
Caring for Kids



“I Want My Lovie!”



Like a lot of toddlers, Linus from the comic strip *Peanuts* dragged his blanket everywhere with him. Wherever Linus went, he just had to take that blanket along.

You might have a child like Linus in your childcare with his or her own “lovie.” It might be a blanket, a stuffed animal or something else the child likes to have close by. These lovies help children to feel comfortable during the time they spend apart from their parents, and can be a healthy and normal part of growing up.

Let children bring their lovies to your childcare. Help to keep track of the lovie, because children often forget it until they need it. When a child drops his lovie on the floor and forgets it while playing, ask that child to put it away in a safe place until they want it again. Children especially like to have their lovies while they sleep. Do not allow other children to play with a child’s lovie. Instead, gently explain who the lovie belongs to and that it is a very special thing to him or her.



**telephone help line for
child care providers**

Do you have questions about caring for other people’s children, such as...

- How do I get children to eat?
- Why won’t children share?
- How do I stop a child from biting other children?
- What do I do when a parent doesn’t pay in time?
- Where do I call to find out how to become a registered child care provider?

**You’re not
alone . . .**

Telephone Help Line

**Call Toll Free
1-800-859-8340**



S N A C K S

Peanut Butter Snacks

Snacks can be good for children. Remember, children cannot go as long without food as adults. Children often don't eat a lot of food at a meal and might need some food between meals. A nutritious snack between meals can help meet the young child's need for food.

Peanut butter makes a nutritious snack and it goes together well with lots of different foods. Try making these recipes together with the children.



Roll up Salad

Spread a lettuce leaf with peanut butter. Place a celery or carrot stick in the middle. Roll up the leaf so that the celery or carrot stick is in the center.

Caution: Children may choke on raw carrots and celery. Always cut carrots in long, thin strips for children to make it easier for them to chew.

Lincoln Logs

This recipe makes one Lincoln log. Mix in a small bowl.

2 teaspoons dry powdered milk

1 teaspoon honey

1 teaspoon peanut butter

1/8 teaspoon vanilla

1 teaspoon granola

Roll mixture into a log. Wrap in waxed paper and freeze for about an hour.

Warning: Do not feed honey to infants under one year of age. Honey has been associated with infant botulism.

Peanut Butter Shake

1 cup milk (skim or 2%)

1 ripe banana

1 tablespoon creamy peanut butter

Put all ingredients in the blender, blend and enjoy!



Peanutty Banana Pop

1 banana

1 tablespoon crunchy peanut butter

1 tablespoon toasted wheat germ

Peel and cut banana in half crosswise. Place a popsicle stick in one end of the banana half, pushing it through to the other end. Stand the banana in a jar and freeze for about an hour. Melt the peanut butter over low heat or in a microwave oven. Roll the banana in peanut butter and then in wheat germ. Stand in jar and place in freezer. Makes 2.

Children DO Get Stressed!

Christopher who was recently toilet trained begins wetting and soiling himself after the birth of his baby brother. Three-year-old Jenna starts having nightmares after watching scary TV programs.

These children are showing signs of stress. Yes, even very young children can become stressed. Any major or minor change in a child's life can cause stress. We often think of major changes as the cause of stress: a move, death of a relative or pet, or any firsthand experience of violence or natural disaster. Even happy events like a birthday or a holiday celebration can be stressful to children.

Young children can also experience stress when they are forced to play sports, take lessons or are pushed to achieve intellectually.

Learn the clues to recognizing stress in children. The key is a change in behavior. Here are some common clues:

- ⊗ lack of appetite
- ⊗ overeating
- ⊗ sleep problems
- ⊗ pulling or twisting own hair
- ⊗ unexplained crying
- ⊗ anger
- ⊗ bedwetting
- ⊗ headaches
- ⊗ stomachaches
- ⊗ thumb sucking
- ⊗ screaming
- ⊗ regression in toilet habits
- ⊗ more aggressive than usual
- ⊗ more quiet and withdrawn than usual

Helping Children to Handle Stress

Play and laughter are important stress relievers.

A child may use playtime to play about things that are worrying him. For instance, a child who overheard his parents quarrel might act out a quarrel with puppets. This can help the child to understand the distressing events. He might even find this fantasy funny, and this brings laughter – an important way to release tension.



Crying is another important stress reliever.

Crying is a natural healing process that allows children to rid themselves of sadness, frustration or fear. Sometimes, adults are tempted to distract or scold a crying child. A more helpful approach is to allow the child to cry as long as needed while showing concern and understanding.

Prepare the children for upcoming events.

Potential stressful situations can be eased with planning and preparation. Talking about the event, answering questions, reading picture books about the subject and role playing are all helpful.

Get the children involved in physical activity

Physical activity is one the best ways to manage stress. Give children lots of outdoor play time. Encourage running, climbing, playing with balls and riding of wheeled toys.

Develop a regular routine

Keep to a regular daily routine, and introduce as few changes as possible in your child care. The daily routine can be a very reassuring experience for young children.

Give lots of affection

Your steady support and affection give kids a safe and reliable place to weather stresses.

Adapted from A. Joan Lamberson

Discipline Tip

If the kids are acting up, ask yourself “When was the last time they had a chance to move their whole bodies?” Sometimes children who misbehave are just bursting with extra energy. Take them outside to play or put on music and give everyone some time to dance. Watch to see if they behave better after some exercise.

Water Play

Water play is exciting for children. If you don't have a water table, use individual plastic pans of water. Its best to put out more than one pan – friends will want to play side by side.

Ask each child to wash her hands before and after water play to help to cut down on the spread of disease.



Try this activity for children over 3 years of age: Let the children put some liquid dish detergent and water in a plastic tub. Give them a rotary beater to whip up the bubbles.

Lots of Holes

Add holes to clean plastic containers that you have recycled for the children to use during water play. See how many different ways you can poke holes. Try putting lots of holes in the bottom of a container. On another try putting holes near the top. Use both large and small holes. Children will enjoy watching the water drain out. You can ask two children to predict which container will drain first and then let them compare for themselves.

He or she? Him or her?

Please note: In this and all Better Kid Care publications we take turns referring to children as “he” or “she.” When we use he or she, we include all children.



Baby Bouncing

Babies and toddlers loved to be bounced on your lap. Try this rhyme for baby bouncing.

Trot, Trot, Trot

Trot, trot, trot to London,

(Bounce the baby on your knees facing you)

Trot, trot, trot to Dover

Look out, Baby *(use the baby's name)*

Or you might fall O-VER!

(Tip baby to one side)

From: Vicky Lasky (1993) Games Babies Play, Deephaven, MN: The Book Peddlers.

Ask friends and relatives if they know any other lap bouncing rhymes. Share rhymes with young parents who may not know this very special type of game to play with young children.

Art In The Outdoors

For creative outdoor fun, take your art supplies outdoors. Use a wagon, tote bag, or a carton with handles to carry art supplies. Set up an easel for painting. Tack large pieces of paper to a fence so the children can draw or paint a mural. Provide sidewalk chalk for drawings. Encourage the children to look around while playing outdoors and then create something with the art materials.

Fingerpainting to Music

What you need: tape player, tape of favorite songs, fingerpaint, small plastic containers, large sheets of paper, paper towels

What to do: Put fingerpaint in small containers. Set containers of paint around the paper. Play the musical tape and encourage the children to dance with their fingers while fingerpainting. Stop the music once in awhile to add more colors of paint. Then continue the activity. Give the children paper towels to wipe their hands.

Sponge Painting

What you need: sponges of various sizes or shapes, tempera paint, paper

What to do: Have children dip their sponges in paint and dab it on the paper to make a print.

Nature Walk

Take the children on a nature walk. Give each child a small bag and have them collect things that they see such as leaves, acorns, pine cones, feathers, etc. Encourage the children to talk about what they collect.

Make a Collage

What you need: paper, glue, things collected on walk

What to do: Have each child glue items collected on a nature walk on paper to make a collage.



“Showing an active interest in what a child is doing is sometimes the best compliment of all.”

Fred Rogers from *You are Special*, (1994), New York: Penguin Books.



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TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

When you have finished circle time and it is time to move to another activity try this transition activity invented by Penny Fahlman of Shady Lane School in Pittsburgh, PA. Penny gets out a flashlight and lowers the overhead light, then she shines the flashlight on the tummy of a child who is ready to go to the snack table. The children are so interested that they become quiet and calm. Try it the next time you need the children to move calmly to their next activity.

Share your special tips on caring for children with other child care providers.
Send your ideas to:

Caring for Kids Caregiver Tips
Room 5 Armsby Building
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802

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* Indicates that book can be borrowed from the County Cooperative Extension Resource Library

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Project Director

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