces
- Food that is tough to chew like steak or bagels should be cut into very small pieces otherwise children cannot break it down with their small teeth
- Bones in chicken, meat, or fish must be removed before a child begins eating
- Some medications including those for teething pain or cough can numb mouth and throat muscles which will make it even harder for a child to swallow, so talk to your child's doctor about the safest way to feed your child when they are sick

Things to remember when feeding children:

- Never leave a child alone while they are eating
- Limit distractions such as TV, pets, and game-playing so you and your child can focus on what they are eating. This is helpful to prevent choking, but also helps them to focus on their food so they do not over-eat.
- Place children sitting upright in a comfortable high chair or booster seat with a table surface that provides support
- For babies you are spoon feeding - wait until their mouth is clear before giving more food
- Watch for "chipmunking"-- when a child fills his cheeks with food and doesn't swallow it. Teach children to swallow what is in their mouth before putting in any more food.
- Keep children from giving each other food

WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT MY CHILD'S BABYSITTER?

You may decide to leave your baby with family or friends for short or long periods of time. You should know and feel comfortable with the person you choose to leave them with – even if it's just for a few minutes as they will be responsible for your child's safety. Before you choose someone to look after your child:

- Have them hold and play with your child to see how they act together and if your child is okay with them
- Ask how they would deal with a crying or fussy baby to be sure they are patient and will not ignore, hit, or holler at the child
- Watch as they feed and diaper your baby
- Make sure to get references from other people so that you know they are responsible and will take good care of children

Important safety items to tell them before you leave:

- Your expectations about the care and attention of your child
- That it's never okay to hit, holler at, or shake your child
- That they must never leave the baby unattended in or near water or on a change table or couch that they may fall off of
- How often you expect your baby to be checked when sleeping
- When your child need to eat and how to feed them safely

When the babysitter arrives:

- Allow time for them to play with your child before you leave so that your child is comfortable with them
- Show them where things are kept
- Show them how to warm a bottle or food and test it to make sure your child is not burned
- Tell them where you are going, when you expect to return, and how you can be reached so they know they can get help
- Tell them what to do if there are problems. Can they call you come home early if needed? Should they call someone else?
- Keep emergency numbers close to the phone including fire department, police, ambulance, poison information, doctor, hospital, helpful neighbour or relative, taxi
- Some personal information may be needed in an emergency, so write down you and your child's last name, home phone number and address, and child's BC Care Card number

IS MY HOME SAFE FOR MY BABY OR TODDLER?

There are many ways that a baby or child can get hurt that you might not think of. Here are some easy ways to protect children:

Babies may not be strong enough to help themselves

Babies cannot remove a blanket, stuffed toy, or other soft items OR they might not be able to lift themselves off of a blanket, couch or other soft surface that may be blocking their breathing

Children are curious - They always want to try, taste, or shake something; they will climb too high; and they will play with, eat or drink things that they don't know are not safe

Top Heavy - A child's upper body is much heavier than the bottom part of their body, so they can flip into bathtubs, toilets, garbage cans, and toy boxes. They can also flip out a window, off a balcony, or out of a crib if they are able to get up high enough.

Choking - Kids love to put everything in their mouths no matter how small, so keep floors and other areas clear. Check under furniture and cushions for things that a child could choke on.

Leaving the house – Let your child know that they can't leave the house without your permission or without an adult. Make sure they can't get outside by themselves where they may get hurt (cars, dogs, pools, cold weather, etc)

Windows - Keep all furniture away from windows as children could fall out of them. Use locks or window guards to limit the amount that a window can be opened by a child. Use only cordless window coverings or cut the strings off as children have died from having them get caught around their neck.

Electricity – Can burn or electrocute a child. Place covers on unused outlets and don't let children play with appliances.

Bathroom

Toilet – A child can flip into a toilet or tub and drown. You can buy a toilet lid lock so that it cannot be opened by a small child.

Faucets - Teach children to turn on cold water first and to test for temperature before using the water so they don't burn themselves.

Kitchen

Stoves - Use back burners and turn all handles to the back of the stove so that a child cannot pull it on top of themselves. Many children are burnt by hot water and steam.

Cupboards - Put things that interest a child in areas away from the stove and don't let them climb up to get things from cupboards

Counter tops and tables – Keep everything at least six inches away from the edge so a child cannot pull it on top of themselves. Choose tables with rounded corners as children often bump into them and might cut themselves if the corners are pointed.

Dangerous items – Knives, cleaning items, medicine, and other things can be dangerous. Put them in a place that children cannot reach and install drawer or cupboard locks if needed.

Child's Room

Toy boxes – Children like to hide in things so make sure the lid has a hinge, there are air holes, and the top is not heavier than a child can lift to get out.

Baby's Sleeping Area – No matter where you child sleeps or naps, you need to remove all things that might limit or stop their breathing. Things such as fluffy blankets, stuffed toys, pillows, bumper pads for cribs, and clothing can all suffocate a child.

Open Areas

TVs - Keep them on low solid furniture as far back as it can go. Most older TVs are very heavy in the front, so they can tip over easily if grabbed by a child or from climbing on the TV stand.

Fireplaces - Put barriers around them that will stop a curious child from getting to close and burning themselves. A gas fireplace window takes 45 minutes to cool down after it has been turned off.

Furniture - Bookshelves can fall over onto a child if they are bumped or climbed on, so attach it to the wall with anchor straps. Hot lamps can burn a child or start a fire if it comes into contact with curtains or falls onto furniture, carpets, clothing, beds, etc.

Plants - Many plants are poisonous. See www.the-baby-safety-site.com to check your plants

MY CHILD IS READY TO STOP USING DIAPERS

Children are usually ready to stop using diapers when they are 2 or 3 years old (some a bit younger). Children should not be potty trained until they are ready and the person who will be helping them learn to use a potty is ready and has the patience to make it a good and safe learning experience for the child. You can tell that a child is ready for potty training when they are able to notice and tell you when they need to pee or poop, they can help with taking off the diaper or underwear, and they don't like wearing a diaper anymore.

- If you are patient and helpful with the child, it should not take more than a few weeks to have them fully trained
- Remember that a child has to learn to control their bladder and pooing over time, so there may be accidents during and after potty training. Do not get angry with the child as that can make learning to use the potty much harder and scary.
- Be sure to give them positive feedback when they use the potty so that they know it is a good thing and you are proud of them for using it. This is especially true when they poop as they might think it is not okay, dirty, or embarrassing.
- It is best to use a child's potty that sits on the floor so that the child feels safe, can get on by themselves, and can get to it quickly when they need it
- If they will be using a regular toilet to potty train, you will need to help them and stay with them as they could fall in or off the toilet and hurt themselves. You should buy a children's toilet cover and a stepping stool to help them reach the toilet.
- You may want to let the child use a diaper when you leave the house in case they need to go quickly or don't feel comfortable using a toilet outside of your home
- Using diapers that are pull up style are helpful as your child can pull them up and down themselves when they go to the potty, so they don't have to wait for you to help them, and it gives them a sense of independence

CAN I LEARN FROM SUPER NANNY?

Shows like Super Nanny and Nanny 911 are a good way to see both good and not so good parenting styles in action. These types of shows can help you to see problems that you may be having with your own children, or want to avoid having in the future. They are great for those who like learning by watching, don't want to read parenting books, don't have family or friends around to ask for advice, and don't have access to a parenting professional to help you with your questions or problems. But remember, TV time is not real time, so changes will take more than a half an hour to happen.

Parenting shows, books, videos, and advice can help you:

- ✓ Understand what are the root causes of a child's problem behavior so that you can work on that, not just the behavior
- ✓ Tackle difficult problems, such as temper tantrums, nagging, hitting, back talking, or bedtime and mealtime battles
- ✓ Understand why it is important for both parents to help with parenting and discipline so that your child is not confused and/or playing you against each other to get their own way
- ✓ How parents can work together to prevent or stop problems with a child's behavior
- ✓ Understand how a parent's actions or inactions can lead to a child's bad behavior
- ✓ Create a plan to stop the negative behavior and replace it with a good and healthy behavior
- ✓ Understand basic and healthy discipline, including how to be firm, set limits, and be consistent
- ✓ Help you and your child understand how to talk and listen to each other in a healthy way to get your message across
- ✓ To help your child deal with anger, frustration, fear, jealousy, confusion, and disappointment in a healthy way

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY CHILD ISN'T LISTENING?

Children will behave or act in a way that they learn will get them what they want even if it is by crying, arguing, begging, and wearing you down until you say yes. If they think a behavior will lead to the answer they want, they will keep trying until you give in. Only you can stop yourself from giving in, it is not a child's responsibility. Since children may try to get away with things, you need to set clear boundaries in order to stop confusion and stress, ensure your child knows that some things are not up for debate, and that the parent makes the final decision. Note: if a child suddenly stops listening and acting out in a way that is unusual for them, they might have a problem that you need to help them with such as bullying, stress, anger, missing a parent, or disappointment.

Children become spoiled when they are not given good boundaries (rules), there is not consistency (things happening repeatedly), and they are allowed to treat others disrespectfully. In other words, someone is teaching them to behave in a spoiled way, it doesn't just come naturally. Do you notice that they listen to someone else, but not you? That is a clear sign that you must change your behavior before your child will change theirs. The good news is that it's not too late to change. These things can help you to change you and your child's behavior.

- You hear parents say "they're pushing my boundaries" - that's exactly what they are doing - testing your boundaries to see how far they can push them. So you need to always be firm with boundaries so that they know what is and is not allowed.
- Whether it is time outs, loss of toys, games or TV, extra chores, or grounding, it is very important that children have consequences when they do things they know they shouldn't
- Discipline is different from punishment because it teaches children to learn from their mistakes rather than making them suffer for them. It teaches children about consequences, respect, authority, and self-control.
- Punishment sends the wrong message as it teaches children that physical force is the way to solve problems and may grow

up to do it to their own children, that a parent can lose control of their emotions, and that they are not good children.

- It is not good to make threats you don't intend to carry out such as taking away TV or grounding them as this makes children think you are a push over, that they can get their way, and that you lie or are not reliable
- Praising your child when they behave in a good way is very important as it makes them feel good about themselves and their decisions; and reinforces good behavior
- Some parents think they should act more like friends with their children rather than as parents so that their children will like them more. This is not a good idea as it is confusing to children as they don't know who to look to for guidance, boundaries, and support when they need it. You can be kind and fun with your child without giving up your parenting responsibility and authority.
- 'No' has to mean 'no', not 'maybe'. If your child thinks that you will change your mind if they ask you more than once or by arguing, they will do it until they are forced to stop. You can let your children ask 'why' or 'why not', but they shouldn't be able to ask over and over again or argue with you as that is disrespectful and teaches them that boundaries and decision are able to be broken if they work hard enough at it.
- It is very confusing for a child to have parents who allow them to do something many times and then suddenly not allow it. Of course they will feel disappointed and angry. So you need to help them understand why things have changed and then remain consistent with it so that they are not confused.

Solutions

- ✓ Be patient and explain why they cannot do or have something. It is also helpful to remind them that they will not always get what they want even when they are adults, so disappointment is something normal that they have to get used to.
- ✓ Teach them that they will not get what they want unless they are always showing good behaviors, not just when they want something
- ✓ Let them know how they have to behave in public
- ✓ They will fight you and challenge you at first. Don't give in.

DOES MY CHILD NEED DAILY ROUTINES?

Children need routines as they help them feel secure and cared for. The following are good routines that will help keep your child on a regular schedule and help you to develop a strong healthy connection with them and others in the family:

- Children should be woken up at a time that will allow them to get all of the things done that they need to before leaving for school (bath, shower, eating, getting dressed, packing lunch and school bag)
- While a parent is fixing breakfast, the child can brush their teeth, comb their hair, get dressed, and fill their back pack
- Doing homework with your child will show them that you believe it is important and help them to feel supported. Even if they don't need help, you can still sit by them and read, write, or do a puzzle. It is helpful to do homework at a specific time each day away from the TV or other distractions.
- Meal should be eaten together at the table as a family so that you are paying attention to what you are eating and have a chance to talk with each other without distractions. Allow each child a turn to talk about their day and discuss any problems or issues at school, with friends, teachers, etc.
- When it is safe, allow children to help with preparing meals, setting the table, cleaning off the table, or doing dishes

Bedtime can be one of the most stressful times of the day if you are not firm and consistent with your child about when they have to go to sleep. To avoid this problem and make sure they get a good rest, try the following things:

- It is helpful to warn them 15-30 minutes ahead of their bedtime routine (brushing teeth, putting on pajamas) so that it is not a surprise. Also, reading them a bedtime story and letting them know you will be nearby if they become scared
- It is not good to let them have sugar close to bedtime as sugar makes it difficult for them to sleep as it makes them hyper.
- Do not let them avoid going to sleep by making you read them more than one story, lay down with them, asking questions, or calling you back into the room to tell you something. These are all ways for them to avoid going to sleep.

WHAT ARE SOME GOOD RULES AND BOUNDARIES?

Building personal boundaries should begin when children are very young. You should be a role model by calmly explaining to children what is not appropriate (ok to do) and why. If you explain to them why or why not, they will be more likely to accept and keep the boundary. It will also teach them to create healthy boundaries of their own.

Some good personal boundaries to teach a child:

- They have to respect personal space and privacy when others are doing private things such as bathing and changing
- They can't touch or take other people's stuff unless they have permission from that person
- They should stay separated from adult issues. Don't let them listen to adult conversations about adult-related topics including relationship issues and arguments
- They don't have to let others touch them and that it is safe to tell you if someone is touching them when they shouldn't or in a way that makes them uncomfortable

Examples of children crossing boundaries

- The child answers questions for the parent
- The child wants to be a part of adult conversations
- The child bosses the parent and siblings around

Starting point - Adults crossing boundaries

Respecting your children's personal boundaries teaches them how they should expect to be treated. It also helps them to value boundaries, including your own.

Here are some examples of boundaries that you, or others, should not cross or push with children:

Examples of crossing emotional boundaries

- Using shame - "I can't believe you did that" or "What kind of a person are you?"
- Sarcasm - "Way to go Einstein" or "A baby could do that"
- Guilt - "I do so much for you, can't you do this for me".

- Demeaning someone - “Everyone knows you have no talent”
- Placing a child in a role as an adult’s confidant/best friend - “I am so lonely. I am glad you are here to listen to me.”

Examples of crossing physical boundaries:

- Insisting children hug or kiss others
- Continuing to touch a child when they don’t want to be touched
- Hitting, pushing, shoving, or bumping
- Throwing things at them

Examples of crossing sexual boundaries:

- Being too physical including tickling, sitting children on your lap, touching or patting their bottom, and other things that make a child uncomfortable
- Commenting on a child’s body or how good their clothes make their bodies look
- Telling children sexual jokes
- Showing children sexual material
- Sharing sexual information
- Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of children
- Engaging in sexual activity with children

WHAT CAN CAUSE MY CHILD TO BE UNHAPPY?

Many things can lead to a child becoming unhappy, hurt, confused, or stressed. It is important for parents to be aware of these things and to try to prevent them from happening in the first place. It is also important to talk to your child about these things ahead of time so they will know who to tell or how to get help if and when they need to.

Bullying - They may be scared to tell you about it as bullies often threaten to hurt them if they do. It is good to drop by the school sometimes to let people know that someone is keeping an eye on your child, then it may be less likely people will pick on them.

Alcohol and Drug Use By People Around Them - This can cause fear, confusion, pain, and could put children at risk of being mentally, emotionally, physically, or sexually abused. If you will not stop drinking or using drugs, please do not allow others or yourself to do it around your child or in your home.

Criticism - Criticising is harmful to their self-esteem as they will feel like they can't do things right. It is better to talk to them nicely about what they can do better next time.

Divorce - When parents split up, they sometimes pay less attention to their child's needs. Children will often blame themselves for the break-up if they are not told by their parents that things will be okay and it is not their fault.

Embarrassment - Children may feel embarrassment about their home, parents, clothes, the way they look, and other things. We may not think that these things are important, but that is not the way children feel sometimes. They want to fit in and be liked.

Expectations – Parents sometimes put too high of expectations on their children. This can be very stressful as the child worries about making their parents proud or getting into trouble for not meeting their parent's expectations of them.

Grief –It is important to talk about grief and loss such as death or friends moving away so that children understand what has happened and how they can cope with it.

Guilt –When a child feels guilty about something they can become withdrawn, scared, and stressed out

Lack of Attention - Being ignored will stress your child, making him feel unloved, uncared for, jealous of others, and confused

No friends - If your child says they have no friends, check it out. Ask at the nursery, playgroup, or school, but remember that children will fall out with each other and make up just as quickly, so don't get too worried at first.

Physical punishment – Hitting, pushing, or bumping will cause your child to become stressed, fearful, and unhappy

Responsibilities - Give only tasks that children are physically and mentally old enough to do. Don't set them up for failure by asking them to do things they can't.

Sexual Abuse - Follow the same advice as for 'Violence'

Sibling Rivalry – Competition between brothers and sisters is normal, especially when children are close in age. If things are getting out of control with name calling, physical abuse, shaming, stealing each other's things, etc, then you need to make sure it stops and teach children that it is not okay to behave that way.

Teenagers Arguing - Hearing or seeing older brothers or sisters arguing with each other or with their parents can be scary, stressful, and confusing to younger children

Traumatic incidents - must be discussed openly and honestly so that a child can learn how to deal with it in a healthy way

Unhappy Parents – Children can often sense when others are unhappy, mad, or angry so try not to worry your child too much by letting them see, hear, feel, or be affected by your moods

Violence - If your child suffers physical abuse by your partner or another family member it is your responsibility to remove them from that person and keep them safe from harm. Your child may be at serious risk and the problem will not just go away unless you do something about it. You must seek help and guidance from family, friends, counsellors, or the police if needed.

WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT THE PLAYGROUND?

The playground is a great place for you to spend time with your child while also encouraging them to play with other children and to get exercise. It is important to pay attention to your child all of the time that you are out with them to make sure they are safe from things and people that may hurt them.

Be sure to keep these things in mind at all times:

- Check the equipment each time to make sure it is safe with no broken parts, splintering or cracking wood, or rusting metal
- Watch out for hooks, bolts, or sharp edges that stick out as it could cut a child or cause clothing to become entangled
- Look for things in the play area including the sandbox that can threaten a child's health and safety (needles, glass, garbage)
- The area around play structures should be covered with sand, rubber, or something similar to cushion a fall
- Make sure all the equipment is secured to the ground and doesn't pose a risk of tipping during play. If any equipment seems wobbly, or you notice loose or missing screws or bolts, tell the playground's maintenance authorities immediately.
- Check for gaps or spaces that are potentially dangerous: Ladder steps should be spaced in a way that children can't get stuck in between. The space between the steps should be smaller than 3.5 inches or larger than 9 inches.
- Be sure a child's clothing cannot choke or hurt them if it gets caught on or tangled on something (scarf, loose clothing, jewellery, drawstrings, neck warmer, etc)
- Choose a playground that is right for your child's age. Don't let them play on things that are too big or small for them.
- Be sure to immediately report any unsafe equipment or areas to the people operating the park or playground
- Always be careful with strangers as child abusers often hang around playgrounds and schools to be near children. Immediately report any suspicious people to the park or playground staff and the police.
- If there is no fence around the area that a child is playing with a ball or other item that they might chase after, be very careful as they might run out into traffic without thinking or checking for cars or bikes that might hit them.

I WANT MY CHILD TO BE SAFE

Signs of Abuse

The items below are some common safety concerns for children. Some of these behaviours may have other explanations, however it is important to assist your child no matter what the cause. Also, keep in mind that children do not always show obvious signs, but may do or say something that hints abuse. Only a few signs or symptoms are listed in each category below. If your child is being physically or sexually abused, you have a legal obligation to report it to the police and to protect your child. This may be very hard to do, but it will help to stop the abuse and let your child know that you believe and care about them.

Bullying

These things may mean that a child is being bullied at school or over the internet: "Losing" lunch money, aggression with siblings, anxiety or stress, can't sleep, doesn't want to go to school, avoids playing with others, or unexplained cuts, bruises, or sudden change in behavior (angry, moody, sad)

Emotional Abuse

These things may mean that a child being emotionally abused (made to not feel good about themselves with words or actions): sudden speech disorders, self-depreciation (I'm stupid, ugly, etc), overreaction to mistakes, fear of any new situation, inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve that'), neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation), extremes of passivity or aggression.

Neglect

Constant hunger, constantly tired, poor state of clothing, untreated medical problems, no friends, constantly looking for food or other items to have, or not bathing, brushing teeth, or changing clothes

Physical Abuse

Unexplained injuries or burns, excuses or refusal to explain injuries, wearing clothes to cover injuries - even in hot weather, refusal to undress for gym, bald patches, constant running away, fear of medical help or examination, peeing the bed, physically hitting others, self-destructive tendencies, aggression towards

others, fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched, or fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Sexual Abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way that is not appropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals (vagina or penis)
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-hurting, suicide attempts, or running away
- Regressing to younger behaviour such as becoming insecure, being clinging, thumb sucking, bed wetting, or playing with younger children's toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Trouble concentrating
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or other family member
- Starting to wet the bed
- Day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Wanting to cover their bodies up all the time with bulky clothes, wearing long sleeve shirts or pants only in warm weather when they used to wear t-shirts and shorts, or refusing to wear short or a bathing suit to gym class
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Note: A child may be experience a combination of different abuses or may not show any outward signs or may hide what is happening from everyone, so be aware and ask questions in a way that does not shut them down or scare them.

Suspected Abuse

If your child tells you that he or she has been abused it is important to stay calm. Any over-reaction by you may scare them or increase their feelings of guilt. Both emotions could discourage them from openly talking about the abuse. Be sensitive to their needs and let them know it is courageous of them to tell you what happened. Be a source of support and assure them you will help to try to take care of things.

- Stay calm and be reassuring, find a quiet place to talk
- Believe what you are being told
- Do not push too hard for information
- Be sensitive to their needs
- Say that you will do your best to protect and support them (but you may not be able to at all times so don't give them the wrong idea as they will feel let down if you don't do it)
- If you believe that they have been sexually abused, seek medical help and contact the police immediately
- If your child has told another adult, such as a teacher or school nurse, contact them to discuss it and any next steps
- Find out if the incident may affect how your child reacts at school. You may want to talk with your child's teacher so that they are aware of the issue and can be supportive and understanding with your child.
- Acknowledge that your child may have angry, sad, or even guilty feelings about what happened, but stress that the abuse was not the child's fault. Acknowledge that you will probably need help dealing with your own feelings too so that they know it is okay to feel confused, angry, or shame.

If you are unsure about what to do, you should talk to someone you trust such as a friend, family member, doctor, counsellor, social worker, youth worker, or police officer to find out more information so that you can make a decision about how to best deal with the problem. This may include separating the child from the abuser(s) or reporting the abuse and abuser to the police.

HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD GET READY FOR SCHOOL?

Children have to know some basic things before they start kindergarten and Grade 1, otherwise they will fall behind the rest of the class and may begin to feel bad about themselves. Children need to know the alphabet, how to count to 10, how to play with others, how to follow direction, pay attention, and read some basic words or they will be at a huge disadvantage. So it is very important that you help your child to learn these things. Remember, learning can and should be fun!

What your child should know before they start pre-school:

- How to get along without you
- Eating on their own
- Basic social skills (being polite, sharing, saying thank you)
- Paying attention / listening when someone is talking to them

What your child should know before they start kindergarten:

- How to say the alphabet from 'A – Z'. You can sing the ABC song with them and read books about the alphabet.
- How to count to 10: Make learning fun by counting cars, trees, people, and toys when you see them. Read them books about numbers and counting.
- Paying attention / listening when someone is talking to them
- How to understand what others are saying
- How to be understood by others
- How to get along and share with other children
- How to stay with an activity for 15 minutes or more
- How to sit still, listen, and concentrate for 15 minutes or more
- How to follow simple directions
- How to describe things: Help your child learn how to tell you how things look and what they do (ask them 'What's round and bounces, or what color is a tree, or what a fork is used for, etc)
- To name things in the environment (trees, grass, flowers)
- How to feed themselves
- How to put their jacket and shoes on by themselves
- How to do large and small muscle activities, such as cutting with scissors or riding a tricycle

FEELING STRESSED OUT?

Taking Care of Your Relationship

Parenting a baby can be a very stressful time in a relationship. It can be too easy for parents to neglect each other because the baby can take most of the focus and energy of the family. It is important that you find time to take care of your relationship. You can go on dates together; or at the very least, spend 15 minutes every day alone with your partner talking, visiting, and telling each other about your day.

Parenting on Your Own

Being a single parent can be hard work, so you need to build a strong support team that can help you when you need it. Be sure to talk to people about your needs as soon as possible to find out if there is any way that they can help you when you need it. Try to find people who can help with emotional support, friendship, shopping, emergency help, child care, and cultural teachings.

How can you stop being broke all the time?

Having children adds financial pressure to a family simply because of the physical needs of children. So when you're buying for your baby, you need to focus on what you really need, not just what you want. These things can help a lot:

1. Spend your money only on things your baby needs
2. Don't spend a lot on items your baby will grow out of quickly
3. Take advantage of opportunities to use hand-me-downs
4. Buy diapers in bulk
5. Make your own baby food. All you need is a small food processor or blender so you can blend fruits like apples, bananas and cooked veggies like carrots and sweet potatoes. You can also just mash them up with a fork. Making it is a lot cheaper and healthier than most baby foods found in the store.
6. If you can afford it, take advantage of sales to buy the next size clothes and shoes that your child will need
7. Ask your friends and family if you can have or borrow clothes, shoes, or a car seat that their child has grown out of
8. Get a "Healthy Eating on a Budget" cookbook from UNYA or online at www.unya.bc.ca

HOW DO I SHARE PARENTING WITH MY EX?

Shared parenting, especially after a bad break-up, can be exhausting and maddening. It can be difficult to get past the history of hurt and built-up resentment you may have with your ex, but if you want your child to grow up healthy and happy it is in their best interest that they see both parents as long as it is a safe situation for them. Parenting should be totally about the well-being of your children, not about parents or their disagreements. Children whose separated parents have a respectful and cooperative relationship feel more secure, happy, and loved.

- Both parents need to have similar rules, schedules, discipline, and rewards between households so children know what to expect and how to adjust to living in two different homes
- Children who see parents continue to work together are more likely to learn how to effectively and peacefully solve problems.
- Never use kids as messengers between parents as it stresses them out as they are put in the middle of your conflict
- Never say negative things about your ex to your children that they don't need to know as it is very upsetting for them to have their parent criticized. Children will often also relate the criticism to themselves as they are that person's child too.
- Major decisions should be made by both parents so that it does not cause tension and both parents get to help make good decisions for the child

When your child leaves for a visit, the following things can help make transitions easier:

- ✓ Help children get ready for change by reminding them a day before that they will be going to the other parent's home
- ✓ Help them pack so that they don't forget things they need or want to make their stay a positive one. Encourage them to bring familiar things like a stuffed toy or photograph.
- ✓ To make packing/unpacking easier and make kids feel more comfortable when they are at both parent's house, have kids keep a toothbrush, hairbrush, and pyjamas at both houses

When your child returns from a visit:

The beginning of your children's return to your home can be awkward as your child might feel guilty for leaving you or for enjoying being with the other parent. You can try the following to help your child adjust quickly:

- Let them know you are glad to see them
- Ask them how the visit was, but don't press for information that you don't need. If a child feels like you are just trying to find out information rather than being interested in their experience, they will feel awkward, stressed, and maybe angry
- Let them know about any major or important things that have happened that will affect them while they were gone so that they always feel a part of your home
- When children first come home, have some quiet time together - read a book, play a game, or some other quiet activity
- Children sometimes need a little time to adjust to the transition, so let them relax on their own for a short time
- Establish a special routine - play a game or have dinner each time your child returns so that they know what they are coming home to and that you are glad they've returned

Dealing with visitation refusal

Sometimes children refuse to leave one parent to be with the other. The problem may be one that is easy to resolve: They may just need the parent that they are going to visit to pay more attention to them, be kinder, or having more things that are interesting to them. They may also be worried about leaving one parent for the other. It may be an emotional reason, such as fight or a misunderstanding. Talk to your child about his or her refusal to find out why they do not want to go, don't just force them to go.

If your child is totally upset and doesn't want to talk, calmly speak with the other parent in another room away from the child and see if the visit can be rescheduled. When your child has calmed down, let them explain what they are worried about. Be sure to watch for signs of abuse or neglect so that you are not sending your child into an unsafe or unhealthy situation.

Parenting Resource List

24 hours Nurse Line 604-215-4700

Newborn Hotline

Tel: 604-737-3737

Parents in Vancouver or Richmond can phone to speak to a community health nurse about any health concerns they have about their babies (up to 2 years). Hours: Daily 8:30am – 5:30pm

Sheway

Vancouver Native Health, YWCA Crabtree Corner, VCHA
533 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC Tel: 604-216-1699

For women who are pregnant or parenting children less than 18 months old and who have current or past substance use issues. Includes help with housing, benefits for you and your child, A & D counselling, free baby food (when available), and juice and milk coupons, nutrition info. Daily hot lunches and access to food bags. Drop in Mon to Fri 11:30am - 3:30pm (incl. workshops).

Eagle's Nest Aboriginal Head Start Preschool

618 East Hastings (at Heatley St.), Vancouver, BC

Tel: 604-253-3354 Fax: 604-253-3440 Web: www.ahsabc.net

Classes: Mon to Fri 1st: 9am - 12pm 2nd: 12pm - 3pm
Prepares Aboriginal children 2½ - 5 years for school. Aboriginal culture and traditions incorporated. Includes snacks. No cost. Also offers family support and parent programs.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House

5288 Joyce Street (near Joyce Skytrain), Vancouver, BC

Ph: 604-435-0323 Web: www.cnh.bc.ca

Offers single moms support groups (Wednesdays 6:30-8:30, call to register), Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program (spring & fall groups, free, call to register), Family Place drop-in (\$12 month, call to register), Saturday Family Place Drop-in (10:30-12:30, cost \$2), Strong Start Program helps prepare children for school.

Aboriginal Mother's Centre Society

Tel: 604-253-6262

208 - 2019 Dundas Street (at Wall St.), Vancouver, BC

Aboriginal Parent Support Circle - Parent Support Services
#204 - 5623 Imperial Street, Burnaby, BC
Tel: 604-669-1616 Toll free: 1-800-665-6880
Fax: 604-669-1636 Email: office@parentsupportbc.ca

Safe, confidential, and non-judgmental place for Native parents to share, support, and learn from each other. Offers emotional and educational support to parents and caregivers of Native children. Weekly circles led by trained Aboriginal facilitators. Subsidies are available for child care and transportation if/when needed. Free.

**“Nobody’s Perfect” Parenting Program
Kiwassa Neighbourhood House**

2425 Oxford Street, Vancouver, BC Tel: 604-254-5401 ext. 227

A 6-8 week education & support program for parents of children aged 0-5 years. Offers opportunity for parents to learn new ways to deal with challenges, share experiences, and support each other. There is a First Nations parent groups. Childcare and transportation (if needed) are provided, as well as refreshments. Also offers a Mother Goose Toddler Group and Infant Group.

Burnaby Family Life Institute

#102 – 2101 Holdom Avenue, Burnaby, BC Tel: 604-659-2200
Email: info@burnabyfamilylife.org

Free and ‘by donation’ support programs for young parents. Includes: family drop-ins; parenting, single, and teen parenting; Nobody’s Perfect; boundary-setting, effective parenting, etc.; groups for women survivors of childhood sexual abuse; pre- and post-natal support services; and parent/child Mother Goose.

Tupper Young Parent’s Program

Vancouver Board of Education / YWCA
599 East 23 Avenue, Vancouver, BC Tel: 604-713-8232
Web: www.vsb.bc.ca/programs/tupper-young-parents-program

A flexible school program designed to help teen parents (12 - 19 years) finish high school. Provides on-site child care for children ages 6 weeks to 3 years old at Emma’s Early Learning and Care Centre. You can start at any time during the year. Subsidies are available. Can self refer. Call for more information.

Healthy Connections – You and Your Baby

Family Services of Greater Vancouver

#202 - 1193 Kingsway (near Knight Street) Vancouver, BC

Tel: 604-874-2938 ext. 162

Assists pregnant women to work through trauma-related issues that can interfere with parenting. Prenatal program begins as early in pregnancy as possible and continues for up to three years. Includes a peer support group, peer leadership training, individualized treatment for pregnant women, and professionally trained therapists. Self-referral or professional such as a social worker or a mental health worker can refer you. No cost.

Crabtree Corner Family Resource Centre - YWCA Vancouver

533 East Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC www.ywcavan.org

Tel: 604-216-1650 Email: enquire@ywcavan.org

For families in the Downtown Eastside. Housing; hot meals; food, facts and fun; early learning and care; Saturday Family Activity Program; CAP-C; Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program; Single Mothers' Support Groups; Single Parents' Food Bank Run; Books, Bags and Babies; Violence Prevention Program; Aboriginal Infant Development Program; and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Prevention Program. Also offers short-term emergency care for children 6 weeks to 6 years old.

Emma's Early Learning and Care Centre and Tupper Young Parent Services (YWCA Vancouver)

3839 Carolina Street, Vancouver, BC Tel: 604-879-1121

Children 4 weeks to 3 years while their parent attends Tupper Young Parent's Program, as well as health and parenting info. Open to other teen moms and other parents in the community.

Citygate Childcare Centre (YWCA Vancouver)

1192 Quebec Street, Vancouver, BC Tel: 604-687-1150

Provides child care for children aged 3 to 5, specializing in integrating special needs children in the centre.

Leslie Diamond Childcare Centre (YWCA Vancouver)

535 Hornby Street, Vancouver, BC Tel: 604-895-5816

Provides care for infants and toddlers aged 6 weeks to 3 years.
Full-time early learning and child care.

Single Mothers' Services (YWCA Vancouver)

535 Hornby Street (at Dunsmuir St.), Vancouver, BC
Tel: 604-895-5802 Email: enquire@ywcavan.org

Support programs & services throughout greater Vancouver - meant to be empowering, informative and fun for single mothers and their children. Provides info and resources, workshops and special events, and weekly local single mothers' groups.

Thresholds Residential Program

Aunt Leah's Independent Life Skills Society
#200 - 668 Carnarvon Street, New Westminster, BC
Tel: 604-433-1204 Fax: 604-433-0504 www.auntleahs.org

Supportive housing and lifeskills program for women and their young children. Safe, affordable housing in 2 stages: 6-9 months in a fully-furnished house with other women and their children and 6-9 months in a semi-independent furnished basement suite. Support Worker assists with life skills, pre-natal and post-natal education, advocacy, and resources. Includes job skills training, tenancy rights, banking, interview skills, resume writing, health, nutrition, support with income assistance requirements and meetings, time management, budgeting, and obtaining I.D.

www.the-baby-safety-site.com

Household poisons, child toy safety, holiday safety, fire safety checklist, toy safety guidelines, baby proofing homes, etc.

www.safekid.org

Free safety pack which includes our 32 page Child Safety Reference Manual, "HOT" Stickers - to help prevent scalding accidents, Child Print/Identification Kit(s) - to identify each child, Window Blind Safety Kit(s) - to prevent related accidents, etc

www.safekidscanada.ca

Lots of safety information for playground, winter, farm, car seat, pedestrian, rail, and water (drowning prevention)

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

'911' for emergencies (ambulance, fire, police) **Tel: 911**

24 hours Nurse Line 604-215-4700

Children's Helpline: 604-310-1234

Poison Control Centre (24 hours) Toll free 1-800-567-8911

Information Services Vancouver (24 hrs) Tel: 604-875-6381
Offers help to find suitable emergency housing

Emergency Line for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired

Help Line TTY: 604-660-0505 Toll Free: 1-866-872-0113
After Hours: 604-660-4927

Helping Spirit Lodge Society Tel: 604-872-6649

Helps Native women and her children who are fleeing from an abusive relationship. Emergency shelter and transition housing.

Victim LINK (24 hours) Collect calls accepted.

Toll Free: 1-800-563-0808 TTY: 604-875-0885 Text: 604-836-6381

24 Hour Mental Health Emergency Services 604-874-7307

Psychiatric emergency services, assessment, and follow-up.

Ministry for Child & Family Development (MCFD)

Child Protection: 604-660-4927 Toll free: 1-800-663-9122
After hours: 604-660-8180 4:30pm - 8am 7 days a week

BC Children's Hospital 4480 Oak St., Vancouver, BC

Tel: 604-875-2000

St. Paul's Hospital 1081 Burrard St. (near Davie), Vancouver, BC

Emergency: 604-806-8016 General: 604-682-2344

Vancouver General Hospital Tel: 604-875-4111

899 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC

Mount Saint Joseph's Hospital 3080 Prince Edward St. Vancouver, BC

Emergency: 604-877-8320 General: 604-874-1141

UNYA overview

UNYA began in 1988. We now have 21 programs, 100+ volunteers, 90+ full and part-time staff, and 200+ community partners. Youth are consulted in the development of new programs and services, as we feel that they are the experts in their own lives and are in the best position to advise us on youth issues. We always strive to have at least 4 of our 9 board members be Native youth. We will continue to adapt to the ever-changing needs of Native youth to ensure that they have the best chance possible to lead safe, healthy, and positive lives.

Aboriginal Outreach Team: Provides support to 12-18 year olds who are considered at risk of becoming street-involved or entrenched because of their involvement in high-risk activities and areas of Vancouver.

Aboriginal Transition Team: Assists 15-18 year old Native youth who are involved with MCFD and VACFSS to develop the confidence, life and social skills needed to successfully live independently.

Aboriginal Wellness Counsellor: Works with 12-18 year old Native youth whose mental health is being affected by stress or other factors. Also leads workshops for youth, schools, and youth workers through UNYA.

Aboriginal Youth First (AYF) Sports & Rec Program: Offers sports and recreation opportunities for 11-24 year old Native youth in East Vancouver.

Aboriginal Youth Safehouse: Provides a safe & stable environment for 16–18 year olds to help them make the first move from the street.

Aboriginal Youth Workers at UNYA and BYRC: Provide a range of cultural, recreational, and educational group programming, outings, referrals, advocacy, and some one-to-one support to Native youth.

Alcohol & Drug Counsellors: Individual and group counselling for Native youth in Vancouver ages 13 – 21 years. Sessions are held at various locations to meet the needs of youth.

Alcohol & Drug Referral Worker at BYRC: Provides educational groups, referrals, and advocacy to Native youth in and around the Broadway Youth Resource Centre at Broadway and Fraser.

Aries Program: Aries is an alternate school for youth ages 13-18. Includes academics, life-skills, A&D awareness, recreation, food, culture, and more.