

Early Learning Parents' Pages



March is all about reading aloud. Find out more on page 2.

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Challenging Behavior Challenges Parents

One of the most frequently asked questions at parent meetings is, "What can I do when my child has a temper tantrum or exhibits other challenging behaviors in public and at home?" Tantrums are common in toddlers and preschoolers because these children have not learned how to handle frustration, anger, conflict or tiredness. Here are some tips to try to manage these behaviors at home and away.

- Know your child's abilities and limitations and keep your expectations realistic. A 2-year-old cannot sit in a restaurant and wait for food to be served for 30 minutes, so take nutritional snacks to feed her or take

her for a walk outside while everyone else waits for the food.

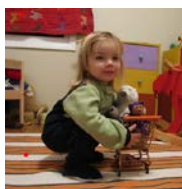
- Plan ahead. Hope for the best but plan for the worst. Make a "happy toolkit" of toys and books that will keep your child's attention when waiting for doctor's appointments or sitting in traffic. Give him a new toy or book to hold his attention when he gets cranky.
- Give clear expectations in advance so your child will know what to expect. When visiting a friend tell your child beforehand, "When it's time to leave, you'll need to help pick up the toys and then come with me."

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"What can I do when my child has a temper tantrum or exhibits other challenging behaviors in public and at home?"

Learn the facts early

All parents are concerned about their children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Parents compare their child's growth in these areas to children of friends, relatives and children in child care or education programs their child attends. It is better to learn behaviors and growth indicators typical for your child's age instead comparing them to other children. [Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!](#) is a program designed for families to learn about the healthy development of children and what to expect at each stage. Milestones are important events or indicators that allow parents to know their children are developing on the same or similar timeline as most children the same age.



Different tracking devices and [checklists](#) are available for a parent to note the dates the child accomplishes each milestone. If you

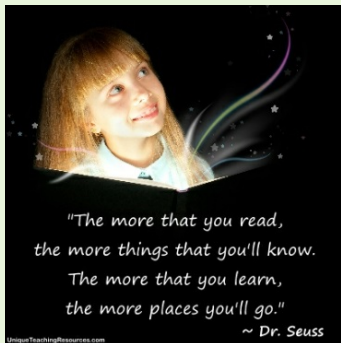
are concerned about your child's development, contact your child's pediatrician. [How to Help Your Child](#) is a two-page guide you can download with advice about talking with the doctor, using a milestone checklist and requesting developmental screening by the doctor or an early education professional. [How to Talk with the Doctor](#) gives suggestions about how to prepare for the visit to the doctor, questions to ask, and how to make sure you

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Pathways.org. has a free online [Baby Games Calendar](#). Enter your baby's birthday to find activities, milestones and games based on your child's age that you can use at home. [10 of the Best Apps for Tracking Children's Milestones](#) is an article about a variety of apps for a parent to keep track of her child's development.

March is Read Aloud Month!



The month of March is celebrated as *Read Aloud Month*. In 2012, [Read Aloud 15 Minutes](#), a non-profit organization, began a campaign to make reading aloud every day for 15 minutes a new parenting standard. **Reading aloud to children is the single most important activity a parent can do to prepare a child for kindergarten.** You can download book markers and other materials from the website.

Sweet reading

Chocolate Turtle Cookies

Make chocolate cookie dough and roll it into quarter-sized balls.

Dip the balls in frothy egg whites and then in chopped pecans.

Use your thumb to make an indentation in the top of each cookie and place a caramel in the indentation.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes.

For an even easier turtle cookie, dip vanilla wafer cookies in melted semi-sweet chocolate and roll in chopped pecans. Before the chocolate hardens, make an indentation with your thumb.

Melt caramels in the microwave oven and spoon the melted caramel into the indentation in each cookie. Cool before serving.



One of the most beloved children's authors – Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss – was born March 2, 1904. Schools and child care centers across the country have special activities to celebrate his birthday.

Whether it's March 2, or another day in March, families may want to visit a local library, bring a book home and read it aloud.

In honor of Dr. Seuss, why not prepare a dinner of roast "beast" (beef or chicken) or ham with green eggs (hard-boiled eggs died with food coloring), truffle trees (broccoli with most of the stem left on), or noodles with stir-fried scallops, peas

and ginger sauce (Poodles Eating Noodles).

For dessert, slice strawberries and bananas and put the slices on a wooden stick or lollipop stick, alternating the fruit to make a Cat-in-the-Hat treat.

Or make chocolate turtle cookies (*Yertle the Turtle*).



Read Aloud 15 MINUTES
Every child. Every parent. Every day.

DOES READING ALOUD REALLY MATTER? YES!

More than one in three children arrive at kindergarten without the skills necessary for lifetime learning.

Research shows that reading aloud is the single most important thing you can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
The number of words that a child knows on entering kindergarten is a key predictor of his or her future success.

LITERACY SKILL BUILDING
Vocabulary, Phonics, Familiarity with the printed word, Storytelling, Comprehension, Reading aloud builds literacy skills.

WHY READ ALOUD?

INSTILL A LOVE OF READING
Your example demonstrates that reading is important, pleasurable and valued.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
From birth to age 3 are critical years in the development of language skills.

KNOWLEDGE GAINED & SHARED
Books are a pleasure, yes, and they are also informative. You and your child can learn something new as you read aloud.

BONDING
Is anything better than sharing a good book?

More than 15% of young children, 3.1 million, are read to by family members fewer than three times a week.

DON'T GOOD PARENTS ALREADY READ ALOUD DAILY? NO

Only 48% of young children in this country are read to each day.

Reading 15 minutes every day for 5 years: 27,375 MINUTES

IS 15 MINUTES ENOUGH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? YES!

456.25 HOURS

Tell a friend at www.ReadAloud.org

Other helpful tips to manage child behavior

Use when...then statements.

"When you sit down in the chair, then you will get your snack." When your child sits down in the chair, give her the snack.

Find transition routines that engage your child. If she doesn't want to stay at preschool when you drop her off and doesn't want to go with you when you pick her up, find something that appeals to her like a good-bye song you can sing together, three hugs and you're out routine, or a zip lock bag of "Mommy and Daddy" kisses to use until you come back to pick her up.

Catch your child being good. When your child picks up his toys say, "You make me so happy when you clean up your toys without me asking you." Or "You are such a big boy when you use your spoon instead of your fingers to eat."

Limit the time you spend on errands when your child is tired or hungry.

Know the "triggers" and try to avoid putting your child in these situations until he is older and can express himself better through words.

Challenging behaviors...

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- Offer limited choices. If your child refuses to get in the car seat, say, "Jay, the car won't start without you buckled into your car seat. Do you want to climb in and buckle it or do you want me to lift you up and buckle you in?"
- Stay calm and use a quiet voice. Children often mirror behavior they see in adults. In a quiet voice say, "When you stop screaming, I can help you find your doll." Calmly sit down. Wait for the screaming to stop. Then take your child to look for her doll.
- Use a quiet time after a tantrum to talk about ways your child can handle problems in the future. When you finish reading a book to your child say, "When you want to go to the store with Daddy, you need to ask me ahead of time. We will find a time to go together when you are not dressed for bed."

As your child gets older and better at communicating feelings, wants and needs, you will see fewer tantrums. Temper tantrums usually become less

Learn the facts...

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understand what the doctor is telling you about your child's development. The [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#) program from the Centers for Disease Control provides free materials to parents to learn and keep track of developmental milestones. You can download a free children's book, *Amazing Me!*, and learn more about developmental milestones while reading to your child. [Milestone Moments](#) is a booklet with an overview of milestones at each age range (birth - 5). Developmental milestones checklists and growth charts are also available free. Acting early on your concerns about your child's development is the best way to help your child and alleviate worry. If your child's doctor thinks there may be a



If you would like to video chat with an expert in child development and parenting skills, Parents as Teachers offers free *Helpouts* with a certified parenting expert. For support with your child's tantrums or other challenging behavior, visit [Helping to Improve your Child's Behavior](#) at <https://helpouts.google.com/117123073731199336700/ls/ba3a0908bfed090a>

frequent or disappear in most children by age 6. But they can continue into school-age years and even into adulthood if they become a reliable way for your child to get what he wants.

developmental delay, ask for referral to a specialist who can do an in-depth evaluation. A **developmental pediatrician** has special training in child development and treats children with special needs. A **child neurologist** is an expert on the brain, spine and nervous system. **Child psychologists** or **psychiatrists** have specific training in children's development and behavior. If the doctor tells you to "wait and see" how your child progresses for a few more months but you're not sure that's best, get a second opinion. You may also call 1-800-CDC-INFO or [contact your state's early intervention provider](#) to have your child evaluated. You do not need a doctor's referral to have your child evaluated for services such as a developmental screening.



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