



# STRONG FAMILIES

TIPS & RESOURCES FOR PARENTS WITH HAPPY, HEALTHY AND SMART KIDS



## Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development Information and Resources for Parents and Caregivers

### What does knowledge of parenting and child development look like?

- Nurturing parenting behavior
- Appropriate developmental expectations
- Ability to create a developmentally supportive environment for children
- Positive discipline techniques; ability to effectively manage child behavior
- Recognizing and responding to your child's specific needs
- Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development



### Where to begin?

We know there is lots of information out there – here are a few resources that will help you get started.

## Positive Guidance

Positive guidance means just that - guiding your child's behavior. Your responses to your child's behavior are key to more effective results. You can help teach your child how to change and control their own behavior as they grow and mature. Rather than expecting an immediate change in your child's behavior, think about behavior as a developmental process that takes time to master.

### Helpful Tips for Parents and Caregivers:

Be positive. Show or tell children what they CAN do.

Cut down on the use of the word "no" and other negative directions.

Adjust schedules so that children are not overtired or too hungry.

Alternate active times with quiet, restful ones. Provide daily exercise.

Supervise in an informal, loving, but constant way.

Understand child development so appropriate expectations are in place. Don't expect too much too soon.

Change the environment to keep it safe and interesting.

Enforce rules clearly, briefly, consistently, and politely. Have a few important rules that children can manage.

Smile and say something positive often.

Complimenting desired behaviors will reinforce them.

Enjoy yourself and enjoy your children. Pleasure is contagious - let children "catch" fun from you.



# Teaching Your Child It's OK to Fail – Building Resilience in Your Child

All parents want to see their kids succeed, but did you know it's just as important to teach your children how to fail? Failing really means trying, practicing, and putting in effort – and it's nothing to be ashamed of. After all, no one is good at everything. Kids who can't handle failure are vulnerable to anxiety and it can lead to bigger problems when they do fail.

It's important for parents to let their children know that failing will happen sometimes and that it is totally okay. Let your kids know it's brave to try something new, knowing that it might not work out. This is called resilience.

Being resilient is the ability to pick yourself up and put one foot in front of the other. Teaching your child to be resilient and bounce back from a failure is very important. It is not an inborn trait; it's a combination of behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed.

Here are a few tips for helping your children develop resilience:

**When you see that your child is struggling or having a hard time, empathize with him.** Be sure not to brush off his feelings. Try using language like *"I know you're really disappointed and that you wanted to do better."*

**Explain to your child that everyone fails and offer a story about a time when you yourself failed.** You can model for your child how to handle frustration and disappointment. Remember, kids are always watching and taking cues from their parents.

**Look at failure as a chance to teach your child a lesson about resiliency.** Talk through what went wrong and use problem solving skills to come up with a plan for what to do next time.

**If at first you don't succeed, try again.** Remind your child that they can try again and use this failure as a learning experience.

Perhaps the most important thing is to step back and let your child stumble. We all want to protect our kids, but it's important to allow them to fail rather than swooping in and fixing the problem. Failure teaches kids the skills they need – like resiliency – to be successful adults.



# Responding to Your Child's Temper Tantrums

How often have you heard the something like this from your child?

Amy, told that she can't have a fifth book before bedtime, shouts: *"You are the meanest mommy! You are not invited to my birthday party!"*

Paul, when offered a choice between carrots and cheese, not ice cream, before dinner announces: *"I don't like the choices you are choicing me!"*

Sadie hurls a bowl of her favorite cereal off the table and screams, *"I said the red bowl, not the blue bowl!"*

If any of these sounds familiar to you, you are not alone. Welcome to world of toddlerhood. One of the biggest challenges parents face is managing difficult or defiant behavior on the part of children. Whether they're refusing to put on their shoes, or throwing full-blown tantrums, you can find yourself at a loss for an effective way to respond.

But seen through the eyes of the child, and developmentally, these behaviors, while hard for parents, are utterly normal, and signal important milestones are being met. Further, these incidents don't have to be feared, as they are chances to teach children to manage their emotions, learn to cope with frustration and letdowns, and find ways to feel in control of their world in positive and acceptable ways.

Getting clear on what we expect from children is very important because the way we respond to a child's behavior impacts how we manage our own emotions and reactions to the behavior at hand. If we see the behavior as done "on purpose" to drive us crazy, then we are much more likely to react in ways that upset instead of calm our child. If, instead, we see these behaviors as part of normal development, then we can approach our children with empathy and successfully teach good coping skills.

Here are some important factors that influence young children's behavior that are helpful to keep in mind when dealing with temper tantrums:

- 1) **Young children are driven by emotions, not common sense, so unreasonable behavior is normal and to be expected.** Toddlers don't have a real understanding of time – they live and react in the moment. They have very little self-control. They want what they want when they want it.
- 2) **Toddlers are becoming more aware that they are separate people – that they can have different thoughts and feelings from others.** This important milestone, linked with a toddlers' natural drive to exert some control over their world, leads to an all-out effort to bring you around to their way of thinking. They are extremely clever and will try any and all tactics (calling you names, threatening to never go to sleep, or throwing a knock-down-drag-out tantrum, to name a few).
- 3) **Toddlers have strong feelings but few tools for managing them at this young age.** Think about it – many adults are still working on being aware of their feelings and choosing to act on them in healthy ways.

## So, what's a parent to do?

- **Stay in control when your child is out of control.** Managing your emotions and reactions is one of the most important parenting tools at your disposal. When your child is losing it, she needs you to be her rock and stay cool.
- **Keep in mind that you can't actually make your child do anything.** What you do have control over is *how you respond to your child's actions*, as this is what guides and shapes their behavior. If throwing a tantrum results in extra iPad time, a later bedtime, or simply getting more of your attention, your toddler is putting two and two together, making an important assessment: "Excellent strategy! Put that one in the win column."
- This is not manipulation, it is a smart calculation, and means you are raising a really competent kid. He is figuring out successful ways to get what he wants, which is awesome. It is our job is to teach our kids which strategies are effective and which aren't. So any behaviors you don't want him to rely on can't be successful, or what would be the motivation to give them up?
- **Show empathy and validate the feeling.** *"I know the blue shirt is your favorite and you are really disappointed that you can't wear it today, but it's in the wash."* It isn't feelings that are the problem, it's how they get acted on that can be the problem. The more you confirm feelings, the less likely children are to have to act on them.
- **Set the limit and provide acceptable choices.** *"Your choice today is the red or yellow shirt."* If your child refuses the "choices you are choosing" him, then you let him know that you will make the choice. He may throw a fit. As calmly as you can, put a shirt on him and move along so he experiences the consequence of his actions. That is how children ultimately learn to make good decisions – by experiencing the outcomes of their choices and learning which get them what they want and which don't.



Giving the child what he or she wants during a temper tantrum teaches children that tantrums work and are an acceptable way to get what they want. Rule of thumb is to make sure the child is safe and will not hurt himself or others. If that is the case, let the child know that you are there but that you won't give in to his demands. Even though you are ignoring the behavior, you can still be there to comfort the child.

*(Adapted from PBSParents.org)*

## A ZERO TO THREE Podcast Series on Early Childhood Development

ZERO TO THREE's podcast series, *Little Kids, Big Questions*, addresses some of the most common issues facing parents of babies and toddlers, such as: helping a baby learn to sleep through the night; dealing with a picky eater; and learning to set limits on children's behavior. These questions – and more – are covered in this series of 12 podcasts. Each podcast features an interview with an expert that focuses on how to apply the research of early childhood development to your daily interactions with your baby or toddler.

Download the podcasts at

<http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/parenting-resources/podcast/>,

and make sure to check out the additional resources on each topic to learn more.

Or, [click here](#) to go directly to iTunes to download the podcasts.

## Celebrate National Child Abuse Prevention Month 2016

Strength-based tip sheets on specific parenting topics and calendars of activities to help parents, and community partners celebrate Child Abuse Prevention Month. All available in English and Spanish.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/guide.pdf#page=54>

## 2016 Week of the Young Child April 10-16, 2016

The Week of the Young Child™ is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers and families. <http://www.naeyc.org/woyc>

To learn about resources and events in Georgia during 2016's Week of the Young Child visit Georgia Association on Young Children.

<http://gayconline.org/resources/woyc/>

**New Texting Service for Parents** Calling all parents of 4 & 5 year-olds! It's time to sign-up for free tips and resources – via three simple texts per week – to help get your little one ready for kindergarten! Thanks to the Georgia Department of Education and Stanford University, Georgia has its very own FREE text service for parents. Just text GAlready4K to 313131 to join. It's FREE!



## 1-800-CHILDREN

Parenting is tough even in the best circumstances and sometimes it takes extra resources and support! Prevent Child Abuse Georgia's 1-800-CHILDREN Helpline is a free, statewide, information and referral service. It's a voice on the other end of the line that can empathize and offer support to help you with simple questions or complex situations. It is designed to help parents and caregivers find resources in their community to help with any need related to raising children.

Toll-Free \* Open Mon.- Fri., 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
Staffed by bilingual professionals \* Safe place to discuss options

**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES GEORGIA**

# Who Are We?

Strengthening Families Georgia (SFG) represents a multi-disciplinary partnership of nearly 50 national, state and local, and public and private organizations dedicated to embedding five research-based Protective Factors into services and supports for children and their families. SFG is funded by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DHS-DFCS) through the Federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program.

The Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC), state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), administers SFG and chairs the SFG Leadership Team and Partnership.

## OUR MISSION

To utilize the Strengthening Families assets-based framework of Protective Factors in all systems, programs, services and activities supporting families with young children as the approach to achieving the vision.

## OUR VISION

All families with children birth through age five in Georgia have the resources and support necessary for a meaningful and successful life.

For more information please contact us at [strengtheningfamiliesga@gmail.com](mailto:strengtheningfamiliesga@gmail.com).

## strengthening families G E O R G I A



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For more information & resources, go to  
[www.strengtheningfamiliesga.net](http://www.strengtheningfamiliesga.net)

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