



RAISING
CHILDREN
CONFIDENTLY



FROM BREAKFAST TO BEDTIME

Helping you
and your toddler
through the day!



Children in Wales is the National umbrella children's organisation in Wales, bringing organisations and individuals together to:

- Make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality in Wales
- Fight for sustainable quality services and fair shares for all children and young people
- Ensure special attention and treatment for children in need
- Give children and young people a voice

Children in Wales works in partnership with the National Children's Bureau in England and Children in Scotland, and works internationally with Eurochild and The International Forum for Child Welfare.

Children in Wales has worked in partnership with the National Family and Parenting Institute.

The National Family and Parenting Institute is an independent charity set up to enhance the value and quality of family life.

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Introduction



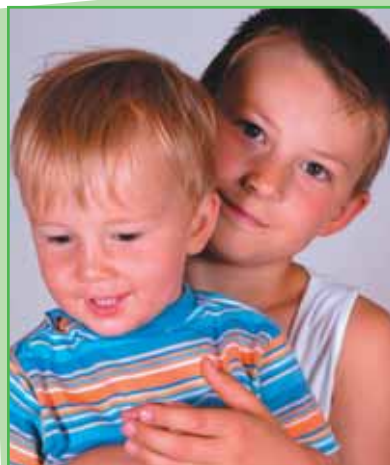
Being a parent to a young child who is full of energy can be a roller coaster ride of amazing moments and tearing your hair out! All parents know the good times with their children; it may be just that today's busy lifestyles make them harder to see.

Understanding your child's needs and how to meet them will help you have more of the ups and less of the downs.

This booklet focuses on positive parenting, encouraging children to feel good about themselves and promoting good behaviour through establishing routines and setting boundaries.

Difficult times are more likely to happen when children are bored or frustrated. How you respond to them and how you are feeling can sometimes turn a simple task into a battle of wills. Obviously, these can't always be avoided but a few, simple ideas may help you and your children to have more of the good times!

Parents of disabled children may face additional challenges and pressures, which cannot be addressed within this booklet. However, there are details of organisations that may be able to help in the Contacts section.



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Play

If children really get into an activity, they are less likely to be posting the remote control in the bin or wrestling with a brother or sister!

If you've got a lot to do in a short space of time, set up an activity that will give you that all important extra half an hour:

Tips

- **Painting, drawing and colouring**
Even very young children enjoy creating works of art and the messier the better! Put down newspaper and cover up clothes to protect them and cut down on tidying up.



- **Water**
A washing up bowl of water and a couple of cups can keep a toddler busy for ages. Water activities need adult supervision.
- **Imagination**
Get out some teddies and dolls and create a tea party or set up a zoo made up of all sizes and shapes of toys – let their imagination run wild.
- **Join in**
Once you've got everything out of the way, take five minutes to get into what your child is doing – show them that what they're doing is important.
- **Keep it simple**
If this all sounds too complicated and time consuming, try to keep a box of toys, crayons and play dough handy and make the most of bath time for playing with a couple of cups and a sponge.



Growing Up

Children's needs and levels of understanding change as they grow and what might be expected of a four year old can't be expected of a two year old:

Tips

■ Exploring

Young children find out about their world by touching, shaking, tasting, pouring, squeezing... the list is endless!

This isn't naughtiness, but a way of learning about their world. Make your home 'toddler proof' by trying to store valuables and breakables away from your child so they can explore safely.

The mess of life with a toddler can be exhausting, but think of all the learning they're doing!

■ Independence

Part of growing up for your toddler will be testing boundaries and becoming an individual. You can help them by letting them do as much for themselves as possible – store toys at child height, let them choose their clothes, and give finger food.

■ Encouragement

Your child will learn what's OK to do from you so give lots of praise and attention to good behaviour – try *"you're using your spoon really well"* instead of *"stop making such a mess."*

If you only pay attention to your child when they misbehave, they'll learn to misbehave to get your attention.



Talking



Talking and listening to your child helps them to understand what's going on:

Tips

■ Language

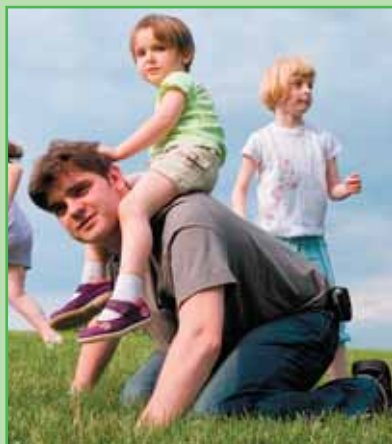
Tell your child what you want them to do, not what you don't want them to do – instead of *"don't make such a mess"*, try *"tidy up your toys please."*

■ Respect

Children learn from what you do and say. If you want your children to be polite and respectful, think about what you say and how you say it – raising your voice will have them shouting back, and put downs aren't good for anyone's self confidence.

■ Explaining

If you have to say 'no' give your child a good reason and offer an alternative - *"Rosie is playing with the doll now, let's find you another toy."*



■ Listening

Your child is trying out her new language and needs to be heard. Have a conversation with her – even if it feels a bit one sided at times she'll get a lot out of it and learn about talking to others.

Try getting down to her level – she'll find it easier to talk (and listen) to you if you're not towering over her.

■ Feelings

Help your child's frustrations by trying to put how they're feeling into words - *"you're really angry that you have to go in your buggy now, but you'll be able to get out when we're at the park."*

Self Confidence

Building your child's self confidence will help them to try out new things, make friends and manage the upsets and problems they meet as they grow up:

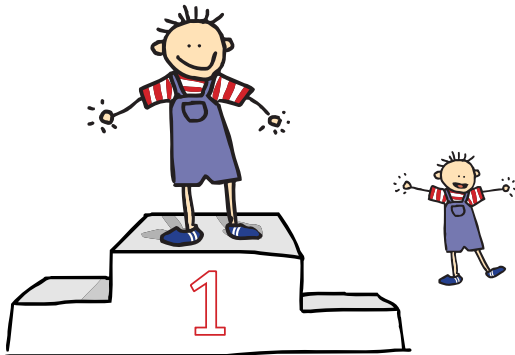
- Finding out: Give your child the chance to face new experiences and challenges with your support.
- Love: Tell your child that you love them and show them by smiling, cuddling and kissing.
- Independence: Don't try and solve every problem for your child – sorting it out for themselves can be a boost to their confidence.
- Praise: As a general rule, try and give five times more praise than criticism.
- Yourself: If you feel your confidence could do with a boost, try listing all the things you like about yourself.



Remember

Most parents walk the line between being 'too harsh' and 'too soft' everyday. Thinking about how you are as a parent and how you react in different situations can help you have an even better relationship with your child.

All children are different – what works with one child does not always suit a brother or sister in the same family. Children have different temperaments. Some are easy-going and will soon join in activities; some are slow to warm up and need gentle persuasion, while others find things more daunting and may not join in at all.



Meltdown Moments



Even with good intentions there are still times that are difficult for every family – usually when there's too much to do in a short space of time or when what you need to do clashes with what your child wants to do.

The Morning Rush

"I try to get clothes out and make up their packed lunches the night before – it gives me a bit of extra time in the morning."

"Getting them to do a bit for themselves always helps, even if it's just getting a bowl and spoon. They feel like they're helping and it's one less thing for me to do."



Other things to try:

- If you have to be at work at a certain time see if you can negotiate more flexible hours – for instance going in later, leaving later. If that's not possible, try getting up a little earlier to avoid the rush.
- Be the first to get up and have five minutes on your own for a quick coffee.
- Ask older children to pack their own bag and say thanks when they do.
- Establish a morning routine and make sure everyone knows what it is and what they should do.

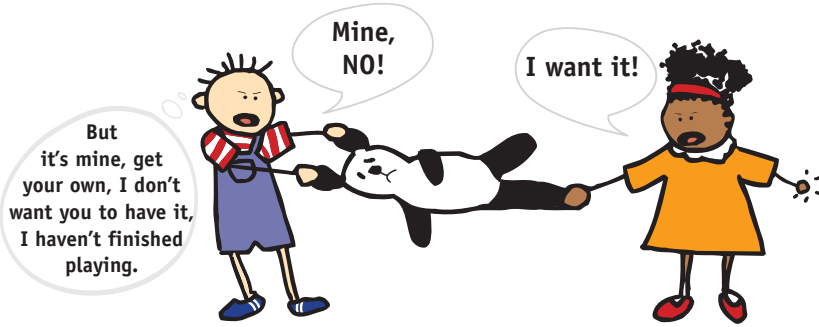
**Come on,
come on,
HURRY UP!**

I'll eat this,
maybe read a
book and watch
some TV
as well

One more
book?

I need to get
washed and dressed, get your
breakfast, make the packed lunches,
get ready for work, leave a note
for the milkman, put the cat out,
defrost tonight's dinner...





At the Supermarket Checkout

"I try and find something else to interest her before we get to the checkout – sometimes I even sing just to keep her from asking for sweets!"

"When he's sitting in the trolley I pass him things to put on the counter and he really likes that."

Other things to try:

- Give your child something to look forward to once the boring shopping is out of the way – a trip to the park, a video when you get home.
- If your child does have a tantrum, trying to find a solution or reasoning with her may not help – she could be too upset to listen. Try and ride the storm, keeping your child from hurting themselves and waiting until they are calmer before trying to do anything else.

Playtime

"I put his favourite toy away when other kids come round – it saves them fighting over it."

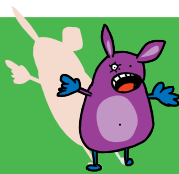
"If she's really got herself upset, I try and take her somewhere else so she can calm down – she still has to know she can't fight, but it's better doing that somewhere quiet."

Other things to try:

- Let children sort out their own squabbles as long as no-one is getting hurt, but do separate them if they hurt each other and explain firmly that you won't allow anyone to hurt another child.
- Let your child know that you understand why she is angry, but that hurting is not allowed.
- Helping your child to talk about their feelings when or after they are upset may help to reduce the chances of the same problem happening again.



Early Evening to Bedtime



"When I get in from work, I try and have five minutes just for them – once I've heard about their day, it's easier for them to let me get on and cook the tea."

"We've just started giving him a five minute warning so he knows that he's got a bit more time to play then it's bedtime."



Other things to try:

- Try to explain that you have to cook tea, sort out packed lunches etc, and involve them in things like setting the table or basic cooking – they'll probably want to stay close to you if you've been apart during the day.
- Get into a routine of bath, book and bed that your child feels happy with.
- Listen to your child's fears about the dark or going to bed and help them to find ways to deal with the fear, e.g., making up a story, chasing the monster out of the bedroom.
- If possible, share the routine with a partner or other family member.
- Try and give each of your children some special time just with you – read a story or catch up on their news.



Looking After Yourself



As much as you love your children, they can also drive you to distraction, dawdling when you're trying to get them off to school, or asking for toys in the supermarket.

All parents will struggle at some time; it's normal not to cope and to need help so don't be shy to ask for help.

If you make sure you get a break to relax, or to go out and enjoy yourself, then you will be in better shape to cope with being a parent too. Get together with other parents - children often feel happier if they have a friend for company.

Remember

- Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to change too much at once – take one tip and use it until you've worked it out and then try another.
- Nobody gets it right all the time.
- Flexibility is fine – life can be chaotic and having a flexible approach will help your children learn to do the same.
- If you feel overwhelmed by having to cope with everything all at once, take a deep breath and count to ten. If it still feels unbearable, make sure your child is safe and take five minutes to yourself in another room.
- The most important thing is that your child is loved and happy amidst the chaos of day-to-day life!



There is a lot of information and advice available for parents, but finding it can be tricky. Look in books, leaflets, videos and the internet. Ask your health visitor or doctor. Ask other parents and friends what they have found useful. There are a few suggestions below.

More help...

Books to read with your children:

Naughty Nigel by Tony Ross
Not now, Bernard by David McKee
Can't you sleep, Little Bear?
by Martin Waddell.
But I Waaannt It! by Dr Laura Schlessinger

The Behaviour Directory

An NFPI publication reviewing books, leaflets, videos and websites, from a range of organisations, on behaviour and discipline, including a section on managing difficult behaviour.

Available direct from NFPI on:
020 7424 3460

Barnardo's Cymru run several parenting projects **029 2049 3387**
www.barnardos.org.uk/wales

NCH Cymru support children, young people and their families **029 2022 2127**
www.nch.org.uk

NSPCC operate a bilingual helpline for children and parents **0808 800 5000**
(calls are free) **www.nspcc.org.uk**

Children in Wales manages and supports the Fforwm Magu Plant which aims to support voluntary and statutory agencies to develop and improve support to parents in Wales **029 2034 2434**
www.childreninwales.org.uk

Parentline Plus freephone helpline 24 hours a day **0808 800 2222**
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Fathers Direct national independent information service **www.fathersdirect.com**

Gingerbread bringing lone parents together for mutual support **0800 018 4318**
www.gingerbread.org.uk

Disabled Parents Network helpline **0870 241 0450**
www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk

Contact a Family helping families who care for children with any disability **029 2049 8001** **www.cafamily.org.uk**

SNAP Cymru is an advice centre for families of children with special educational needs **029 2038 8776** **www.snapcymru.org**

YoungMinds the national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people **0800 018 2138** **www.youngminds.org.uk**

RoSPA Provides information and advice on making your home safe and child friendly - **029 2025 0600** **www.rospa.org.uk**

Relate offers advice, relationship counselling, mediation and support, by telephone or face to face **0845 130 4010** **www.relate.org.uk**

Learning Wales A website which gives parents information on all aspects of education in Wales
www.learning.wales.gov.uk/parents

Working Families is a UK wide charity which aims to help children, working parents and their employers to find a better balance between home and work **0800 013 0313**
www.workingfamilies.org.uk