



## Things Child Care Providers Want to Hear from Parents

Young children are just learning to communicate and are not yet able to tell us things that are important for their care. They often can't tell us directly that they have a tummy ache or that they are feeling stressed. For many children, problems come out in indirect ways. Stress can come out as misbehaviors or withdrawal, and it can be hard to figure out exactly what's going on. To complicate things, children are changing rapidly during the early years, and it can be difficult to determine if the behaviors are simply a new stage or are a sign of troubles.

This is one reason why communication is so important. It helps if your child care provider knows about changes in family life: a new job, extra overtime, a move, family visiting. Both positive and negative stresses affect your child's behavior. If your child care provider knows about this, she can respond more wisely to behavior changes. You don't need to share any information that is private, but knowing that the family is facing special circumstances can help your child care provider better meet the needs of your child.

Let your provider know about any changes in your child's behavior—from increased misbehavior to changes in eating. Sometimes the same behaviors are seen at child care and sometimes not; either way, knowing

about these changes can help a child care provider better understand your child.

It also helps to know about changes in sleeping or health. If

your child is more tired than usual or had a poor night of sleep, let your child care provider know. She can adjust her expectations when she knows your child is tired or not feeling well.

There are many other things that can be helpful to know. One child care provider had many conversations with a child about her special friend "Momo." She was quite surprised and a little embarrassed when she discovered that "Momo" was an imaginary friend.

Sharing information about your child's life can help your child care provider understand your child better and can help ensure that your child's true needs are being met. Most of all, it can improve the quality of care for your child.



# What Is the Simplest Way to Improve Your Child's Behavior?



What can you do to improve your child's behavior that is free, easy, and good for the health of everyone in your family? Going for a family walk! Children benefit from the exercise and the stress release. This tends to improve their behavior because when children have pent-up energy and feel stressed they often misbehave. Studies have found that walking can be a great way for adults to get exercise and to manage their stress. So put on your sneakers and head out the door to a better way of life!

## Bedtime Routines

Do you dread bedtimes? Many parents of young children do. Often tired young children become wild and silly and misbehave at this time of day. Sometimes they become so worked up it is hard for them to calm down and sleep. In many households, bedtime is a very stressful time of day. The secret to a successful bedtime is *routine*.

Here's a routine that not only works well with most children, but is also great for them. The best bedtime routine has four important parts:

**1** A warm, relaxing bath  
Warm baths calm children down and relax them. Supervise young children in the bath at all times.

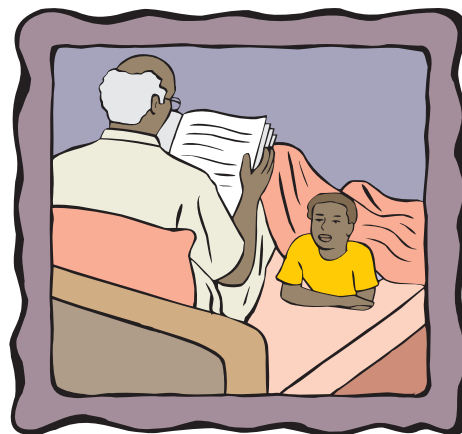
**2** The caregiving routine: time to put on jammies and brush teeth. This is a time for some extra love and attention. A special cuddle or hug can make this time warm and loving.

**3** Then it is time to read. Reading aloud to your child is the most important part of the day. As well as being a calming activity, it's the best way you can prepare your child for success in school and in life. After all:

*The more you read,  
The more you know.  
The more you know,  
The smarter you grow.  
The smarter you grow,  
The stronger your voice  
When speaking your mind  
Or making your choice.*

**4** Then dim the lights, put on a nightlight, and settle your child for sleep.

This routine has it all: something to calm and relax your child, something for her mind, and plenty of love. These are all the things children really need.



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