



# GRASP Newsletter



Grandparents/Relatives As Surrogate Parents newsletter.

A quarterly publication for caregivers of relative children.

April—June 2011

## Life with Toddlers

### *Full of Energy and Eager to Test Your Limits*

Toddlers can be particularly tricky for a weary grandparent. A few guidelines will help see you through.

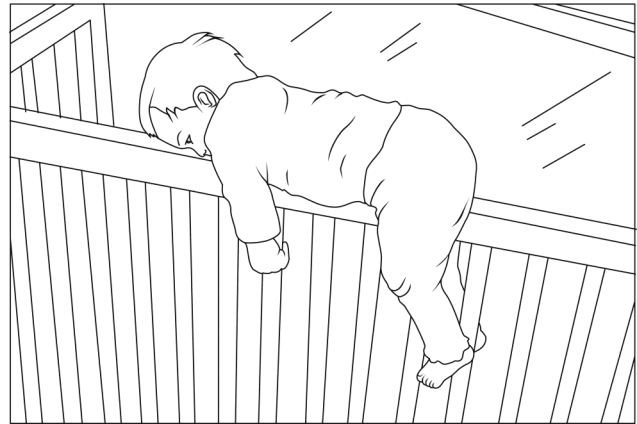
**Be consistent.** Keep to regular schedules and routines. Toddlers do best when they know what to expect, whether it's what time they bathe or go to bed, or what consequences they'll face for misbehaving. The more consistent and predictable things are, the better. Consistency can be a challenge when parents and grandparents (or other caregivers) don't see eye to eye, so adults should agree ahead of time on things like meals, bedtime, and how to handle misbehavior.

**Let them do it for themselves.** Rushing to help a child complete a puzzle, get dressed or manage a sippy cup may be sending the child the message that he or she can't do it alone. The toddler years are made for learning new things, even if it means a few bumps and spills.

**Lay down the law.** Once you tell your toddler to do something, don't talk about it or make eye contact. If the child disobeys, give a brief verbal warning or count to three. If the child refuses to toe the line, give a time-out or another immediate consequence.

**Serve big people food.** Most toddlers are picky eaters. Encourage your child to try "grown-up" fare. As long as there's something your child can eat on the plate, don't worry. Do not allow yourself to become your child's short-order cook.

**Keep the crib.** Cribs do more than keep little ones safe. They promote good sleep habits. A toddler moved too soon into a "real" bed may have trouble staying in bed or falling asleep, or end up getting into your bed. Wait until the child asks for a bed or starts climbing out of her crib. For most kids, that comes between the ages of 2 and 3.



**Don't start potty training too soon.** Because of the cost of diapers, many grandparents want to rush potty training. Children learn to use the toilet when they're ready. The process shouldn't be rushed, but you can set the stage. Show your toddler the toilet. Explain its use. If you feel comfortable doing so, let your child watch you use the toilet—and praise her if she gives it a whirl.

**Limit TV.** Toddlers who watch lots of TV often have more trouble learning later on. And studies suggest that kids under the age of 2 can't really take in what's on TV and computer screens. Keep your toddler busy with reading, playing, and talking.



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**Let them kick and scream.** All toddlers have tantrums. When they do, just make sure they aren't in danger of getting hurt, then stand back and let it happen—even if it is in front of company or in a public place. A little dramatic behavior in children is normal and it does not mean you aren't a good caregiver. Don't feel judged. Your grandchild matters more than the opinions of other people, especially strangers. If people offer unwanted advice, simply smile and say, "Gosh, do you remember what it was like?" Then

scoop up the wailing child and find a place away from prying eyes for the tantrum to run its course. Once it does, offer the child a hug and go on with your day.

Source: *Poison Center; www.poison.org*

### New Advice for Fighting Fever in Children

Fever may be beneficial when it comes to fighting infection. New guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics urge parents to recognize fever as a sign that the body is working to fight infection and *not* something to be feared.

They say the main goal of treating fever in children should be to keep them comfortable while **watching for any signs of serious illness** rather than focusing on keeping their temperature within a "normal" range. When a child has a fever, researchers say parents and caregivers should focus on the overall well-being of the child and carefully monitor the child's behavior for any changes in activity or temperament that may be a sign of a serious illness.

Additionally, the guidelines give this advice for treating fever in children:

- Encourage the child to drink fluids (formula, water, etc.) to prevent dehydration
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen, when used in *appropriate doses* based on the child's weight, are generally safe and effective to manage symptoms of fever in children
- Do not wake a sleeping child to give him or her a fever reducer
- Cough/cold medications containing acetaminophen or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) should *not* be given to children

\*Since, they **must be given in the correct dose at the right times** based on a child's weight, age, and overall health, caregivers may accidentally give the child simultaneous doses of acetaminophen or ibuprofen *and* a cough and cold medication that contains the same fever-reducing medication. For children who require liquid medications, only one formulation should be used in the household. An accurate measuring device should always be used when dispensing to children.

As with all medicines, to prevent accidental overdose, all fever reducers should be stored out of reach of children. Always check with your healthcare provider if you have concerns about your particular situation.



Source: *WebMD; American Academy of Pediatrics*

# Taking Care of Yourself

**Seek, accept, and at times demand help**

Don't be ashamed to ask for help. When people offer assistance, accept it and suggest specific things that they can do. Caregiving, especially at its most intense levels, is definitely more than a one-person job. Asking for help is a sign of your strength and an acknowledgment of both your abilities and limitations. When someone says, "What can I do?" give them a specific suggestion of what they can do to help you.



Source: National Family Caregivers Association.

## Inspiration

If you want your children to keep their feet on the ground, put some responsibility on their shoulders.

~Abigail Van Buren

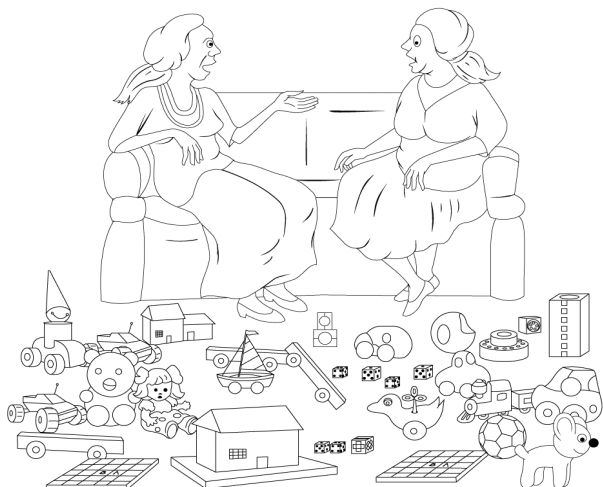
## GUN SAFETY

If you have children or teenagers at home, it is safest not to have guns in the house. If there is a gun in the house, store it unloaded, with a trigger lock, in a locked box. For extra safety, store all ammunition in a separate locked box. Teach children never to touch a gun and to tell you if they see a gun at a friend's house.

## LIVE LIFE LAUGHING!

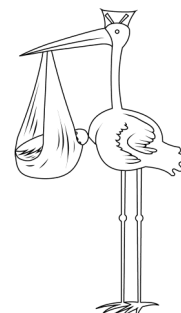
Know what I want for my birthday?

A dumpster?



## BABY YOUR BABY - Back to Sleep

Until a few years ago, doctors said to put babies to sleep on their stomachs. But now doctors say it's safest for babies to sleep on their backs to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).



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## **DANGER – When a Car Becomes an Oven**

Did you know that a child's body heats up 3 to 5 times faster than an adult's body? It only takes a few short minutes before a child can become dangerously overheated.

Every year, more than 30 children die because they are left alone in a car. In just 10 minutes, a car's temperature can increase by 19 degrees, and it continues to rise as time goes on because sunshine coming through the windows turns the car into an oven. There is no evidence that cracking the windows helps keep a car cool.

*Never* leave a child alone in a car, even for one minute. It may seem OK to leave a child in his car seat while you run into the store for a few things, but *this is very dangerous* because it only takes a few minutes to put a child at risk.

*Make it a habit to check the back seat every time you exit.* Leave something in the back seat such as your purse, so you must look in the back. Remember, never leave your child alone in a car.

*Source: Safe Kids Worldwide; [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)*