

# FAMILY GUIDE



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This booklet was developed for use in conjunction with the Building Blocks for a Healthy Future material. Numerous people contributed to the development of these materials (see appendix).

## **DISCLAIMER**

This document and the entire set of Building Blocks for a Healthy Future material were developed under Contract No. MDMS Contract No. 277-98-6014 with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Gwyndolyn Ensley served as the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (Division of Prevention Education) Project Officer. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of CSAP, SAMHSA, or HHS.

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## **ORIGINATING OFFICE**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
HHS Publication No. (SMA)  
Printed 2003

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*To order additional publications, contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686 or <http://bblocks.samhsa.gov>.*



# Building Blocks for a Healthy Future



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# Building Blocks for a Healthy Future

## INTRODUCTION

Lay the groundwork now to talk about underage drinking, tobacco, and drugs. By the time most children enter preschool, they have seen adults drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes in real life, in the media, or both. Today, even elementary school children may hear about or see illegal drug use.

What children learn early in their lives often forms lifelong habits and attitudes. Young children can learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy activities. They know how to follow rules. They can practice making decisions and gain the confidence and wisdom to say "no."

*Building Blocks for a Healthy Future* is here to support you as you set aside time to share with your children. Talk and play with them, and learn about them. Let them know you love them. Be involved now and you and your children will find it easier to talk about alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs as they get older. Studies have found that parents who talk to their children about alcohol, tobacco, and drugs help them avoid substance abuse.

This *Building Blocks for a Healthy Future* Guide is designed for parents and caregivers of children ages 3 to 6. It is organized around six main topics to help you help your child learn how to make positive, healthy choices.

1. **Good talking, good listening:** Establish and maintain good communication with your child.
2. **Time with your kids:** Get involved and stay involved in your child's life.
3. **Living with rules:** Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences.
4. **Walk the walk:** Be a positive role model.
5. **Kids with kids:** Teach your child to choose friends wisely.
6. **Show and tell:** Monitor your child's activities.



Each chapter has four sections that describe the topic and how it relates to messages about substance abuse:

- **Tips:** Tips to help you explore the topic with your child.
- **What Do You Think?** Examine your understanding of the topic. You will find our answers at the end of each set of scenarios or questions.
- **Discussion Starters:** Questions to begin good family conversations.
- **Things To Do:** Games and activities to help make the key topics part of your daily lives.

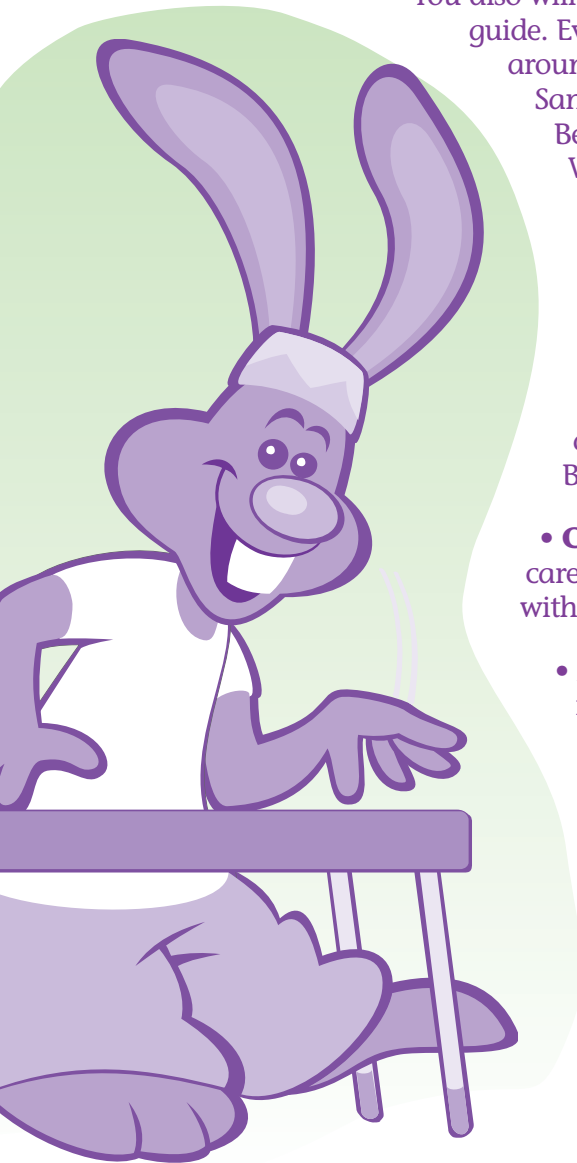
You will find several recommendations for activities in this guide. Choose the ones that suit you and change them to make them work for you and your family.

You also will find references to Wally Bear and friends throughout this guide. Everything in *Building Blocks for a Healthy Future* is built around the characters Ali Rabbit, Kristi Kitty, Miguel Tiger, Sandy Squirrel, Mee Possum, Thurgood Turtle, and Wally Bear. Each character has a definite personality and interests. Wally Bear and friends can be found in five other products.

- **Character Cards:** Trading cards show a character in one of his or her favorite activities and talk about the character's interests, dreams, and fears.
- **ABC Coloring Book:** Provides simple coloring activities that reinforce pre-reading skills through alliterative language and offer a fun glimpse at Wally Bear and Friends.
- **CD:** Songs and dialog are about eating well, taking good care of yourself, being careful, having family fun, and playing with others.
- **Activity Book:** Special reading, writing, and art activities for you to do with 3- to 4-year-olds and 5- to 6-year-olds. Find out about what to eat, your family, how to play, and the world around you.
- **Know Kit Cards:** Wally Bear and each of his friends introduce discussion starters and activities about topics important to you and your child.

These are available from:

**SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)**  
P.O. Box 2345  
Rockville, MD 20847-2345  
1-800-729-6686  
Web site: <http://bblocks.samhsa.gov>



# 1 GOOD TALKING, GOOD LISTENING

*(Establish and maintain good communication with your child.)*

## TIPS ON TALKING

**T**alk with your children. No matter how old they are, talking with them is one of the most important things you can do to help them grow up confident and secure. When they start school with strong communication skills, they will be better prepared to learn and become successful students.

**Ask questions that require more than a one-word answer, such as “yes” or “no.”** Ask them to explain something or talk about a story you read together. Answer your children’s questions thoughtfully and encourage them to answer their own questions. If you don’t know an answer to a question, tell them so and suggest ways to find the answer together.

**Value your children's answers.** Don’t use your talks as a chance to criticize or blame. If your children are unafraid to talk with you, you can more easily help them improve or change behavior. Listen closely. If your children believe their feelings and ideas are valued, they will be more likely to talk openly and you can learn a great deal about how they think and what they feel. You can help set the stage for your children to continue to share their thoughts and feelings as teenagers.

**Read stories to your children.** Let them see you read. Take them to the library for storytelling and to choose books to take home and share with you. Reading together helps children learn about language and share something wonderful with you in a close, warm atmosphere. And, it opens their world to authors of all kinds of books and stories from all over the world.

**Tell stories to your children.** Children love to hear stories. Tell your children stories about when they were younger. They love hearing these and they make children feel valued. Tell them stories you loved hearing when you were a child. Tell stories about yourself when you were a child and about other family members. These stories give children an important understanding of family history. They also show how family members work, play, make mistakes, and celebrate successes together.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**H**earing and listening are two different things. Paying attention to what someone is saying, or *active listening*, is key to good communication. Active listening takes time. When children are upset, take the time to get to the reason. Ask questions. You'll get more information and your child will know that you are listening and value what he or she is saying.

**How are your active listening skills? Read the conversations below between parent and child to find out! Circle the parent answers you think sound like active listening.**

1. **Child:** I don't like Juan anymore.  
**Parent:** You and Juan have always been best friends. What happened?  
**Child:** He took my truck and didn't give it back!  
**Parent:** I can tell you're pretty angry with Juan. What did you do to try to get your truck back? What else might you try?
2. **Child:** Daddy made me mad. I don't like him anymore.  
**Parent:** Why? What did he say to make you so angry?  
**Child:** He made me stay in my room until I had put away all my toys.  
**Parent:** Well, you'll just have to get over that because he's your daddy and what he says goes!
3. **Child:** I am hungry. Please fix me a snack.  
**Parent:** You sound like you need something to eat. I bet if you tried you could make your own snack.  
**Child:** No, I can't. I don't know how!  
**Parent:** Let's decide what you'd like to eat that you can make yourself, and I'll help you.
4. **Child:** You don't ever listen to me.  
**Parent:** My job isn't to listen to you. It's your job to listen to me.  
**Child:** But, this is important.  
**Parent:** I don't have time.
5. **Child:** Why do I have to clean up my room?  
**Parent:** Your room is a mess. You have to clean up your mess.  
**Child:** Kofi messed it up when he came over to play. He should clean it up.  
**Parent:** I know how hard it is to clean up someone else's mess. I'd be happy to help you get started. After the room is cleaned up, what can we do to celebrate your beautiful room?



If you circled 1, 3, and 5, you have active listening down pat. Read the information below and look again at the parent answers you missed. How would you change the parent answers that are NOT active listening to answers that ARE active listening?

## KNOW KIT CARDS



Use the *Building Blocks for a Healthy Future Know Kit Cards* to help you and your family start fun conversations.

### Active listeners:

1. Are compassionate and accepting
2. Avoid value judgments
3. Do not place limits or conditions on speakers' feelings
4. Are responsible and truthful

### Active listeners respond to what is being said by:

1. Making sure they understand the content
2. Acknowledging the feelings
3. Giving choices for working out the issue



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

Good talks are based on questions that invite more talking as well as careful listening. First, decide how you would answer and what you believe your children would say. Then, talk with your children to find out how they would answer the questions.

1. What is your favorite thing to do?
2. What is your favorite thing to eat?
3. Which would you rather do—play ball or play cards? Why?
4. What makes you angry? What do you do when you're angry?
5. What scares you? What do you do when you're scared?
6. What three words would you use to tell another person about yourself? Why those three words?
7. When do you feel bored? What do you do to stop being bored?
8. What do you like best to do with (a member of the family)? Why?
9. Who's your favorite friend?
10. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

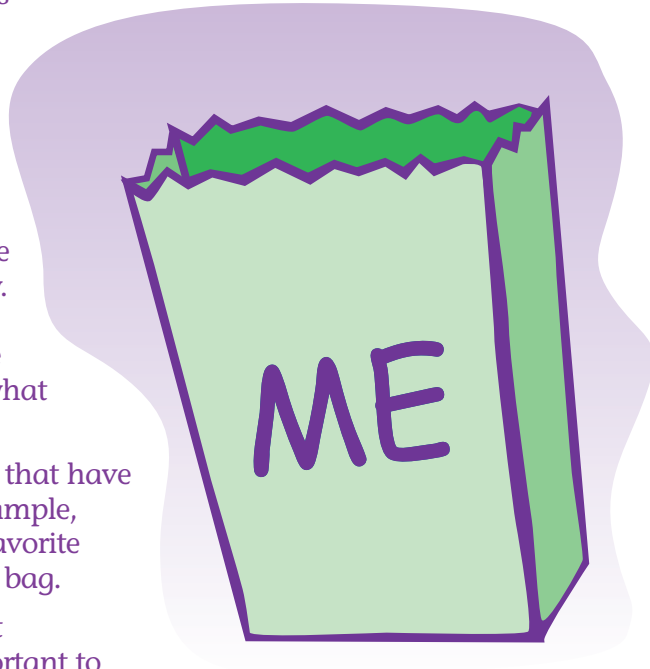


## THINGS TO DO

### ME BAGS

Create “ME” bags to help you and your children share your feelings and thoughts more easily.

- Each person should decorate the outside of a paper bag to look like himself or herself. The bag can show only a face or can be the entire body. Tell your children that these bags now show the outside of themselves—what others see.
- Put things inside the bag that have special meaning. For example, your child might put a favorite stuffed toy or shirt in the bag.
- Use the bag to talk about yourselves. What is important to you? Why is something a favorite? What would you like to put in the bag but can't?
- Remember to practice active listening.



### PAPER PLATE FEELINGS

- You and your children can make faces on paper plates to show what you look like when you feel angry, sad, happy, proud, worried, etc.
- If your child is interested in learning to read, write the names of the feelings on the backs of the paper plate faces.
- Use the plates to talk about feelings. Hold a paper plate to your face and say how you're feeling. For example, you might say:

“I feel silly when I drop spaghetti on my shoes. What makes you feel silly?”

“When someone borrows my things without asking, I tell them right away that I am angry and that they must ask me first. Then, I feel better. What do you do to stop being angry?”

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR  
A HEALTHY FUTURE

**Activities, games,  
and songs in the  
Know Kit, the  
Activity Book, and  
on the CD will help  
your children learn  
to talk about their  
feelings.**



## TRAVEL DREAMS

- Ask your child to gather his or her toy trucks, trains, rockets—anything that can travel. Toy houses or buildings or building blocks are also useful.
- Ask, “If you could go anywhere, where would you go?”
- Give your child a large piece of paper and a pencil, crayons, or markers to draw a map of this place. Talk about the streets and sidewalks needed to get there and help your child draw these on the map.
- Add buildings and houses. Discuss who lives or works in the houses and buildings, what a visitor would find inside, and which ones your children or you would like to visit.
- Play with your children with the cars, trucks, etc. Talk about where the cars or trucks are going, who is driving them, the drivers’ plans, etc. Where are we going? Where are you going? What do you think you’ll see when you get there?



## STORY TRAINS

- Make up a funny story with your child. You can start the story with, “One day, a rabbit hopped into your bedroom.” Or, “One of the children in the squirrel family that lives in the backyard was painting a beautiful picture in his room. He had an accident and spilled paint all over his rug!”
- Ask your child to add the next sentence.
- Keep the story going by adding sentences. Take all additions as a challenge to keep the story going.
- If you like, write the story down and share it later with the family.



# 2 TIME WITH YOUR KIDS

*(Get involved and stay involved in your child's life.)*

## TIPS ON TIME

**Spend time with your children.** One of the most important things you can do to safeguard your children is to spend time with them. None of us ever feels we “have enough time” to do the things we have to do much less the ones we’d like to do! But, according to the Office of National Drug Control Strategy, when strong ties are formed between children and their families, and between families and their children’s schools, children are least likely to develop drug problems.

**Enhance the quality of the time you spend with your children.** Children should be absolutely sure that they can count on your time with them. Set aside time when you can give your full attention to your child: family dinner hour, homework help, or once-a-week outings. Younger children need more time, although older children need regular time with you, too. And each of your children needs some time to spend with you alone, apart from brothers and sisters. Set aside together time with your children when they are younger and the habit will more likely continue as your children grow.

**Three kinds of time.** There are three kinds of time you can spend with your kids:

- 1) One-on-one time: Just you and your child talking, shopping, cooking, going to the playground or the park, watching TV, reading aloud, or playing a game
- 2) Family time: The whole family eating a meal, cleaning the house or car, hiking, making plans, reading aloud, cooking, going to a movie, or playing a game
- 3) Community time: Family, or you and your child, attending neighborhood or sports events or gatherings at places of worship

**Share yourselves.** The whole point of spending time with your children is to share your own values, beliefs, and plans with your child. Talking with and listening to your child is one of the most important “quality time” activities you can do. And, it can happen anywhere, at any time—while folding laundry, playing a game, doing the shopping, or driving home from Grandma’s house.



## —WHAT DO YOU THINK?—

**H**ow involved are you in your kids' lives? How do you work to make them comfortable confiding in you? Check out your parent involvement skills below. Would you respond in a different way?

1. Check all the things you do to let your children know that you are listening carefully and taking what they say seriously.
  - ☐ Make eye contact
  - ☐ Remove all distractions
  - ☐ Ask questions about what they have said
  - ☐ Repeat what they say to show you have heard them
  - ☐ Keep your tone of voice quiet and without judgment
2. How often do you let your children know you love them?
  - ☐ Once a week
  - ☐ Occasionally
  - ☐ Every day
3. How do you encourage your children to share their problems with you no matter what they are?
  - ☐ Show them that I take their questions and concerns seriously and without judgment
  - ☐ Tell them they can tell me anything
  - ☐ Try to fix any problems they bring to me
  - ☐ Tell them they need to solve their own problems, because I have too many of my own to deal with
4. If your children attend school or preschool, how much time do you estimate you spend with them at school or on school projects?
  - ☐ 1 hour/week
  - ☐ 2 hours/week
  - ☐ 3 hours/week
  - ☐ more than 3 hours/week
5. How much time do you spend doing things with your children, one on one? With your family? In community activities?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 hour/week	one-on-one	family	community
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 hours/week	one-on-one	family	community
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 hours/week	one-on-one	family	community
<input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 hours/week	one-on-one	family	community

How did you do? Check the hints below to see the best way to develop and strengthen ties between you and your children.

1. Listen carefully and always with respect to anything your children have to say.
2. Make sure your children know that they are loved. This can be done with words, physical contact, and special activities.
3. Guide your children through decision-making and problem-solving activities. Give suggestions; ask questions.
4. Show a sincere interest in your children's lives in school.
  - Ask specific questions about classwork.
  - Praise honest effort.
  - Celebrate individual talents and knowledge developed in school.
5. Spend time with your children, one on one, as a family, and in the community. Give them your full attention. Don't let it turn into negative time or become the last priority on a list of "things to do."

Adapted from: The National PTA Parents' Center  
[www.pta.org/commonsense/2\\_parents/251\\_getinvtp](http://www.pta.org/commonsense/2_parents/251_getinvtp)

## KNOW KIT CARDS

**Use the *Building Blocks for a Healthy Future Know Kit* to help your family find fun things to do together and to find other discussion starters.**



***My Family* cards have good ideas about things you can do with your children one on one and in a family group.**

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

Good talks are based on careful listening and questions that lead to more questions. The following questions suggest ways to talk about things you can do with your children to become more involved in their lives. Use these questions as models for your own family. Keep it fun!

1. I think you made a great drawing. Tell me why you picked the colors that you did. How did you think to draw that?
2. Let's play with clay today. What do you like to make with clay?
3. Let's do something fun tomorrow. What do you think would be fun?
4. What would you like to help me make for dinner tonight?
5. Tonight, we're going to have a family meeting to talk about taking care of the dog. Everyone will sign up for feeding and walking the dog during the week.

6. Our church is having a picnic tomorrow night and the whole family is going. Can you be in charge of getting together things to play with, like flying discs or a baseball?
7. Tell me one good thing that happened at school today.
8. I see you had a problem with your teacher today. Tell me what happened and let's see if we can work together on a way to clear up the problem.
9. Let's go for a walk around the neighborhood and see how many doors we can count. You can practice riding on your bike while I walk.
10. I'd like you to play on a neighborhood team this summer. What kind of team would you like to play on?

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## THINGS TO DO

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### HOLD REGULAR FAMILY MEETINGS

Family meetings can assure children that they are needed, contributing members of the family and that they have a say in their lives. If you start family meetings now while your child is young, you will help set the stage for an easier passage through the teen years. Children who can talk with their parents about schedules, money needs, and future plans regularly when they're young will find it easier to discuss those issues when they are teenagers.

Hold regular meetings but keep them short for the youngest members of the family. You can talk about anything, depending on what your family needs. Talk about activities for family time, or ask for opinions about places to visit together.

Set rules for taking part that everyone should follow. One fun way to ensure that everyone gets a chance to be heard is to use a "speaking stick." The person holding the stick gets to talk. Then, he or she passes the stick to another family member. Keep family meetings as calm as you can and make sure everyone's opinions and ideas are respected, if not actually followed.

Family members can suggest a schedule for household chores, money needs, and bedtime issues. Children who are asked to solve problems in a team will find those skills useful for the rest of their lives.

### ACTIVITY BOOK

**The Activity Book has two good activities called "I Like Being Me" to help your children "tell" you about themselves. Use the drawings and lists as conversation starters.**



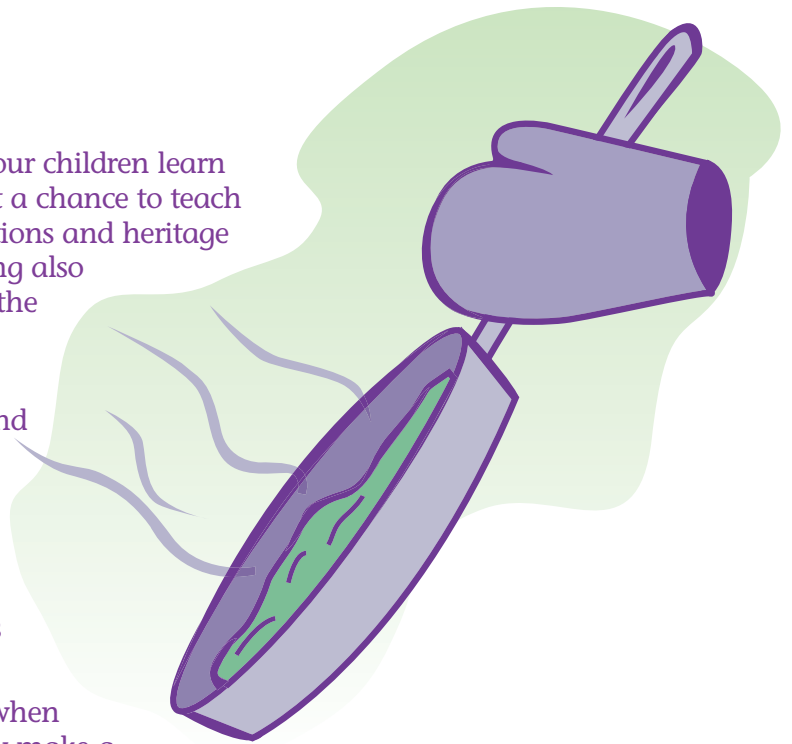


## COOK TOGETHER

Cooking together is fun and will help your children learn about food and nutrition. You'll also get a chance to teach them about their family's cultural traditions and heritage as well as those of other peoples. Cooking also is good preparation for both math and the sciences.

Young children can do many cooking tasks. Three-year-olds can add raisins and chips to cookie dough; 4-year-olds can pour ingredients from a cup into a bowl. Five-year-olds can crack eggs and are strong enough to help stir, and 6-year-olds, with help, can measure flour and other dry ingredients in a measuring cup.

Be patient and have a sense of humor when cooking with children because they may make a mess. But, you will get a chance to teach good nutrition in fun and delicious ways.



Start a refrigerator list of recipes you can cook with your children's help. If possible, make a picture scrapbook of their favorite snacks and help them learn to "read" it. Whenever your children help you cook for a family meal, make sure everyone else at the meal knows about it.

## ACTIVITY BOOK AND SONGS

**Introduce your children to the "Healthy Snacks" song and activities in the Activity Book. Use them to discover your children's favorite snacks and help them write down and illustrate a favorite recipe.**



## GOING TO SCHOOL

As a parent, your involvement in your children's schools—even if it's a part-time, child enrichment program or day care for preschoolers—is an important way to be involved in their lives.

- **Volunteer and attend conferences.** Set appointments and visit with your children's teachers. Come prepared with questions about ways you can support what they are doing, things that worry you, or information about your children's special needs.

- **Join the PTA (PSO) and attend meetings.** You will discover many things you can do for your children's teachers, and you will be able to track important school decisions and events. Put the events on your calendar and attend them with your children. Volunteer to help in class. You will be able to see your child in the school setting. You can listen to children read and/or read to them and make materials they will use in lessons. If possible, chaperone a field trip.

If your schedule does not allow you to participate in class, ask your child's teacher about class projects that could use a helping hand but do not have to be done in the classroom. For example, you could make decorations for a class play, or refreshments for a party or contribute toward a bulletin board display.

At home, in the car, or on a shopping trip, ask your children to share a good thing about school as well as a problem. Celebrate the good things and help them come up with ways to solve the problems.

## VOLUNTEER AS A FAMILY

Volunteering as a family is positive, leads to a sense of teamwork, shows responsible actions, and lets your children know that their community needs them. Your children also will learn to accept others, gain useful skills, and develop habits that will help them use idle time when they are older.

- Get your whole family into a situation that is positive.
- Encourage a sense of teamwork.
- Model responsible behavior.
- Help children learn to accept others, gain useful skills, and develop lifelong, active habits.

There are many ways to find places to volunteer—through your place of worship, on the Internet, or through your local volunteer clearinghouse. Let organizations know about your skills and interests, your intentions to volunteer as a family, your time and transportation limits, and any special needs you may have.

Finally, interview the volunteer organization carefully. Will your time be spent in activities that are meaningful to you and your family? Will all the members of your family, despite their ages, be involved together? Once you begin working, make sure you and your family talk after each volunteer experience to be sure that everyone is enjoying it and achieving their goals.

# 3 LIVING WITH RULES

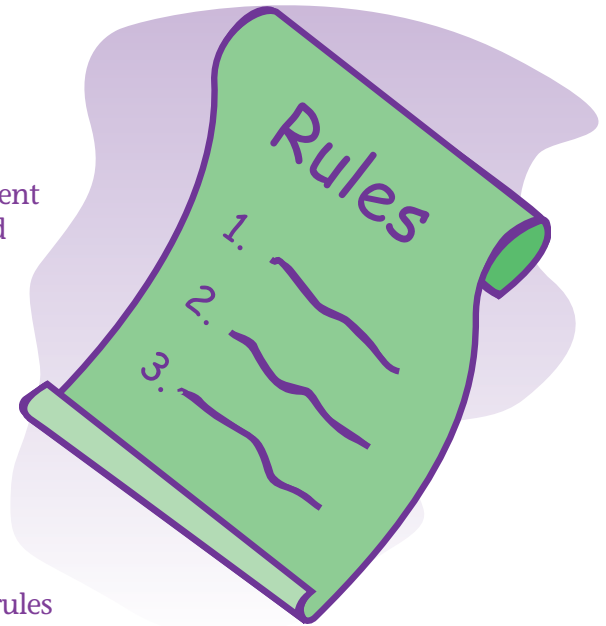
*(Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences.)*

## TIPS ON RULES

Young children who are used to clear rules and consistent consequences are less likely to risk using alcohol and other drugs as they get older. They are also more likely to have the self-confidence to say “no.” On the other hand, studies show that children are at greater risk for drug abuse in homes where punishment is too severe or where there is no discipline.

Below are seven steps to positive discipline.

1. **Discuss how rules protect health, safety, and the rights of children and others.** Let children know you love them too much to let them take dangerous risks or get into trouble. Set rules to help them take care of themselves, avoid dangerous situations, and respect themselves and others.
2. **Discuss how different families have different rules.** Let your child know that, in different houses and in different countries, families may have different rules. In your family, your child follows the family’s rules.
3. **Discuss your rules and expectations in advance.** Make clear rules with your child. Make sure everyone understands the consequences for breaking the rules. Don’t make too many rules—you might not remember or enforce them all consistently.
4. **Follow through with the consequences.** Children need to know that rules are enforced. Young children test their boundaries. Clear negative messages let them know potential dangers.
5. **Don’t make any rules you do not intend to enforce.** Rules without consequences have no meaning for children, so set rules you know you can and will enforce.
6. **Don’t impose harsh or unexpected new punishments.** Stick to consequences that have been set ahead of time. Be sure that anger doesn’t influence your discipline. If you need one, give yourself a “cooling off” period before confronting your child.
7. **Praise children when they follow the rules.** Positive reinforcement helps them develop self-confidence and trust in their own judgment.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**Living with rules is a matter of practice. Consider the scenarios below.**

1. **The Rule:** Keisha must be in bed by 8:00. When you ask her to start getting ready for bed at 7:45, she says that she wants to finish the game she's playing with her brother.

*What would you do?*

- a. Tell her that's fine, but you expect her to be in bed no later than 8:15.
- b. Tell her that it takes 15 minutes to get ready for bed, so she had better stop playing and start now.
- c. Remind her that bedtime is 8:00 sharp, but that you'll help her and her brother save the game so they can finish it tomorrow.

2. **The Rule:** Carlos cannot play ball in the house. When you walk inside, you see a ball and a broken lamp in the living room. You are really angry.

*What would you do?*

- a. Yell at Carlos to go directly to his room and stay there until you say he can come out.
- b. Tell Carlos that you know the agreed-upon consequence is that you decide the times Carlos can play with the ball. This time, however, Carlos also broke a lamp, so the consequence changes and he cannot play with the ball at all.

- c. Give yourself a cooling off period. Then, find out what happened. Talk to Carlos about the consequences of playing ball in the house and of breaking a lamp. First, as agreed, for the next week you'll be in charge of the ball and Carlos can use it only when you say. Second, Carlos will help you clean up the broken lamp.



3. **The Rule:** Adam cannot play in the backyard by himself. Today is Adam's birthday. He is 6 and he wants to take the new remote control car out into the yard and play. You're too busy to go with him.

*What would you do?*

- a. Tell Adam, "Don't whine. You know the rules."
- b. Tell Adam that rules are rules, even if it is his birthday.
- c. Talk to Adam about the rules the two of you have set together. Discuss whether he's become responsible enough to have some of the rules changed now that he is 6 years old.

**Answers:**

Would you do something different for any or all of these three rules? What would you do?

1. If you picked c, you're enforcing the rules and showing respect for Keisha's request.
2. If you picked c, you're enforcing the rule with an agreed-upon consequence. You're also reinforcing a positive lesson about taking responsibility.
3. If you picked c, you're giving rules the flexibility to grow as your child grows. You're also teaching a positive lesson about responsibility and trust.

## BREAKING RULES

**Consequences** vary according to the age of your child, the seriousness of the situation, and your child's needs and personality. Here are a few examples:



- Earlier bedtime
- No friends over to play
- Cancelled trip to the movies or a favorite restaurant
- Less time on the computer
- Less time watching TV

Remember, any of these consequences can be turned around and made into rewards for following the rules.

**Consistency** does not mean rules can't be changed. As your children grow, be ready to expand their rights and change rules and limits. A good system is to have a meeting at milestones, such as birthdays or the first day of a new school year, to talk about expectations and rules. If a rule or its consequences needs to be changed, talk about it, preferably before the rule is broken.

## Effective Discipline

- Tell children what to do rather than what not to do. Help them do it, if necessary.

“Please pick up your toys.”

NOT — *“Don’t leave your toys in the middle of the floor.”*
- Give children plenty of chances to make decisions, but only when their decisions will be okay with you.

“Do you want cheese and crackers, or banana and peanut butter for a snack?”

NOT — *“What do you want for a snack today?”*
- Criticize your child’s behavior, not your child.

“I don’t like it when you...”

NOT — *“I can’t believe how bad you were today.”*
- Punishment may cause a child to hide a particular behavior temporarily, but reward can help change behavior.

“After you finish setting the table, you can watch your video until supper time.”

NOT — *“If you don’t set the table, there will be no video for you.”*
- Whenever possible, there should be natural consequences for misbehavior.

“I saw you throw mud all over the windows. Here’s a bucket of water and a sponge so you can help clean it.”

NOT — *“I saw you throw mud all over the windows. You’ll have to stay in your room the rest of the afternoon.”*



## DISCUSSION STARTERS

Young children like rules. Setting limits tells your children you care for them and are helping them behave correctly. Rules should protect the health, safety, and rights of your child and others. Use these questions or think of others for a family discussion on rules.

1. What is a rule?
2. What are our family rules? Why do we need them?
3. What are some of the rules in Grandma's (or another family member's) house?
4. What rules do you follow at school? Why?
5. What should happen if you break a rule?

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## THINGS TO DO

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### SETTING RULES

Set up rules and consequences with your children so you can be sure they understand and agree. Follow these steps:

1. Discuss the rules needed to protect the health, safety, and rights of everyone in the family.
2. Respect children's rights, such as the right to privacy, within the family rules.
3. Determine appropriate consequences for breaking each rule.
4. Give everyone a chance to discuss the fairness of the rules.
5. Write down the rules. Ask your children to draw pictures about the rules using stick figures or magazine cutouts. Tape the rules to the refrigerator for everyone to see.

Once the rules are set, don't forget:

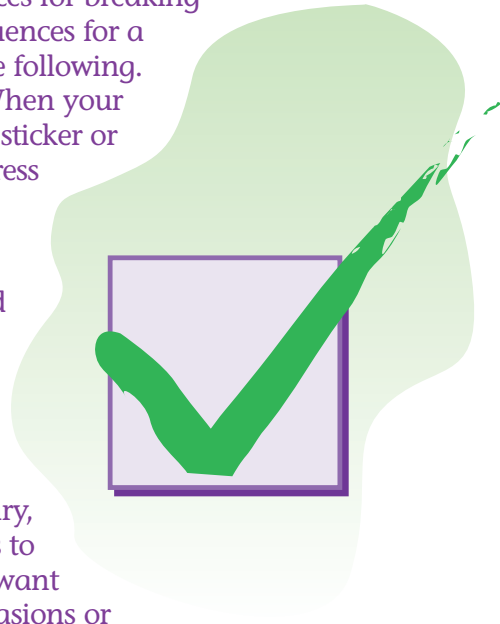
- *Praise children when they follow the rules.*
- *Stick to the consequences established for breaking each rule.*
- *Talk about needed changes in the rules.*
- *Help children follow the rules.*



## TROUBLE WITH RULES

You have created negative consequences for breaking the rules. Now, set up positive consequences for a family rule that your child has trouble following. Set up a weekly achievement chart. When your child follows the difficult rule, place a sticker or check mark in the chart to track progress and reward changing behavior.

For example, Amy refuses to go to bed on time. Put a check in the achievement chart for every night that she follows the bedtime rule. If she goes to bed on time 5 nights in a row, treat her with an extra bedtime story or a trip to the playground, library, or other special place. If she continues to follow the rules for a while, you may want to offer a compromise. On special occasions or on weekends, she can stay up 1 hour longer. If she falls back into old habits, she loses the privilege.

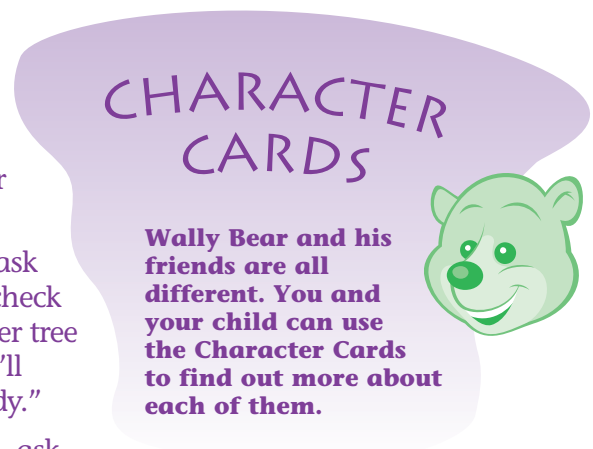


## WHAT WOULD WALLY BEAR AND FRIENDS DO?

Use *Building Blocks for a Healthy Future* Character Cards to help your children follow the rules.

- If your child is late getting ready for bed, ask “What would Sandy Squirrel do?” If you check her character card, Sandy Squirrel loves her tree house and books. Your child might say, “I’ll climb into bed and read a book with Sandy.”
- If your child has lost his shoes once again, ask “What would Miguel Tiger do?” If you check his character card, Miguel loves to investigate. Your child might say, “I’ll get my magnifying glass and look everywhere until I find my shoes and, then, I’ll choose one place to always keep my shoes.”

Focus on Wally Bear and friends to help children make the right choices when asked to follow rules or behave appropriately.



# 4 WALK THE WALK

*(Be a positive role model.)*

## TIPS ON ROLE MODELING

**Y**oung children learn by observing and imitating the adults in their world. From birth, children watch their parents closely, following their every move, studying their expressions, and mimicking their sounds. As babies grow, imitating becomes more complicated. In the kitchen, they may bang on a pot with a wooden spoon while a parent uses a similar pan and spoon to cook. They will try on makeup, pretend to shave, mother a doll, read a book, and write a letter—all in imitation of the adults they love and admire. Children will also imitate our bad habits, such as swearing, smoking cigarettes, or abusing alcohol or other drugs.

**Show your children how to handle stress.** If you are tired or sad or angry, talk to your child about your feelings and your need to rest quietly. Help your child learn to manage his or her feelings in the same way.

**Show your children how to solve their own problems.** If you quietly address issues as problems to solve rather than as behaviors to punish, children will calmly apply problem-solving strategies to difficulties elsewhere in their world. If you come home from work angry, they will surely follow your lead. Rather, talk about how to work with other people and solve problems together.

**Model the traits and behaviors you wish to cultivate in your children.** Model respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance and self-esteem, exercise, eating good foods, laughing, reading, playing, and dreaming. Studies show that children who have strong, loving role models in the early years grow into strong, successful adults. They view the world, their peers, and themselves in positive terms and have few problems with abuse of drugs or alcohol.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**How do you think the things you do affect your children's behavior? Are you pleased with yourself as a role model? Select "true" or "false" to check your role model know-how.**

1. Choosing TV programs or movies, watching them, and then talking about them with your children will help them avoid negative role models and behavior, such as smoking, drinking, or solving problems with violence. **True or False**
2. Your children are in the backseat of the car when another driver cuts you off and you throw a fit and swear. But, it's okay because your kids aren't old enough to drive yet, so they can't imitate you. **True or False**
3. If a phone call interrupts a family dinner, ask your child to tell the caller that you're not home so you won't cut into family time. **True or False**
4. You worked hard to quit smoking, but your friend still smokes. She offers you a cigarette and you think, "What's one cigarette?" You decide to take it. **True or False**
5. If you are experiencing stress or conflict in your own life, tell your children you need extra time to calm down. **True or False**

**H**ow much did you know about role modeling for your children? Will you change your own behaviors after checking yourself here? Check this information, to help you answer that question.

**Question 1:** *True.* The media often glamorize the use of alcohol and cigarettes. In many programs, violence is an okay way to solve problems as long as the perpetrator is defending "the right." Choose and watch TV programs with your child that allow you to talk through some of the other actions or rules of behavior.

**Question 2:** *False.* Model responsible habits. Never assume that your children don't notice lapses in following rules in courtesy or can't transfer your behaviors to their own situation.

**Question 3:** *False.* Lying for any reason tells your children that it's okay to be dishonest. If you politely tell the caller you'll be happy to call back later, you've given children a model for staying true to themselves without hurting someone else.

**Question 4:** *False.* Show children that you value your freedom to choose by refusing the cigarette. Your example will show that it is possible to remain friends without giving in to peer pressure.

**Question 5:** *True.* Children must learn to deal with the good and the bad. You have an opportunity to model ways to do this successfully if you share your own coping strategies honestly and calmly.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

Good talks are based on thought-provoking questions as well as on careful listening. The following questions will help you start talking with your children about their role models or qualities and behaviors they expect to find in a role model.

- What do you want to be when you grow up? What makes you want to be a \_\_\_\_\_?
- Is there someone you know whom you would almost always be willing to do what he or she says? Who is that person?
- Let's play copycat. You do everything I do. Later I'll copy everything you do. What did I do that you had the most fun copying? Why? What else do I do that you would like to do, too? Why?
- Who is your favorite character on TV or in a book? What makes them your favorite? Would you like to be like the character? What would you copy?
- Does your child copy your disciplinary style? Ask, "If your teddy bear makes a mess or tells a lie, how will you deal with it?"

## ACTIVITY BOOK AND SONGS

**Introduce your children to the "Weather Wise" song and activities in the Activity Book. Use these to help your children become role models themselves or identify role models in their lives.**



## THINGS TO DO

### FAMILY ROLE MODELS

Use family photos to tell children stories about family members who model one or more traits that you admire. Explain why each story is important to you and how they were role models for you. Tell at least one story about your children and the traits or behaviors that make them good role models for you. For example, describe a time when you saw them sharing their toys or comforting a friend.

Ask your children to help you create a bulletin board or scrapbook of role models. They could choose anyone: family, friends, community members, people in the news or in history, or characters from a book or in a TV show. Ask your children to help you write a caption under each picture that explains why that person is a role model.

## MODEL READING

Children who like to read are much more likely to succeed in school and in the workplace than those who don't. Reading sparks the imagination, stretches the brain, provides comfort, broadens problem-solving strategies, and provides a way to use free time well. Let your children see you read books, talk about books you've read or hope to read, and share books with others. They will want to do the same.

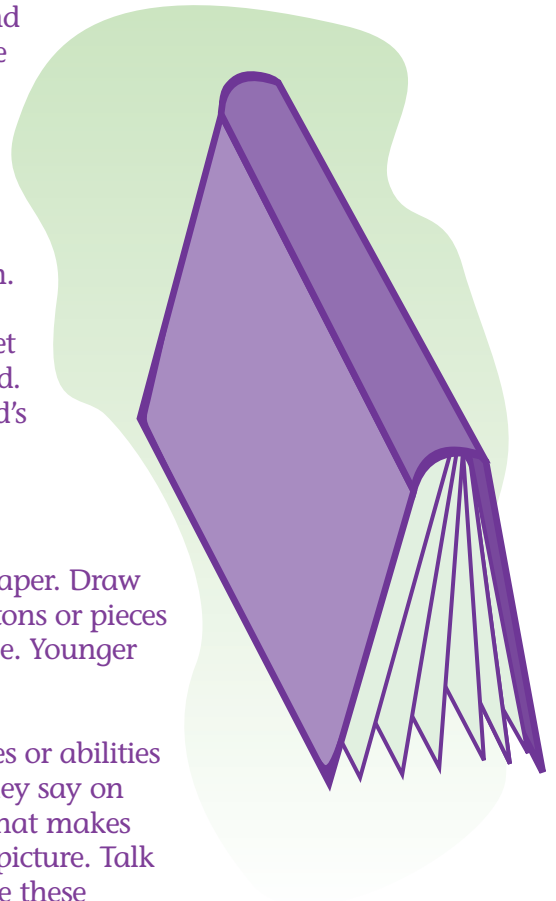
Set aside time each day to read with your child. Talk about what you've read. Ask about what they think will happen next in the story or why certain characters acted as they did. Then give your child the book and pick up one of your own. Depending upon your child's independence and reading ability, read silently to yourselves for a set period of time. Afterward, share what you've read. Gradually, lengthen the time period as your child's interest and ability to focus grows.

## MAKE A ROLE MODEL

Have your children lie down on large pieces of paper. Draw their outline. Give them magic markers and buttons or pieces of material to draw their features onto the outline. Younger children may need help.

Then, ask your children to tell you about qualities or abilities they have and would like to have. Write what they say on the picture in the margin. When they explain what makes characters or friends "favorites," add that to the picture. Talk with them about why they would want to imitate these behaviors. Point out that when you or they demonstrate one of these traits or behaviors, you or they are acting as a role model for others.

Put the picture where you and your children can see and add to it over time. When you or your children model the traits or behaviors illustrated on the picture, congratulate each other on positive role modeling.



# 5 KIDS WITH KIDS

*(Teach your child to choose friends wisely.)*

## TIPS ON FRIENDSHIPS

Recent studies show that peers have a powerful influence on even the youngest children. If you've ever watched a baby concentrate on the next youngest person in a room, you know why.

Kids learn how to get along by watching other kids. They learn new skills and information from playing with or alongside children. They become better at communicating because they want to play with and be accepted by friends. In fact, the better they are at learning social and thinking skills from their friends, the more successful they will be later in life. The more comfortable and confident they are with peers, the more likely they can choose friends wisely and resist negative influences.

You can do many things to help children get along with and learn from friends.

1. **Play with your kids just for fun.** You should play with them, letting them take the lead and direct the play as much as possible. Keep the tone positive.
2. **Give your children many opportunities to play with friends.** Friends don't have to be the same age as your child. Begin by inviting one child and his or her parent to play for a short time and extend the time and play group membership gradually.
3. **Be sure you and your kids talk about their friends and the things they do with their friends.** When talking with your kids, you are finding out information and helping them learn to solve problems.
4. **Support your kids approaching problems with friends in a problem-solving mode.** Children can picture different ways to solve problems and be compassionate when you encourage them to do so.
5. **Throw your weight behind positive, appropriate solutions.** Negotiation and a willingness to join in with others' ideas are always more acceptable than tattling, aggression, or vocal bullying.
6. **Take an upbeat approach to setbacks or disappointments.** About 50 percent of most encounters in preschool result in rejection. If kids respond to this rejection by saying, "Nobody likes me," they will drive away potential friends or withdraw from the group. Help your child understand that this is not a permanent situation. Ask your child to choose a schoolmate to invite to your home for a play day or role-play with your child ways to make friends.
7. **Unless necessary, don't interfere in your kids' ongoing play.** Get involved when an argument turns into a fight or stalemate.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**Getting along with other kids is important. How would you help each of the children in the following situations?**

1. Five-year-old Barbara is playing dress-up with her new friend Rita. Both girls want to wear the purple feather boa. Their argument has turned into a screaming, hitting match.

*What should you do?*

- a. Ask both girls to stop screaming or you will take Rita home.
- b. Take the purple feather boa away so that neither girl can wear it.
- c. Distract both girls with a snack and then work with them to think of ways they could solve the problem of the feather boa without a fight.
- d. Turn on the TV and ask both girls to be quiet and watch it.

2. Four-year-old Felipe appears to have found nothing he wants to do. So, he asks to turn on the TV.

*What should you do?*

- a. Turn on the TV.
- b. Get down on the floor with Felipe and invite him to play with you. Or if you can't break away immediately, give him blocks or toys and tell him you'll join him in 15 minutes. Have fun together!
- c. Give him a chore to complete.
- d. Send him outside or to his room.





3. Sarah is 4 and seems to like preschool. But her teacher says she doesn't play with any of the other children.

*What should you do?*

- Keep her by your side at home.
- Talk with her teachers to find out whom they would recommend as a playmate for Sarah at home. Talk with Sarah about what she and her friend might do at home and then invite the friend to play.
- Take Sarah to the park and tell her to go play with kids who are there already on the swing sets or the slide.
- Ignore the problem. Sarah will make friends when she's ready.

## THE GOLDEN RULE

**Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.**

**Kids will have fun completing the Golden Rule activities in the Activity Book.**



4. Five-year-old Derek and his friend Akira have been friends since preschool. At home, Derek complains that, "José won't leave Akira and me alone at school. He just wants to bug us."

*What should you do?*

- Invite Derek to think about reasons why José wants to play with him and Akira besides the one Derek has identified. If necessary, suggest reasons such as "José might be lonely" or "José may think you and Akira play good games." Guide him to think of ways to solve the problem other than just rejecting José.
- Talk with Derek about how to deal with people he doesn't like. Help him come up with ways to push José away.
- Tell Derek that's not really a big problem. You're sure he and Akira can work out a way to take care of José.
- Tell Derek to tell the teacher that José is bothering him and Akira.

CD

**Play the "Lion and the Mouse" song from *Wally Bear and Friends*, which talks about the Golden Rule.**



5. Rosalie comes home angry. When asked what's wrong, the 3-year-old complains that June tried to grab her doll. "Next time she does that I'm going to hit her," Rosalie exclaims.

*What should you do?*

- You're too busy to think about Rosalie's problems right now, but you make a mental note to talk with her about it later.
- Tell Rosalie not to hit anyone. She should share her doll.
- Talk with Rosalie about standing up for her rights. Guide her to brainstorm ways to defend her position, such as telling the teacher or yelling.
- Talk with Rosalie about solving the problem without hitting. Ask her to think about what June would do if Rosalie hit her. Then, ask her to come up with other ways she might try to protect her doll without hitting June. Keep her moving in a positive direction as she considers alternatives, such as sharing. Tell her about the Golden Rule.

### Answers:

Would you do something different in these scenarios? What would you do?

1. c. Children who learn to talk about problems to solve them tend to have more friends and more success in preschool or school.
2. b. When you let your children direct the play, you have the opportunity to strengthen your relationship with them and to help them sharpen skills they need to make friends with others kids.
3. b. Use teachers as a resource to help your children work on relationships and to guide problem-solving for at-home behaviors.
4. a. Help Derek discover new ways to solve his problem with José, based on insight into José's reasons for "bugging" him. This will help Derek learn to negotiate and act with compassion. Children who play with other children in a positive, compassionate, and flexible way are generally better liked by others.
5. d. Children who focus on positive alternative solutions to problems with friends will be more successful in playgroups and with friendships.



## THINGS TO DO TO HELP KIDS COOPERATE, NOT STRIKE OUT

At 3 years old, some children use aggression to solve problems. If Jack takes Terry's toy truck, Terry may hit Jack to express his anger and get his truck back. Almost all children go through this stage of development.

You can help kids learn to solve their problems through cooperative rather than aggressive behavior. Be helpful, consistent, compassionate, don't punish, and ALWAYS:

1. Approve efforts to be creative, flexible, and relevant while playing with others.
2. Support efforts to help others.
3. Model the power of positive negotiation and cooperation.
4. Acknowledge a child's struggle to learn how to get along with others.
5. Make it clear that you expect your children will be able to make friends.
6. Guide children to:
  - Identify and talk about their feelings and those of others
  - Look at the consequences of their aggressive actions
  - Develop problem-solving approaches to conflicts
  - Ask for and get help when needed.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

Young children learn more if they solve problems themselves than if you tell them what to do. In your talks with your children, try to use questions to help them expand their viewpoint of a situation or consider other solutions. Here are some questions to use or adapt.

1. Why do you think that happened?
2. What other things could you do in that situation? (or What other things could you do together?)
3. What did Chandra do when you said (or did) that? How do you think she felt about it?
4. How did you feel about that?
5. How do you know what the other kids are playing? How could you fit into their game?

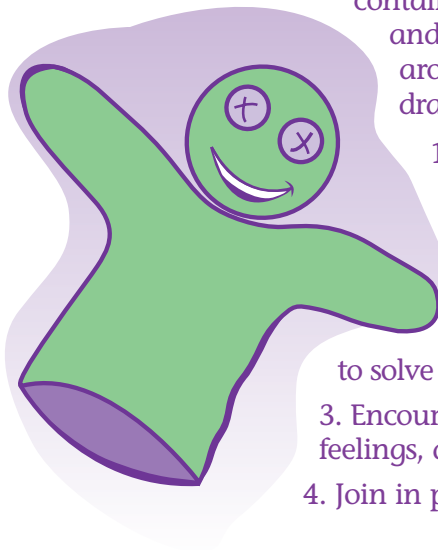
## THINGS TO DO

### PRACTICE WITH PUPPETS

Puppets are a great way to help your kids practice the social skills they need to make friends. Keep a corner or

container in your house filled with puppets and puppet-making materials found around your home, such as old socks, buttons, and string, or draw a puppet. Use the puppets to:

1. Discuss an upsetting incident reported by your child on the way home from school. Discover what happened, what was done to solve the problem, and what could be done the next time the problem occurs.
2. Give everyone in a confrontation a chance to discuss the events that led to the conflict, their feelings, and ways to solve the problem.
3. Encourage shy children to tell you about their day, friends, feelings, and fears.
4. Join in playtime with your kids in an easy, friendly way.



## KNOW KIT CARDS

**Check out the Know Kit cards for situations to use to practice positive social skills with your kids.**



## ACCENT THE POSITIVE

Children need to make friends. They also need to be able to keep their friendships and their communications pleasant, appropriate, and safe. Present several situations to your children at the dinner table. Then ask, “What would Wally Bear and his friends do?” As a family, come up with ways to handle each situation. For example:

1. A girl and a boy are pretending to cook. They tell others that there is only enough room for two in the “kitchen.” How could others join the game and make it more fun?
2. A boy pretends to be a firefighter. His friend wants to play but doesn't want to be a firefighter. He wants to be a policeman. What could they do to change the pretend game so they can play together?
3. Two children are playing in a playhouse. The house is small. The rules of the preschool classroom say only two at a time in the house. How could more than two children play with the playhouse together?

## WHEN MY FRIEND COMES TO PLAY

When you feel you and your children are ready to have friends over to play, planning will help the visit go smoothly and be fun. How many children you choose to invite at one time will depend on your child's age. Make decisions with your kids about:

- The best place to play: In their room? In the backyard? At the park?
- The best toys to play with (and those that should be put away, out of sight, and out of temptation!)
- Food or drink
- The best time limit for the play: 1 hour? 2 hours?
- The best time for the visit: After school? Saturday morning?
- Whom to invite?
- With older children, the best number of kids to invite
- Possible strategies if conflicts arise



# 6 SHOW AND TELL

*(Monitor your child's activities.)*

## TIPS ON MONITORING

It's easy to keep track of 3-, 4-, 5-, or 6-year-olds. Their friends don't drive, and they can't get far on a tricycle. But there's more to monitoring children's activities than just knowing where they are.

1. **Know your children.** The best way to notice any changes in a child's behavior is to understand your child's world. Children's behavior may change due to problems at school, with friends, or with family members. Help your children share their feelings and their world.
2. **Get to know your children's friends.** This puts you closer to their daily activities. You'll be able to recognize trouble spots and guide your children away from risky situations or dangerous behaviors.
3. **Get to know other parents.** Remember, parents can support each other's efforts and create a valuable security net for their children.
4. **Know where your children are going, whom they will be with, and what they'll be doing.** Keep a handy list of phone numbers and addresses of friends, teachers, and babysitters.
5. **Set up regular check-in times.** If old enough, have your child call and check in with you. Otherwise, call to make sure the babysitter picked up your child from school or that your children are safe with their friends' parents.
6. **Make sure your child has access to positive and appealing structured activities.** Start early to encourage your child in constructive, supervised activities. As children get older, participation can be a powerful way to help prevent drug use.

Monitoring young children's activities has been shown to be important in preventing alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use. Start now so that your children become used to telling you about their daily activities, asking permission, and knowing that their friends' parents know who you are. These habits will stay with them as they grow.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**How have you taken a role in your children's lives recently? Consider the following areas:**

1. What have you done to show your children that you take an interest in them and support them?
2. What do you do to make sure you know where your children are at all times?
3. Do your children or their caretakers know how to get in touch with you or another responsible person at all times?
4. How have you used the resources of family, friends, or community to ensure your children's well-being?
5. In what ways have you built a safe haven for your children?
6. Do your children know their schedules and routines?
7. Do your children know what you expect of them and the consequences for breaking rules?

### GETTING INVOLVED



Coordinating and monitoring children's activities ensures that they always have something "better to do" than drugs. Involvement also helps children develop skills, identify talents, gain a stronger sense of self-esteem and self-confidence, and make new friends.

It's easier to monitor your children by helping them choose activities. Then, you know where they are, whom they are with, and what they are doing. Resources for children's activities include:

- **School programs:** Find out about after-school classes, sports, and play programs.
- **Community programs:** Look to see what's available at community centers, libraries, dance and theater groups, and museums.
- **City and county programs:** Check out local parks and recreation centers.
- **Faith-based programs:** Religious groups sponsor many programs for all faiths.
- **National organizations:** Scouting and other group activities are available for older children.

## DISCUSSION STARTERS

Start your own family sharing time by helping your children share their feelings and their world. Young children love “show and tell,” and it’s a fun way to monitor your children’s activities, show you value them, and communicate your family’s values anytime, anywhere.

### KNOW KIT CARDS



**The Know Kit is a great source of ideas for family show and tell.**

**You can share ideas and feelings about the world, your family, and friends.**

#### **At breakfast or while riding to school or daycare:**

- Set the day’s schedule
- Talk about any changes in the routine
- Share expectations for the day

#### **While riding home, take turns sharing:**

- One thing that happened today
- One person you met or played with
- One time you felt (happy, sad, afraid, angry) during the day

Remember, everyone gets a chance to talk and be heard.

#### **While watching TV:**

- Choose and watch programs that encourage communication and show family support
- Compare TV family members and friends with your own
- Use a TV problem to point out ways to prevent the problem at home or with friends





## THINGS TO DO

### GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS

Monitoring your children also means knowing how they feel emotionally. Often, problems grow because children don't know how to communicate. Start a family "feelings report."

1. Together with your child, cut out bright yellow suns, white clouds, dark clouds, and thunderbolts, one for each family member. Write names on the shapes and glue them on refrigerator magnets.
2. During the day, members of the family set up their emotional weather reports. Do they feel bright and sunny? A little cloudy? Gloomy as a gray sky? Angry as a thunderbolt?

Give everyone time to share their emotions, but don't force them to talk. It's most important that you begin to monitor your children's feelings.

- Are they always gloomy? Do they feel angry often?
- Are they willing to talk about their feelings?
- What makes them feel good? When are they happiest?

### WHO ARE YOUR FRIENDS?

Help set boundaries for choosing new friends now. As your children get older, they will learn that it's important to find friends who care about others and act responsibly.

1. Talk about what makes your child a good friend.
  - I like to...
  - I'm always...
  - If someone is sad, I...
  - I know how to...
2. Talk about what's important in a friend.
  - Someone who cares
  - Someone who shares
  - Someone you can count on
  - Someone you can play with
  - Someone you can talk to

### CHARACTER CARDS

**Wally Bear and his friends are very important to each other. Use the Character Cards to help your children discover why each friend is a good friend to have.**



3. Help your children make a list of their friends. What makes each person a good friend? Think about and discuss their choices of friends.
4. Now, check yourself: Do you know each of these children? Have you met their parents? If not:
  - Go to his or her daycare, school, or play group and introduce yourself to the child and, if possible, the parent
  - Invite the child to your home to play
  - Set up a time to meet the child and his/her parent at the park or playground

## HERE I AM. WHERE ARE YOU?

On a large piece of paper, help your child list or draw all the places each of you goes during the day—work, school, Grandma’s house, the babysitter’s, the recreation center, etc. Talk about when you’re together and when you’re not. Use this to help your 3- or 4-year-old get to know the day’s schedule. For example:

- When I’m at work, where are you?
- If you’re at Grandma’s, where am I?
- Where will I meet you today?
- Who will pick you up from daycare today?

Place the “map” where, each morning, you can talk about the schedule and your expectations for the day. This will not only help you monitor your child, but also give your child a sense of routine and safety, knowing where you are.



## IF IT'S \_\_\_\_\_ O'CLOCK, I MUST BE \_\_\_\_\_

Clocks and telling time help 5- and 6-year-olds monitor their own schedules.

1. Start with two large paper circles, one for midnight to noon, one for noon to midnight. Have children select colors to represent their activities: sleeping, getting ready for school, playing with friends, eating, going to Grandma's, etc.
2. Place the numbers on the round clock faces. Ask your child: What do you do between midnight and 6 o'clock in the morning? Draw lines to block off that amount of time on the clock face. Have your child color the time for "sleeping." Continue to fill in the clock faces for other activities.
3. Have several blank clock faces ready to help your child understand a change in the daily routine (for weekends, etc.).
4. Post the clock faces to help your children know where they will be and what they will be doing each day.
5. As children get older, they will know that any change in their schedule means they must contact and talk with you. Monitoring your child's activities will become a natural expectation.

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## SUMMARY

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### HEALTHY START

Children are exposed to alcohol and drug use even when they are very young. What you say and do every day can affect your children's future attitudes about substance use and about how they interact with family members and others. *Now is the time to help your children form healthy habits, attitudes, and relationships.*

Use the information you have just read in this guide, as well as the suggested activities, to help you strengthen your relationship with your children and give them the healthy start all children deserve. As your children grow and/or as issues and concerns arise, come back to the key topic in this guide that addresses the subject you need help on and refresh your memory. If one of the discussion starters does not help you get a conversation going with your child, try another and another until you find one that works for you.

Watch closely and listen carefully to how your children react in your conversations.

Their reactions will tell you what direction to take: Are

they ready for the discussion? Are they

interested? Do they want to talk

even more? Change the

conversation starters to suit your

particular needs—use your own

words, if you want—whatever feels

comfortable to you. The point is to get

the conversation going between you

and your child and to have fun! Also,

choose the games and activities that are

appropriate and interesting.

#### ACTIVITY BOOK AND CD



**Sing the “Feeling Song”  
to help children  
understand that all  
feelings are “OK.”  
Use the Activity Book  
to help children express  
their feelings in  
pictures and words.**

Don't forget: the key topics in this guide

help you think about the ways you interact

with your child now and what you might want to change or

develop further. Below is a quick summary of the issues covered in each section.

#### · Talking and Listening

Talk with your children and really listen to what they have to say to you about their ideas, experiences, hopes, fears, and dreams. Talking together and telling stories strengthens children's communication skills, helps build confidence, and prepares them to become successful students.

- **Take Time**

Set aside time that your child can count on you to be available to him or her, whether it is one on one, as a whole family, or together in a community activity. Learn about each other, what you and your child believe and value, and your future plans. Spending time with your children helps them form strong family ties that will last as they get older.

- **Rules**

Set clear and consistent rules and establish appropriate consequences for breaking those rules. Let children know the family's rules and remember to praise them for following them. Positive responses help children develop self-confidence and trust in their own judgment.

- **Role Model**

Children watch and imitate the adults in their lives. They will do what you do. Model the behavior and attitudes you want them to cultivate in themselves.

- **Peer Acceptance**

Learning how to play well and share with other children will teach children how to be a friend and, later, how to choose friends wisely. Give your children lots of opportunities to play with others and help them learn how to share and how to solve problems positively.

- **Monitor Activities**

Who are your child's friends? Who are those friends' parents? Know who your children know and where they are going, and develop supportive relationships with the other adults in their lives.

You know your family best, so do what works for you. Open up the lines of communication, share what is important to you with your children, and learn about each other. Your children will grow up confident and competent, trusting in their own instincts about how to make healthy choices and wise decisions. Later on, into their teen years, they will continue that open communication with you that they enjoyed so early in their lives.

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## RESOURCES

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Resource List Disclaimer: This list of resources is not intended to be exhaustive; inclusion as a resource in no way is intended to represent an endorsement of a non-Federal organization or Web site by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), its Agencies, or its subdivisions. Further, HHS does not endorse the views or warrant the content of any non-Federal Web site that may be referenced in this volume.

### BOOKS FOR ADULTS

Bisset, Josie, et al. *Little Bits of Wisdom: A Collection of Tips and Advice from Real Parents*. Compendium, Inc., 2001.

**Bright, colorful, wise, and witty, this book comes from the hearts, minds, and experiences of parents from around the world.**

Chavez, Nelba, Ph.D., and Ruth Sanchez-Way, Ph.D. *Infants and Preschool Children: Substance Abuse Resource Guide*. Rockville, MD: SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, 2000.

**List of resources, from books to videos to classroom materials, to help parents and preschool and primary educators build resiliency in young children.**

Eisenberg, Arlene, et al. *What To Expect the Toddler Years*. NY: Workman Publishing Co., 1996.

**For the parents of toddlers: Information on self-esteem; emotional, physical, and social development; discipline; eccentric behaviors; and on making time for yourself in the midst of it all.**

Faber, Adele and Elaine Mazlish. *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*. NY: William Morrow and Co., 1999.

**Get your kids' cooperation without arguing. Real-life situations show how you can respect and respond to your child's feelings and satisfy your own needs.**

Mazlish, Elaine. *Siblings Without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too*. NY: William Morrow and Co., 1998.

**Suggestions for teaching children how to get along with each other.**

Nelsen, Jane, Cheryl Erwin, and Roslyn Duffy. *Positive Discipline for Preschoolers: For Their Early Years—Raising Children Who Are Responsible, Respectful, and Resourceful*. Roseville, CA: Prima Communications Inc., 1998.

**Practical, up-to-date guide showing how to raise children who are responsible, respectful, and resourceful.**

Nolte, Dorothy Law and Rachel Harris. *Children Learn What They Live: Parenting to Inspire Values*. NY: Workman Publishing Co., 1998.

**Inspiring values through example; shares common sense solutions to parenting dilemmas.**

Warner, Penny. *Healthy Snacks for Kids*. San Leandro, CA: Bristol Publishing Enterprises, Inc., 1996.

More than 120 recipes; includes a food pyramid, illustrating the new thinking on nutrition and innovative recipes for snacks, drinks, frozen treats, breakfasts, lunches, and dinners.

Whelchel, Lisa. *Creative Correction: Extraordinary Ideas for Everyday Discipline*.

CA: Focus on the Family Publishing, 2000.

Each chapter includes real-life situations illustrating common disciplinary problems and concludes with an extensive “toolbox” of creative yet practical ideas from parents all over the Nation.

## SUGGESTED READING

The books listed below were chosen because they talk about the topics in *Building Blocks for a Healthy Future*. They are suggested reading only and you will find other titles that cover these same topics. You can find these books in your local library or bookstore or borrow them from friends!

### Books For Kids

Black, Claudia. *My Dad Loves Me, My Dad Has a Disease*. Denver, CO: M.A.C. Printing, 1997.

A workbook designed to help young children learn about themselves, their feelings, and the disease of alcoholism in their families through art therapy. Children 6-14 share what it is like to live in an alcoholic family.

Brown, Cathy, Elizabeth LaPorte, and Jerry Moe. *Kids' Power Too! Words To Grow By*. Dallas, TX: ImaginWorks, 1996.

Carle, Eric. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1994.

Caterpillar grows into a butterfly as he nibbles his way through the book's pages. Kids learn about animals, numbers, days of the week, and the importance of friendship and self-esteem.

de Paola, Tomie. *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush*. NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1991.

Little Gopher, a Native American from the Plains, discovers his destiny as an artist and brings the colors of sunset out of the sky for his people.

Feiffer, Jules. *I Lost My Bear*. NY: HarperCollins Children's Books, 2000.

Panic and despair, a favorite toy is lost! Delightful cartoons humorously express the anguish of a small girl with a big problem.

Hoban, Russell. *Bread and Jam for Frances*. NY: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1986.

Frances is a one-food kid: She only likes jam on bread. An excellent book to use to talk with kids about the importance of a balanced diet based on foods they like.

Kimmel, Eric A. and Janet Stephens. *Anansi and the Talking Melon*. NY: Holiday House, Inc. 1997.

In this African folktale, the trickster hero Anansi, the spider, outwits all the huge animals, including Elephant, Hippo, and Warthog, and even the king.

Kvasnosky, Laura McGee. *Zelda and Ivy*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2000.  
Fox sisters, Zelda and Ivy, reveal a dynamic relationship that is both caring and competitive.

Marshall, James. *George and Martha: The Complete Stories of Two Best Friends*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

Five short stories, starring two huge hippos with buckteeth and pin-dot eyes, show what friendship is all about, from privacy to vanity to honesty.

Mercury, Catherine. *Think of Wind*. Rochester, NY: One Big Press, 1996.

A gentle book that tells children living with alcoholism that their feelings and hurts are reasonable and acceptable. It describes the environment of a child living with alcoholism as similar to wind. You feel it, but do not always see it and can't always explain it.

Ringgold, Faith. *Tar Beach*. NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1996.

In this beautifully illustrated book, the author captures the joy in the universal dream of mastering one's world by flying over it.

San Souci, Robert D. *Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella*. NY: Simon & Schuster (Juv), 1998.

A vital, assured Cinderella in this French Creole adaptation of the traditional tale.

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*. NY: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1984.

Max dreams of visiting a land of Wild Things where he is made king. In this story, scary monsters become familiar friends and readers get the chance to fantasize about their own "wildness."

Shannon, David. *No, David!* NY: Scholastic Trade, 1998.

Desperate rebukes of a mom who can't stop her son from playing with his food or picking his nose.



Steig, William. *Pete's a Pizza*. NY: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1998.

Pete's blue but his father decides to cheer him up by turning Pete into a pizza.

Stuve-Bodeen, Stephanie. *Elizabethi's Doll*. NY: Lee and Low Books, 1998.

Elizabethi, from Tanzania, adopts an oval-shaped rock for a doll. A lovely story of imaginary motherhood.

Vigna, Judith. *I Wish Daddy Didn't Drink So Much*. Niles, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1993.

A girl and her mother deal with the father's drinking during Christmas. This story can help the child of an alcoholic understand that it is not his or her fault.

Viorst, Judith. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. NY: Simon & Schuster Children's Books, 1972.

From the time he gets out of bed, everything goes wrong for Alexander—the entire day is “terrible, horrible, no good, and very bad!”

Young, Ed. *Lon Po Po: A Red Riding Hood Story From China*. NY: Putnam Publishing Group, 1996.

Thousand-year-old Asian version of Red Riding Hood and the Wolf. The heroines are three sisters, and their clever handling of the villain will spark excitement and admiration.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

### Federal Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<http://family.samhsa.gov>

Administration for Children and Families

[www.acf.dhhs.gov/](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/)

U.S. Department of Education

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Ready Web

[readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/](http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/)

Electronic collection of resources on school readiness sponsored by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

### Private Resources

#### American Baby: Healthy Kids Aged 2-10

[www.americanbaby.com/hk/CDA/homepage/1,2208,,00.html](http://www.americanbaby.com/hk/CDA/homepage/1,2208,,00.html)

As part of Primedia's American Baby Group, americanbaby.com offers everything parents of kids aged 2-10 need to know about parenting. Focus is on prenatal and family health as well as kids' growth and development. Also, features on beauty, relationships, work, and family finances.

#### American Dietetic Association: Child Nutrition and Health Campaign

[www.eatright.org/pr/child.html](http://www.eatright.org/pr/child.html)

The Child Nutrition and Health Campaign is a multiyear program to enhance awareness of the current state of child nutrition in the United States and identify future trends.

#### A Child's Development Calendar

[www.vtnea.org/vtnea14.htm](http://www.vtnea.org/vtnea14.htm)

Games, book titles, and ideas to help you share in your child's playing and learning.

#### Common Sense: Created by the National PTA Parents' Center

[www.pta.org/commonsense/](http://www.pta.org/commonsense/)

Especially designed for parents with children in grades 3-6, this site also offers resources for parents of younger and older children and practical ways for PTA and community leaders to share the program with parents.

#### The Cyber Parent

[www.cyberparent.com/](http://www.cyberparent.com/)

Useful information for personal growth and development, family health, and child development.

#### Help For Parents

[www.helpforfamilies.com/frameparent.htm](http://www.helpforfamilies.com/frameparent.htm)

Gives parents a set of tools to use in a variety of situations. It starts with parenting behavior that keeps families working well together and builds positive personality characteristics in children.

#### KidsHealth: For Parents, Kids, and Teens from the Medical Experts of The Nemours Foundation

[www.kidshealth.org/](http://www.kidshealth.org/)

Doctor-approved health information about children, from before birth through adolescence. Separate areas for kids, teens, and parents—each with its own design and age-appropriate content. Hundreds of in-depth articles and features, and the site continues to grow every week.

#### KidSource

[www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/preschoolers.parenting.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/preschoolers.parenting.html)

Goal: Provide knowledge and advice to help parents better raise and educate their children.

#### Positive Parenting

[www.positiveparenting.com/](http://www.positiveparenting.com/)

Provides resources and information to make parenting rewarding, effective, and fun! You can register online for classes or workshops in your State. One interesting site includes tips on "Things To Do Instead of Spanking": [www.positiveparenting.com/nospank.html](http://www.positiveparenting.com/nospank.html).

## ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Mental health is how we think, feel, and act as we face life's situations. It is how we look at ourselves, our lives, and the people in our lives. It is how we evaluate options and make choices. Like our physical health, our mental health is important at every stage of life. Mental health includes how we handle stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Mental health ranges from good to not so good and even to poor. A person's mental health may move through the range; sometimes that person is healthier than at other times. Sometimes he or she needs help handling problems. Many people experience mental health problems at some time during their lives.

Like adults, children can have mental health problems that interfere with the way they think, feel, and act. These problems are real and painful. They can lead to school failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence, or suicide. Sometimes a young person has a mental health problem that severely disrupts his or her ability to function at home, in school, or in the community. Known as a "serious emotional disturbance" this impairment may continue for a year or more. In some cases, it may last for a shorter period of time, but is more severe or life-threatening. Many children can face mental health problems. Caring for and protecting a child's mental health is a major part of helping that child grow to become the best he or she can be.

The publications listed below offer additional resources and information about mental health issues and alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use. These free publications can be ordered through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) National Mental Health Information Center at 1-800-789-2647 or [www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov) or SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686 or [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov).

### **Mental Health Issues**

(Order from SAMHSA's National Mental Health Information Center at 1-800-789-2647 or [www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov))

### **15+ Make Time To Listen, Take Time To Talk**

Based on the premise that parents who talk with their children about what is happening in their lives are better able to guide their children toward more positive, skill-enhancing activities and friendships, this campaign provides practical guidance for parents and caregivers on how to strengthen their relationship with their children by spending at least 15 minutes of daily, undivided time with them and focusing on them.

**Caring for Every Child's Mental Health**

This campaign shows it is important to protect and nurture the mental health of young people; recognize that many children have mental health problems that are real, painful, and sometimes severe; and encourage caregivers to seek early, appropriate treatment and services. It helps parents and caregivers recognize mental health problems and to seek or recommend appropriate services. It also strives to reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems. A variety of publications are available from this campaign through the National Mental Health Information Center.

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health**

This fact sheet is on children's mental health disorders. Families and caregivers may find it helpful when looking for information about mental health disorders.

**Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drugs**

(Order from SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686 or [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov))

**A Quick Guide to Finding Effective Alcohol and Drug Addiction Treatment**

This guide instructs family members to consider such things as the setting, length of care, and philosophical approach when finding a treatment program for a loved one. Also presents 12 questions to consider when selecting a treatment program.

**Moving Forward With Your Life: Leaving Alcohol and Drugs Behind**

Discusses the reasons why people abuse drugs, the warning signs that someone has a problem with alcohol/drugs, and where to go for help. The booklet emphasizes that abusers are not alone and that help is available.

**Recovery Month 2003: Family & Community Resources**

In this Recovery Month 2003-related Special Feature Kit from SAMHSA's NCADI, you can read the inspiring stories of men and women who have reclaimed their lives. Learn more about substance use disorders, addiction treatment, and recovery issues. Find out how you can support people in recovery and Recovery Month in your community.

**You Can Help: A Guide for Caring Adults Working with Young People Experiencing Addiction in the Family**

This guide describes the resources available to help and support children of addiction and the problems such children may be at risk for.

## APPENDIX

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to acknowledge the following team for their various contributions to the development of the Building Blocks for a Healthy Future material.

Gwyndolyn Ensley, Alvera Stern, Bettina Scott, Tracy Farmer, and other DPED staff members.

We would also like to acknowledge Pat Schneider, Jan Jones, and Lynn Suruma of Teachable Tech, Inc. for their writing and research contributions; Eric Litwin of Interactive Music Works for the music and song lyrics; Jill Herzog, Elaine Rahbar, Todd Witiak, Jill Harner, and Sue Herzog for product development and partnership opportunities.

We acknowledge our two partners—the National Head Start Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals for their cooperation and assistance in product evaluation and dissemination.

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