



# Generation Next Parenting Skills ~ Part II ~

*(Continued from Cedar Springs of Inspiration 2010)*

**T**he following could be shared and discussed with young mothers, one subject at a time, in a friendly group setting.

## **TOPICS:**

- 11. POOR STUDY HABITS
- 12. SHORT ATTENTION SPAN
- 13. SHY CHILD
- 14. SIBLING RIVALRY
- 15. SLOW AND FUSSY, EATERS
- 16. STEALING
- 17. TEMPER TANTRUMS

### **11. Poor Study Habits**

Studying is the application of mental faculties to acquire knowledge. Typically materials are read with the intention of learning and remembering. When this process is accomplished ineffectively

or inefficiently, we say that a child has poor study habits which often lead to underachievement.

### **Reasons why:**

- 1. Parents' expectations are too low, or too high.
- 2. Parents use rigid, overly controlling approaches in their teaching methods.
- 3. Parents are too permissive — not setting limits or expecting compliance.
- 4. Parents' over involvement prevents the development of independent study skills.
- 5. Child uses poor homework and studying to get even for feeling rejected and criticized.
- 6. Child is preoccupied with family problems.
- 7. Child has low self-esteem.
- 8. Child has not learned skills involved in how to study



### How to prevent:

1. Encourage your child to achieve simple goals like putting on their shoes and socks.
2. Encourage your child to learn and discover new things by providing them with educational toys, books and outings.
3. Stimulate their curiosity and expose them to many different ideas. Visit museums, science centres, libraries etc.
4. Show your enthusiasm for reading and acquiring knowledge. Share the discovery of why and how things work.
5. Set up a quiet, comfortable proper study area, with only the necessary supplies, which is free from any distractions like the T.V or telephone.
6. Have an established daily homework time.
7. Supervise your child during homework time. List what must be completed and check that it is done.
8. Encourage your child to do their homework independently — instead of giving the answer, ask questions.

### What to do:

1. Consistently praise your child for starting and completing their homework.
2. Motivational tools such as stamps or erasers and incentives like extra playtime may be used.
3. Use a Homework Contract or a chart or point reward system to record how often they complete their homework and challenge them to do it more often. These points can earn rewards and privileges.
4. State your expectations calmly and firmly, do not argue but repeat your expectation.
5. Impose consequences when your child does not complete their homework; for example suspending privileges.



***Consistently praise your child***

6. Play “Beat-the-Clock” with your child. Reward them if they finish their homework before the timer goes off.

### What not to do:

1. Beg, plead, punish, criticize, threaten, nag, shout, argue or confront child.
2. Expect perfection.

### 12. Short Attention Span

Attention span is the length of time an activity is pursued. For a child with a short attention span, shorter than average time is spent on an activity and a task is not stuck to. The child will shift from one activity to another and can easily be sidetracked. The average length of attention span is approximately:

- 7 minutes - 2year-olds
- 9 minutes - 3year-olds
- 12 minutes - 4year-olds
- 14 minutes - 5year-olds

### Reasons why:

1. Slow maturation or organic brain malfunction.
2. Inherited trait.
3. Inadequate visual and auditory perception resulting in poor ability to receive sights and sounds, understand the meaning and respond appropriately.



4. Child is anxious, insecure, lacks confidence and has not developed patience or persistence.
5. Associated with learning disabilities, retardation and emotional disturbance.

**How to prevent:**

1. Promote adequacy and success. Praise and encourage child for any efforts at completing a task. Help select a task that your child can complete with success and praise task completion.



2. Child's attention span can be increased by careful task planning — giving tasks that they enjoy doing or short specific tasks that can be successfully completed.
3. Use a timer to increase your child's attention span. Set the timer for a few minutes to do a particular task. Slowly increase the activity before the timer rings.
4. Use a positive reinforcement like praise and rewards to encourage longer intervals of focused attention.
5. Use educational games to encourage concentration; *i.e.*: jigsaw puzzles, or memory games that sharpen visual perception.
6. Give clear specific instructions. Ensure that your child is looking at you and have them repeat the instructions. Be consistent in rules and disciplines.
7. Have a very clear routine. Construct a timetable for eating, play, study, chores and bedtime.

***Encourage them to openly express their positive or negative feelings and opinions as well as to accept negative reactions from others.***

2. Teach and reinforce your child's increasing ability to focus on a task: *i.e.*: praise child for playing with a toy for longer intervals.

**What to do:**

1. Structure the environment to minimize distractions; *i.e.*: give your child one toy at a time or placing other toys out of sight.

**13. Shy Child**

In social situations, a shy child is often silent, speaks softly, and avoids eye contact, frequently avoid others is usually timid, easily frustrated, distrustful, reserved and hesitant to commit to most things.

**Reasons why:**

1. Child feels insecure, lacks self-confidence and self-reliance.



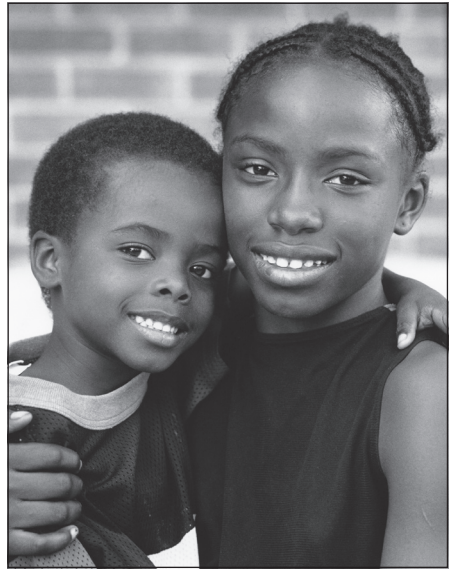
2. Child has limited socializing opportunities and is overprotected by parents.
3. Child is frequently teased and ridiculed. Thus is fearful of being judged, rejected or embarrassed.
4. Child is often punished, criticized and threatened with withdrawal of love and acceptance.
5. Parents are inconsistent, unpredictable and harsh in their discipline.
6. Parents are themselves shy and quiet.

**How to prevent:**

1. Provide your child with pleasant, happy socializing experiences with peers.
2. Encourage and reward your child for socializing: *i.e:* smile and comment you are happy that they are having a good time when you see them playing with other children.
3. Provide a warm and accepting atmosphere. Help them feel loved and wanted even though their behaviour is not to your liking.
4. Helping them to be aware of their strengths thus building self-esteem. Create opportunities for them to develop their own strength; *i.e:* art classes or swimming lessons.

**What to do:**

1. Reward social skills. Praise any effort made by child to relate to others.
2. Teach and demonstrate social skills. Tell your child appropriate and specific ways of relating to people like saying, "Hello", giving and accepting compliments, smiling, nodding and observing eye contact.
3. Make socializing situations as pleasant and non-threatening as possible. One friend and then more can be invited to visit with your child. When attending a party, you can pair your child with a familiar friend.



4. Encourage assertiveness. Teach your child to ask for what they want and to say "no" nicely when they do not want to do something. Encourage them to openly express their positive or negative feelings and opinions as well as to accept negative reactions from others.
5. Get your child to help younger children by doing a chore or playing a game.
6. Engage your child in Supervised Play Activities giving opportunities for them to interact with other children.

**What not to do:**

1. Put child in the spotlight.
2. Reward shy behaviour by giving child considerable attention.
3. Allow child to engage in too many isolating activities such as television viewing, or playing on computer.
4. Criticize, threaten, shame and shout.





## 14. Sibling Rivalry

Sibling rivalry refers to the hostility and jealousy that brothers and sisters develop towards one another. Rivalry is most prevalent in siblings when they are fairly close in age and of the same sex.

### Reasons why:

1. Child demands the total attention of parents. They are unable to share their parents with anyone.
2. It is part of normal conflicts and disagreements.
3. Child is jealous over parents' favoritism of the other sibling.
4. Child's hostile feeling towards parents is taken out on younger sibling.
5. Child feels inferior in talent to another sibling.

### How to prevent:

1. Make each child feel loved and valued especially the child who is less talented, attractive or successful.
2. Build a close and loving relationship by spending 'special time' alone with each child.
3. Treat all children fairly.

4. Provide each child with as much privacy as possible.
5. Encourage a certain amount of physical separation to reduce friction.
6. Teach your child respect for private property by training them to ask rather than use the possessions of another child without permission.
7. Model respect, warmth, consideration and constructive problem solving through the relationship with your spouse.
8. Praise and reward your child for any acts of cooperation and sharing.
9. Arrange for frequent family group activities such as picnics, parties and games.
10. Prepare your child for the expected birth of a sibling well in advance. Let your child also help with the care of the new baby.

### What to do:

1. Let your children settle minor squabbles on their own.
2. Teach your children to be assertive — to state their rights, needs and feelings without being aggressive.
3. Encourage your children to engage in mutual problem solving to arrive at an effective solution that will meet the needs of all concerned.
4. Act as an impartial negotiator if your children are not able to solve the problem themselves.
5. Enforce the rule on 'no hitting' or name calling.
6. Use group rewards and penalties. Reward your children for not hitting, fighting or calling name — impose a penalty for fighting such as staying apart in separate rooms or removal of object under dispute.
7. Give your children more supervision during play-time.



**What not to do:**

1. Overprotect the youngest child.
2. Compare child with another sibling.
3. Take sides predictably or constantly.
4. Respond to tattling.

**15. Slow and Fussy Eaters**

After your child's first birthday, their growth will slow down considerably. Dawdling over meals, loss of appetite or developing specific food likes and dislikes is common between twelve months and four and a half years.

***Loss of appetite or developing specific food likes and dislikes is common between twelve months and four and a half years***

3. Make meal-time eating time. Set the rule that the child must remain at the table during meal- time.
4. Talk to your child at the table. They will not become bored or try to get your attention by playing with their food.
5. Let the older child have a choice in choosing a portion of food or the food they would like to eat first.



**Reasons why:**

1. Child did not receive training in proper table manners or eating habits.
2. Child gets attention from parents when they are coaxed to eat.
3. Child can make use of meal-time to exert their power especially when parents themselves are too controlling.

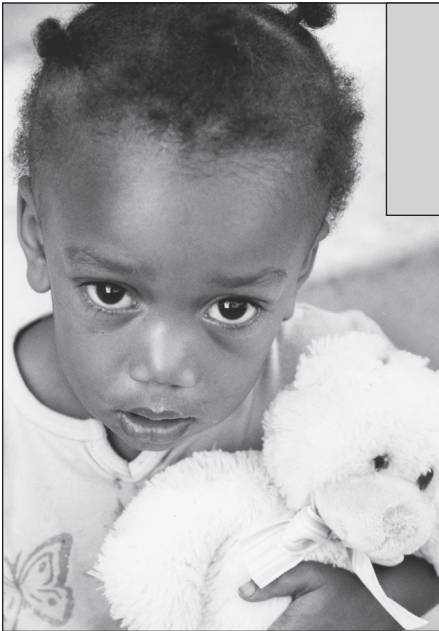
**How to prevent:**

1. Make eating a pleasant and relaxing activity by:
  - Presenting food in an attractive manner.
  - Eating in a cool and comfortable place.
  - Offering a variety of food.
2. Involve children in:
  - Food selection (going to the supermarket).
  - Food preparation (helping you in the kitchen).
  - Learning about food (talking about nutrition).

**What to do:**

1. Set a time limit for your child to finish their meal. Remove the food after the time limit with a neutral attitude saying something like, "I guess you're not hungry. You can eat again at dinner." Do not feel guilty since your child chose not to finish their meal.
2. Use preferred food as a reward for eating or trying the non-preferred food.
3. Introduce new food at the beginning of the meal when your child is hungry.





***Stealing can be defined as taking an object not clearly belonging to the child without permission of the owner***

4. Substitute fruits for vegetables if your child dislikes vegetables.
5. Present non-preferred food in a different or attractive manner. You can also mix the non preferred food with a food that they like, for example blending vegetables with meat.
6. Give your child encouragement when they eat a spoonful of anything.

**What not to do:**

1. Force, bribe, coax or remind children to eat. Force-feeding creates tension and unhappiness for both mother and child.
2. Insist that children finish all the food on the plate.
3. Serve large portions of food.
4. Provide snacks in between meals when they are hungry.

5. Get upset when they will not eat. Giving child attention for not eating will make not eating much more satisfying than eating.
6. Make a fuss over slowness it only gives more attention and diversions that distract from eating.

**16. Stealing**

Stealing can be defined as taking an object not clearly belonging to the child without permission of the owner. Minor stealing incidents in early childhood are quite common. However if regular stealing persists after age 10, child is most likely to require immediate professional help.

**Reasons why:**

1. Child has not developed an understanding that it is wrong to take another person's belonging without their permission. They cannot distinguish between borrowing and stealing.
2. Child is self-centered and needs to satisfy their desires immediately.
3. Child's emotional needs like love, security, praise and recognition are not met.
4. The behaviour is the means chosen to seek revenge or to gain — power, approval or attention.
5. Child enjoys the excitement and sense of adventure involved in stealing.
6. Child has insufficient money to meet their material needs.



7. Child has learnt behaviour from parents; siblings or friends.

**How to prevent:**

1. Establish rules that ensure your child respects the property rights of others; *i.e.*: has to borrow and return property belonging to others.
2. Model acts of honesty and respect.
3. Ensure that your child has some pocket money to buy things they like.
4. Encourage your child to come to you for assistance when they cannot afford something they want to have. Encourage child to save for what they want.
5. Provide opportunities for your child to earn the money to buy something they want.
6. Avoid leaving loose change, wallets or money lying around the house.

**What to do:**

1. Understand your child's main motive in stealing to help you prevent the problem from happening again.
2. Calmly confront your child verbally about the act. Explain why the act is wrong. You can examine the feelings others have towards people who steal.
3. Encourage empathic responses from your child by statements like, "How would you feel if someone stole something from you that you really liked a lot?"
5. Get your child to take responsibility by making restitution — either return the stolen object with an apology or pay for it out of their own pocket money. This should teach them that there are consequences to the choices they make.

6. Remove privileges like watching T.V, playing on the computer or going for an outing if restitution is not possible. It is important to immediately and consistently set penalties for stealing incidents.

7. Seek help from a Social Worker if your child steals persistently.

**What not to do**

1. Get too emotionally upset or angry.
2. Give child a bad label or suggest a bad outcome.
3. Demand a confession as this will force child to lie.
4. Allow child to keep the stolen objects.



**17. Temper Tantrums**

Temper tantrums are violent outbursts of anger manifested by screaming, breaking things, rolling on the floor, whining, holding breath, kicking or hitting. It starts in children from as young as 18 months, is common between 2 to 4 years and may continue in their teens if left unchecked.





### Reason why:

1. Child gets angry or frustrated due to inability to get what they want. Child is unable to cope with anger or frustration.
2. Child learns that this is the only way to get what they want.
3. Child wants to gain attention.
4. Child learns this behaviour from parents who are impatient and quick tempered.
5. Child is tired, hungry or easily irritable.



6. Praise your child when they handle frustration without becoming upset.

### What to do:

1. Remain as calm as you can. Ignore the tantrum. Try to stand firm. Do not give in. You can ignore the tantrum by not looking or talking to your child or walking away from them.
2. If child throws a tantrum in a public place, take them home or to a place where they will receive little or no attention for this kind of behaviour.

***Give your child adequate attention to make them feel loved and wanted***

### How to prevent:

1. Make sure that your child's physical needs like sleep, food and physical activity are met.
2. Set an example in handling your own anger and frustrations. Teach your child to look at the choices available to solve their problem instead of yelling and screaming.
3. Do not place excessive demands and restrictions on your child.
4. Encourage your child to express minor irritations in a socially acceptable way: *i.e.*: "I know you are angry because your sister took your book. Instead of hitting her you could ask her to give it back to you."
5. Give your child adequate attention to make them feel loved and wanted.

3. When your child is destructive or dangerous to themselves or others, it is necessary to physically restrain them until they calm down. Alternatively you could remove them to a time-out.
4. Introduce a reward system like a star for every two hours of no-tantrums.
5. Put child in time-out area, a place where they can cry alone until they calm down.
6. Teach your child an appropriate way to express their anger verbally. Recognize and acknowledge their feelings of anger.

### What not to do:

1. Try to reason or explain why they cannot have their way. They are simply not receptive at that particular moment.
2. Punish, criticize, threaten, shame and shout. You are simply getting yourself into a power struggle and teaching a negative way to resolve problems.

