

citibabes™

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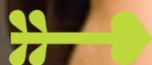
GET SMART:
CitiSchool

10
mommy
must-haves

the best
playdates

citibabes
SCARSDALE

the
secret of
play

 spot a
green toy

you asked: seedlingsgroup

Citibabes is thrilled to announce our partnership with SeedlingsGroup, who will host a series of discussions at the club throughout the year on various child-rearing topics as well as new-mom groups and parenting workshops.

MEET SEEDLINGSGROUP, Dr. Alexandra Barzvi, Dr. Bronwyn Charlton and Aliza Pressman, MA, child development experts and psychologists who support families in navigating the challenges of parenthood. As new mothers in NYC, they recognized the need for specific, useful and reliable parenting information and in 2008, formed SeedlingsGroup with the aim of helping parents raise happy and healthy children. Through research-based advice and support, SeedlingsGroup dispels contradictory and confusing parenting and child development advice, easing parents' anxieties along the way and giving them the confidence to make great decisions for their children.

We turned to SeedlingsGroup for their advice on some common parenting concerns.

Q: Will I spoil my newborn if I pick him up every time he cries?

Crying is your baby's earliest form of communication and the only means he has to let you know what his needs are. Until your baby is 3-months-old, disregard any thoughts that you can spoil your baby by tending to his needs. In fact, you will improve his sense of security in the world and build his brain cells simply by responding to him when he communicates with you (usually through crying). As your baby grows, you can wait a little longer to respond, you don't have to rush to him at every whimper. However, even 3-6 month-olds need to know that they can count on you when they call (except at night, but that's another issue altogether!). While routines are important, the first few months are too soon to be scheduling your baby, so enjoy spoiling him and save the tough love for later!



LEFT TO RIGHT:
SeedlingsGroup
(Charlton, Pressman,
Barzvi) answer
questions at a recent
Citibabes event.

Q: My 15-month-old gets very anxious and upset when I leave her with any other caregivers, even her grandparents. She wasn't this clingy before, what can I do?

Sometimes children express fears when they need to separate from you. These fears are often developmentally appropriate. Other times, this anxiety may be cause for concern. Your child is at an age when feelings of separation anxiety often intensify (typically from 12-18 months). Babies begin walking and can move away from you, but aren't emotionally ready to handle the separation.

What you can do to minimize her anxiety:

GRADUALLY BUILD on the amount of time your child spends with other caregivers.

PREPARE YOUR CHILD before entering a new situation by helping her know what to expect (e.g., by reading books or drawing pictures related to the new situation).

VISIT A NEW SETTING in advance (whenever possible), before leaving her in the care of someone else.

GIVE YOUR CHILD TIME to size up strangers and read your reaction to them. She'll be looking to you for cues on how to react. If the stranger is ok to you, he'll be ok to her.

DON'T SNEAK OUT WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE. Let your child see you go and establish a routine with her when you do. Your child will become more upset if she feels like you just disappeared.

seedlings (cont.)

● My 2-year-old is biting her playmates. Why is she doing this and what do I do?

When toddlers bite, they are actually trying to communicate. Usually, they want something but lack the self-control and intellectual maturity to think of alternate ways of getting it. A major task of toddlerhood is learning methods for handling frustration and anger appropriately. As parents, our job is to help our toddlers learn how to regulate their emotions and behavior.

What you can do when your toddler bites:

RESPOND IMMEDIATELY. Stop the behavior quickly, firmly and simply.

USE SIMPLE STATEMENTS like “biting hurts,” or “we don’t bite.”

IF POSSIBLE, INTERCEDE

before your child resorts to physical aggression. Intervene as soon as you see your child becoming frustrated or angry. Help her label her feelings and try to talk to her about why she’s feeling this way. If she’s too upset, redirect her attention to another activity until she’s calmer.

GIVE YOUR TODDLER A TIME-OUT.

In general, the rule of thumb is 1 minute of time-out for every year of your child’s life. However, shorter time-outs for toddlers (ranging from 10-30 seconds) are sufficient and just as effective.

TEACH alternative communication strategies. Help your child learn to “use words” (and be sure to give her those words if she can’t come up with them herself) to express her anger and frustration, instead of biting.

TURN YOUR ATTENTION toward good behavior. Catch your child being good and give her lots of attention when she is being gentle and not biting.

TIE YOUR CHILD’S actions to her “victim’s” feelings. Let her know that her actions affect others.

TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING skills. Use role-play to help your child learn problem solving skills.

TEACH HER HOW to walk away or ask another adult for help.

REMOVE YOUR CHILD from a situation where she just can’t control herself. Let her try again another day.

DON’T LOSE CONTROL. By getting angry, you’re not teaching your child how to manage her emotions. She’ll be watching how you handle your own anger and frustration.

● My 2 ½-year-old daughter won’t stay in her “big girl bed” when we put her to sleep at night. How can I persuade her to get into her bed at bedtime and convince her to stay there?

Sleep issues are one of parents’ most common complaints and also one of the most frustrating.

Behavior shaping is an effective strategy to get your child to stay in bed. To ask that much of your daughter at once, will likely be unsuccessful. Instead, you’ll shape her behavior in baby steps, rewarding each step along the way.

Step one: The first step, you reward, big time. Say to your daughter, “If you get into your big girl bed right now, you earn an extra book to read, grab-bag item (you will have already made a bag of tiny rewards that she knows about), plus a sticker.” She can have all of these things *immediately* after she gets in bed.

Step two: You say, “If you stay in your big girl bed, a big girl bed fairy princess will leave you something special under your pillow that will be here in the morning when you wake up.” Put fairy dust (aka glittery eye shadow) under her pillow while she sleeps.

With all rewards, it’s up to you what you offer because you know what will work best with your daughter! Don’t worry, she won’t need a reward for the rest of her life and she can be weaned off the reward in a matter of weeks.

If your daughter runs around and refuses to get into her bed at bedtime, calmly say to her, “We will try again tomorrow for the reward.”

But here’s the tricky part. You then will have to *ignore* her behavior. Most parents get very frustrated and end up attending to their children constantly. Attention, whether negative or positive, perpetuates behavior. So in this case, even negative attention around not going to bed, perpetuates your daughter’s resistance. When your daughter does get into bed, even if it’s 11pm, praise her for doing so, but do not give her any reward.

There are a lot of steps to shaping, but in the end, the changes in your daughter’s bedtime behavior will be well worth it. 🌸