

Avoiding Bedtime Uproun

Around the age of two years, many children suddenly object to going to bed. Until now going to bed was accepted willingly, or at least without much objection.

Now, suddenly, Toddler begins to resist. He hangs back. He clings. He wants this or that. He cries. He may even have a temper tantrum.

Why this sudden reluctance to go to bed? After all, Toddler is probably tired. He is almost certainly sleepy. Why then is he fighting about going to bed?

To try to answer this question, we need to consider how Toddler's thinking has been developing in relation to the world around him.

Toddler has learned that objects and people do not just vanish when they are out of sight. If he goes into another room leaving his favorite toy behind, he knows that it will be where he left it when he comes back. The permanence in his world gives him feelings of possessiveness. It also gives him a sense of security.

But with sleep it is different. Toddler becomes aware that sleep is different from waking.

He is afraid of what might happen to his familiar world while he sleeps. So he clings to the security of the known, the security of whom and what he can see and touch.

At this stage of development, a bedtime routine will help both Toddler's behavior and general peace in your home.

Perhaps you have already established a bedtime routine. Just what this includes will depend, of course, on the lifestyle

of your particular family. The routine should be structured so as to provide a nightly ritual which prepares Toddler for sleep.

You may say that you are just not a person who follows a daily routine. You don't like to do the same things in the same way every day. You say you need the freedom of flexibility. Perhaps as an adult you find your security in this very freedom.

A two-year-old, however, is not ready for that kind of freedom. He must feel that his world, as he knows it, is stable. It will be the same tomorrow as it has been today. He must feel secure if he is to explore his world further. Every explorer needs a base camp from which to move out into the unknown.

Toddler needs reassurance that his world will be there when he awakens in the morning. A bedtime ritual serves to provide this reassurance because it moves him along familiar paths toward sleep.

As part of this nightly ritual, a realistic bedtime hour—flexible within reason—should be established.

Often this can be cued to an after supper playtime or after a special cuddle with a picture book story. This leads naturally into the ritual of getting ready for bed and for sleep, which reduces bedtime uproun to a minimum.

For one child the nightly ritual may include saying "good night" to favorite toys. Or it may involve giving a good night kiss to every member of the family.

Another child may want to take a favorite toy to bed with him. Or he may insist

At 22 Months Toddler Likes to:

- Imitate what adults do.
- Put lids on containers and take them off.
- Match familiar shapes.
- Take favorite playthings to bed.

Give Toddler:

- Some time alone for self-communication.
- Encouragement for new verbal skills.
- Simple picture puzzles.
- Plastic jars with screw caps.

that his new shoes be placed where he can see and touch them. This can happen if he has developed a strong sense of possession. He wants "his" things around him.

For yet another child, sleep may come only with the corner of a favorite wooly blanket clutched in his fist.

The bedtime routine that is appropriate for your child should be adhered to night after night. Following a familiar ritual reassures him about the stability of his world.

This helps him to organize and understand this world. It also gives him a feeling of security. It prepares him for the separation from his daytime world that sleep will bring.

If your child appears fearful about darkness, you may find that a small glowing night light provides the reassurance needed. It is also a sensible safety measure for a child who may have to use the bathroom in the middle of the night.■

Learning at Work and Play

Toddler's accomplishments are substantial by now: He is able to drink through a straw, eat with a spoon, and blow his nose with a tissue.

He is moving from babyhood toward childhood in several ways. He wants to do things for himself.

He demonstrates his independence in the mastery of his own body (walking, climbing up, climbing down, running, jumping). He prefers now to push his stroller rather than ride in it. He wants to transport objects from one place to another and back again.

He knows where things are kept. But he may not yet appreciate the fact that one object cannot be in two places at the same time.

For example, during a ride with a toddler in the family car, a father once joked, as they passed a car identical to theirs, "Say, somebody must have stolen our car!" The toddler immediately began to cry because he was unmindful of the fact that they still had their own car.

In addition to the mastery of the larger space in which he now moves, he is learning space relationships between objects. He takes apart things like pressure cookers and percolators and may even put them back together.

He stacks wooden or plastic donuts on a peg. Most likely he cannot arrange them in the correct order if they are of different sizes.

He can understand gross differences in size. But he cannot consistently differentiate small differences as can be observed when he tries to put larger objects inside slightly smaller ones.

Language is now very much a part of the child's daily activity. It is not an isolated skill such as riding a bicycle or dressing oneself. Language deals with moving, perceiving, feeling, thinking, and expressing oneself.

At 22 months, Toddler is word-hungry. He

goes around cataloging his environment by naming objects, actions, situations. Or he comes to you and asks, "What's that?"

From now on, Toddler is likely to be highly verbal. Speech is self-rewarding and self-motivating.

More verbs are coming into his vocabulary. He matches words to his actions: "climb up," "climb down," "run," "eat," "fall," "cry."

However, he may frequently misuse the vocabulary of space—prepositions such as "up," "down," "over," "under," "in," "out."

He can generally count to "two." To him "two" stands for any quantity greater than one! He may even be able to count higher than two. But it is a rote recital of a learned sequence.

For example, if there are objects on the table, he may count to five. At the same time he's likely to skip an object or touch the same object twice. There is not yet a one-to-one correspondence between numbers and objects.

In addition, counting and summing are unrelated to him. If he counts five cookies—1, 2, 3, 4, 5,—and you then ask, "how many are there?" he may reply, "two," or repeat "1, 2, 3, 4, 5."

He doesn't realize that the last number is the sum. This kind of awareness will come much later.

He is also beginning to understand and use time-related words, such as "day," "night," "now," "first." He demonstrates that he has a memory for past events and can anticipate future events.

If he is told before napping that he will visit his grandmother when he awakens, he will likely awaken from his nap with a loud reminder—"Go nana" or "Now go nana!"

Self-communication is Toddler's way of enhancing his language and speech development. Talking to oneself at this age takes four forms:

(1) **Self-direction.** Toddler dictates to himself step-by-step how to do something as he goes about doing it. You can observe this, for example, in his sand play as he pours, mixes, stirs, and bakes.

(2) **Self-control.** He admonishes himself with words like "no-no" or "don't touch" as he approaches the candy dish.

(3) **Daydreaming.** As he stares into space, you may hear Toddler repeating certain phrases to himself. Or he may just chat to himself in a world of his own.

You may find him sitting quietly and even sucking his thumb or holding his security blanket when only a second before he was active.

If you are sitting or working nearby, he will appear to be totally oblivious of your presence.

It's best not to interrupt this daydreaming chatter. Toddler needs this time to communicate out loud with himself in order to organize and integrate his own experiences.

(4) **Dramatic play.** Toddler tries out the roles of the models to which he has been exposed. He acts out the events of daily life which he has observed.

The types of actions are simple ones that he has seen frequently in his own life such as when he imitates driving the car or using the telephone.

Both boys and girls pantomime shaving. They also play with dolls—feeding them, pushing them around in strollers, bathing them, putting them to sleep.

Doll play is important for both sexes. There is no loss of masculinity when boys engage in doll play. Rather it helps them to develop feelings of tenderness, care, and affection.

Dramatic play helps Toddler learn about himself. It is an essential ingredient in the process of identification, of learning to become a member of his family and his community. ■

Learning by Imitation

Imitation combines both play and learning for Toddler. She imitates you on her own for fun. She is learning new action patterns at the same time.

When you want to teach Toddler something new, you can simply tell her what things should be done.

A more efficient method, however, is to have her watch while you demonstrate how to do the activity. You can then have her imitate what you just did.

You may notice that Toddler's imitations have become increasingly more complicated. She may imitate not only people but animals and machines, a sign that many things are now represented in her mind.

These imitations are quite realistic. They are accurate enough that you can easily recognize what she is pretending to do, such as imitating your food preparation actions in the kitchen.

When you attend to Toddler's imitations, you realize that they can be rather remarkable feats for someone so young.

In imitating someone, she must be able to observe accurately what the person does. Then she must call upon her body to perform movements that are similar to what she saw.

To do all this, she needs to develop a wide variety of individual motions.

In the last few months she has built up a fund of movements such as pulling, sliding, turning, stacking, and rolling things.

A really interesting aspect of her present imitative ability is that she can put together for the first time two or more simple motions to reproduce an action which she has seen only once.

She does this even though she may never have combined the movements in such a way before.

Let's take an example. You have probably played the game where you touched some part of your body and tried to see if Toddler could touch the same part of herself.



By now she is probably pretty good at touching her nose, eyes, ears, mouth and other major parts in imitation of your movements. You could also have her do this by naming the various parts of the body.

Now suppose that in a play session, you grasp your nose between your thumb and

the knuckle of your forefinger. At the same time grasp your ear the same way with your other hand.

The chances are that Toddler can imitate your actions fairly closely, including the particular kind of grasp.

She will do this even though she may never before have combined grasping her nose and ear at the same time.

Even if she fails at first, she usually can get it after being shown the difference between what she did and what should be done. She can do the right combination without having to do several trial and error attempts.

This was not true earlier when she learned the simpler movements, like grasping or touching a part of her body.

Those movements had to be repeated again and again, at first exactly the same way, then later with little variations.

Eventually her muscles were able to do the movements dependably, at her will. But now two or three simple movements can be combined immediately.■

Self-Identity

At 22 months most children are still the center of their own universe. And we have been helping Toddler to develop a sense of self when we teach the names for body parts.

It is important that we do not omit words like "penis," "urethra," "vagina" and "rectum." If we're casual in our naming, Toddler will have a relaxed and positive acceptance for the organs of elimination and sex.

Here's a body image game that may be recited or chanted:

"Eyes to see with" (point to eyes);
"Ears to hear with" (point to ears);
"Nose to smell with" (point to nose);
"Teeth to chew with" (point to teeth);
"Hands to work with" (point to hands);
"Feet to walk with" (point to feet);
"My behind to sit on or to go potty" (point to your behind).■

Burns: Prevention and Treatment

It is estimated that over 2 million Americans suffer severe burns each year and that over 8,000 die from these injuries. Thousands are disfigured for life.

Saddest of all, the vast majority are young children who are involved in accidents, which are often preventable, in their own homes.

We sincerely hope that none of our extended family of *Growing Child* children will ever be counted among those statistics. For that reason we believe that all parents and other child caregivers should have some basic information about the prevention and treatment of burns.

Scalds: Scalds are burns that are produced by any hot liquid or steam. Scalding ranks as the most frequent cause of burns, with children under five years of age being most at risk.

It's important to remember that water can still scald even 30 minutes after boiling.

To avoid scalding, the thermostat setting on a water heater should never exceed 120 degrees F. Even at that temperature, third-degree burns can occur after 30 seconds—while at 140 degrees F, they will occur after only 5 seconds.

A water heater temperature setting of 120 degrees F should be adequate for most household uses.

The temperature of the water in a child's bath should be about 100 degrees F but should never exceed 104 degrees F.

When filling the tub, it's a good idea to run the cold water first, then warm it with hot water, as a safe way to prevent accidental scalding.

Always check the temperature of the bathwater with your hand or elbow before letting a child get into the tub.

Matches and lighters: To a young child who is unaware of their danger, matches and lighters look like very attractive toys. They are small enough to be held in one's hand, are relatively easy to use, and

produce a most fascinating, colorful flame. Because they are so attractive to a young child, they are all the more hazardous.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that approximately 9,000 individuals receive hospital emergency treatment each year for injuries—mostly burns—related to the use of matches.

Hospital personnel who deal with these injuries recommend that children under five years of age should never be allowed to use matches, even under adult supervision.

After five years of age a child can be instructed in the safe use of matches to light a fire or a candle, provided they do so always under adult supervision. Matches should always be kept out of reach of young children.

A field study conducted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has found that about 200 deaths each year are the result of fires started with cigarette lighters. An estimated 140 of these deaths are caused by children playing with lighters, with over 75 percent of the victims being under five.

It has been found that young children—because they don't understand the consequences of their actions—are more likely to hide in a closet or under a bed rather than inform their parents that they have started a fire.

Emergency treatment: Very often emergency treatment is needed immediately—even before getting medical help:

- Make sure all family members know what to do if clothing catches on fire—STOP-DROP-ROLL—to extinguish the flame.
- Before swelling occurs, remove shoes, tight clothing, belts, jewelry, etc.
- Don't try to remove clothing that adheres to a burn. Simply cut around the fabric that is stuck to the skin.
- In the case of thermal burns which are caused by a flame, hot liquid or other

source of intense heat, cool the burn with cold water as quickly as possible.

- In the case of chemical burns, it's important to be familiar with the emergency treatment information provided on the package or container involved.
- Any injury to the eyes usually requires continuous flushing with water until medical help is available.
- Burns on any part of the face, hands or feet should always receive prompt medical attention.

Some household precautions to prevent a fire:

- In the living areas of your home, don't leave electrical cords dangling to tempt busy little fingers.
- Keep covers on all electrical outlets not in use.
- Keep all chemical, flammable or combustible materials in a cool, well-ventilated place which is out of reach for children.
- Make sure that all fireplaces or wood-burning stoves have a protective screen around them.
- In the kitchen, make sure that the handles of all hot pots and pans are turned inward.
- Don't allow young children near you when you are carrying hot liquids or removing a hot dish from the oven.

If necessary, establish a "No Trespass" zone, marked off with Scotch™ tape, in front of the oven, until your child is old enough to recognize the danger area.

- At table, use tablemats rather than a tablecloth. Young children will sometimes grab the corner of a tablecloth—with disastrous results—when trying to pull themselves up from the floor.
- Keep all hot dishes close to the center of the table, away from the edges where they could easily be knocked over.

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- Around your home, it's wise to install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors on each level and in each bedroom.

It has been found that fires in homes are most likely to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. when family members are likely to be sound asleep in their bedrooms.

It's important, therefore, to check the batteries periodically in all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

- Fire extinguishers are an extra precaution. Keeping some water in plastic bottles in all bedroom closets will enable you, in the event of fire, to moisten a cloth that will help block smoke from your mouth and nose as you make your escape.

How to survive a fire: Knowing what to do before a fire occurs can be the differ-

ence between life and death for you and your family.

- It's wise to develop an escape plan for the entire family, with at least two possible exits—windows and door—from each room.

- Be sure to identify a meeting place for all occupants of the house at a safe distance from the home.

- If you are in your bedroom with the door closed when you first discover there is a fire, first feel the door and door handle with your hand. If they are not hot, open the door slowly.

If, however, you notice smoke or hot gases are entering the room, close the door immediately and seek your escape through a window, if possible.

- If you find it's safe to exit through the door, cover your mouth and nose with a dampened cloth, if available, in order to prevent smoke inhalation.

- As you make your escape, crawl, if necessary, rather than walk, in order to keep below the level of the smoke.

- Once outside, never try to go back inside. Only trained firefighters should enter a burning building.

Everyone who has ever experienced a fire in their home undoubtedly once thought that those things only happened to other people—but never to them!

Those who take the precaution of knowing what they should do in the event of a fire most likely will improve their chances of survival.■

A Positive Attitude

A positive attitude can lead to better parenting. In life, two people can look at the same glass: while one sees it as “half full,” the other sees it as “half empty.” It's just a matter of positive versus negative attitude.

An attitude is something we can work on changing. If I perceive that my attitudes on life are more negative than positive, I can deliberately make a greater effort to focus on the positive (versus negative) aspects of each situation.

Here are three good reasons for seeking to develop and maintain a more positive attitude as a parent:

1. My attitude helps to determine how I perceive my child's behavior. For example, if my almost-two-year-old has recently developed the habit of saying “No!”

I can perceive that as either (a) “My child is developing a healthy sense of autonomy and independence” (a positive attitude) or (b) “My kid is becoming a little monster”

(a negative attitude).

2. My attitude helps to determine how I will react. If I perceive my child's behavior in a positive manner (“He's learning to develop a sense of autonomy and independence”), I'm more likely to react to his behavior in a positive way.

For example, by showing him more love and affection to reassure him that it's natural and okay for him to want to demonstrate greater independence as he gets older.

On the other hand, if I perceive the same behavior in a negative manner, I'm more likely to respond in a negative way (“You'll lose your TV time if you keep doing that!”)

3. My attitude will affect how my child will respond. When a parent can exhibit a positive attitude toward a child's behavior, the child will more likely develop a positive attitude toward life.

Giving him the reassurance that he is loved unconditionally will help him to be more in tune with his world and, therefore, behave more positively.

On the contrary, when a child feels threatened and unloved because of a parent's negative attitude, he is more likely to develop negative feelings toward himself, which ultimately will lead to worse misbehavior.

It's important to note, however, that having a positive attitude toward a child's behavior (“I think my child is terrific”) is not the same as spoiling a child (“My child can do no wrong”).

Whereas a spoiled child will eventually exhibit misbehavior increasingly more demanding of parents, the child who is treated by parents with a positive—yet realistic—attitude will more likely develop a similar, more positive outlook on life.■

Movement Combinations

Suppose that Toddler is learning to unscrew the lid of a jar. She must combine a finger grasp with a turn of her wrist.

She is probably capable of performing each of these separate movements. But the unscrewing action requires a conscious combination of two separate movements. This is a process that takes some time to master.

You may notice a delay between the closing of Toddler's grasp and the beginning of her wrist motion. She is thinking about the order of motions to be performed.

If you try to talk to her while she is at the task, she will be frustrated. She does not have enough attention to spare for both the conversation and the task.

For you, unscrewing the lid of a jar is a simple movement. You can unscrew the lid while you are talking to someone else.

The movement is simple for you because it is automatic. For Toddler the movement is a movement combination.

Here we need to make a distinction between simple movements and movement combinations. Each of these changes in complexity as a child grows older.

A simple movement is one that can be done automatically, without conscious thought other than to give oneself the command to begin the motion.

Once the order is given to start the movement, the muscles do the entire job themselves without having to be consciously guided.

A movement combination is the conscious and deliberate joining of two or more simple movements, either at the same time or closely following one another.

A human being is marvelously flexible. She can create just about any combination of simpler movements that she needs in order to get a particular job done.



The next time you are learning a new skill such as learning how to play a musical instrument, you will find that three or four movements are the most you can put together at one time.

Growing Child

P. O. Box 2505 • W Lafayette, IN 47996

(800) 927-7289

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www.GrowingChild.com

Contributing Authors

Phil Bach, O.D., Ph.D.

Miriam Bender, Ph.D.

Joseph Braga, Ed.D.

Laurie Braga, Ph.D.

George Early, Ph.D.

Carol R. Gestwicki, M.S.

Liam Grimley, Ph.D.

Robert Hannemann, M.D., F.A.A.P.

Sylvia Kottler, M.S.

Bill Peterson, Ph.D.

Notice how you operate the next time you are learning a new skill (for example, if you want to learn how to play a musical instrument).

You will find that three or four movements are the most you can put together at one time as you learn.

Usually you will do only two things at once. The proverbial "one-track mind" is a limitation we all share.

So when we look at things this way, we see that Toddler is able to combine separate learnings at about the same rate that we do.

The marvel does not end here. For if the same job occurs repeatedly, the movement combination needed will become, through repetition, a simple movement.

The action will be performed automatically, as a single unit. Its control is actually shifted to a lower center of the brain, allowing conscious thought to be redirected to something else.

A movement combination can then become a simple movement. Most simple movements, including many that Toddler does at this stage, can be broken down into still simpler movements.

All of our motor skills are built from simpler movement patterns. This is how a concert pianist, for example, learns to play so many notes so quickly.

It is how a pilot is trained to fly the plane and operate the radio at the same time. It is the way a person is able to drive a car.

Right now Toddler is learning to combine simple movements into movement combinations.

When movement combinations become automatic, she joins them into more complicated combinations.

When Toddler can perform two or more simple movements in combination, she is performing almost as well as an adult. ■