
PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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Patience and Grace: Parenting a Stubborn Child

■ by Melinda Hammond, PsyD, LCPC

I have a confession: my child can out-stubborn me. He is the prototypical strong-willed child – when he sets his mind to something, nothing is going to change his path. At times, I feel ashamed. After all, I'm a psychologist who works with children. I should have all the answers and all the solutions.

But I don't have all the answers. There is not an easy solution to dealing with a stubborn child. But I do know that God has the same problem that you and I have. He has a stubborn, strong-willed child or two (or 7 billion). By looking to His examples and instructions, I find that parenting my strong-willed little man becomes easier. There are many examples of how God parents us, but two of God's traits seem particularly helpful when facing this challenge.

Grace. Grace for myself, when I feel overwhelmed, ashamed, annoyed, angry, or hurt. Grace for my child when he is having a rough day. Grace for my husband when

he needs a break. Grace for the world we live in, which is not always built for strong-willed children! For my clients, I often define grace as "undeserved favor." Often, a stubborn child will make it difficult to show him or her favor; it is those children in those moments who need our grace and favor the most. Remember that love is patient and kind, and that includes the love we have for our children, and the way we should treat ourselves. Matthew 6:14 beautifully states, "for if you forgive others for their transgressions, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." Is it possible that forgiving ourselves, and showing ourselves grace is also part of living a blessed life? Remember that Christ showed this grace to us by dying *while* we were yet *sinners*. That unconditional love is true grace.

Patience. What you plant today will not bear fruit until tomorrow.

continued on p 4 "Parenting a Stubborn Child"



In This Issue

Page 2

A Hug is Not Just a Hug | building bonds

Page 3

10 Tips for Blended Families
CCCC News...

Page 4

Parenting a Stubborn Child - continued

A Hug is not Just a Hug

| building bonds builds healthy children



■ by Marilyn Ciaramitaro, MSW, MA, LCSW, Type 73 Certified School Social Worker

What exactly is Bonding? And why is Bonding so important for your child?

Forming strong bonds with your child during their early years is key to good/compliant/obedient behavior. Bonds in early infancy are formed by holding, cuddling, wooing, playing with, feeding, massaging, looking at, smiling at, talking to, reading to and singing to the baby. As bonds form, trust builds. As trust is built, the child will tend more so to do what the parent asks (especially when a simple reward such as a smile, praise, hug, small trinket, hand shake, high five, tiny candy, or small piece of fruit is given).

As the baby grows into the toddler years and begins to independently explore, a good parent bond/attachment makes the job of teaching and supervising much easier. A bonded/attached child is more likely to seek parent approval to maintain the relationship (which is pleasurable to the child). Thus, when a bonded child hears the parent's voice or is given a directive by the parent s/he tends to come toward the parent or obey the parent.

Allowing the child to explore the world in a safe supervised setting is needed so that s/he can develop courage, confidence and social skills. A child with a strong early parental bond is most likely to transfer that positive relationship/trust onto another caregiver (babysitter, teacher) provided there is some transitional time and the new caregiver also uses effective bonding strategies (holding, smiling, conversing, cooing, praising, playing with or otherwise appropriately engaging the child). A good early childhood teacher implements these strategies (as well as a predictable routine/structure) to maintain a positive, upbeat morale, cheerful atmosphere and happy campers in the classroom.

A child with good parental bonds is essentially more emotionally secure, sleeps better, has a better appetite, is more attentive, cognitively processes more efficiently and usually develops appropriate social skills at an earlier age.

Effects & Remedies for Bonding Deficiencies

Children whose early bonding wasn't as optimal as needed are more vulnerable to emotional distress. These children are more likely to exhibit anxious or depressive symptoms, be less compliant/obedient, aloof, or disengaged and exhibit what professionals may term attachment issues.

Remedies for attachment issues to improve bonding were written about extensively by Ann Jernburg, the founder of the Theraplay Institute in Chicago, IL (1960s) and the author of the book Theraplay. Theraplay and most other forms of play therapy (there are different approaches which distinguish these, as do the goals of the therapy) aim to enhance and make stronger the parent-child bond or the caregiver-child bond and engage the child in pleasurable social interaction. Even if a parent is unavailable to participate with the child in a therapeutic relationship, the child can benefit from the play relationship with another nurturing parent figure. The main objective being to engage the child, promote person to person enjoyable and appropriate interaction, build social skills, interpersonal confidence and emotional security, by transmitting the message that s/he is loved and cared about.

Parents who work full-time or who suffer from various mental or physical illnesses are more likely to notice anxiety, depression or attachment issues in their children (but not always pending the qualities of the substitute caregiver and also the innate traits of the child). These children may be restless, hyperactive, non-compliant, testy, wander off, avoid eye contact, seem aloof, be reluctant to try or participate, have sleep disturbances, etc. Parent-child exercises to enhance bonding and reengage the child may include

continued on p 3 "A Hug is Not Just a Hug"

10 Tips for Blended Families

■ by Joy Bocanegra, MA, LCPC

Tip #1: ANTICIPATE CHALLENGES AND ACCEPT THEM AS PART OF THE PACKAGE

- ◆ If you go into remarriage expecting an "instant" happy family you are setting yourself up for frustration and disappointment.

Tip #2: BALANCE TIME BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS

- ◆ It is important to spend time with your spouse, time as a family and one-on-one time with your biological children.

Tip #3: DON'T TRY TO REPLACE THE BIOLOGICAL PARENT

- ◆ Loyalty to a biological parent is normal and encouraging a positive relationship is beneficial to everyone involved. Stepparents have a special role of their own.

Tip #4: HOLD FAMILY MEETINGS

- ◆ Family meetings are a good way for stepfamilies to develop and maintain good communication.

Tip #5: PROVIDE SPECIAL SPACE

- ◆ Everybody needs some space of their own.

Tip #6: ESTABLISH RITUALS

- ◆ Establishing rituals provides a sense of familiarity which is one aspect of connectedness.

Tip #7: HONOR TRADITIONS

- ◆ It is important to continue some traditions and create some new ones.

Tip #8: SHARE YOUR HISTORY

- ◆ Sharing important parts of your past, your likes and dislikes and special interests help everyone feel more comfortable with each other.

Tip #9: ALLOW FOR DIFFERENCES

- ◆ Accept differences, looking for common ground elsewhere.

Tip #10: BE FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE

- ◆ Think outside the box!

A Hug is Not Just a Hug - continued from page 2

floor time play together (ex. Building with blocks, rolling balls back and forth, playing with cars, trains, dolls, farm animals, etc), or lap time (holding the child, scratching, stroking, massaging their back, arms, hands, singing or reading to them, doing finger plays, etc.) These basic techniques will help to rebuild and reinforce bonds and reengage a child in the early years (from about 0-7 yrs old). Some of the techniques may also work on older children if modified. With consistency in giving floor time and lap time, attachment increases and symptoms of anxiety or depression are hopefully reduced. As emotional stability and security increase (trust) the child's readiness for higher order processing using cognitive and social skills increases. Thus, laying the groundwork with our children in those early years helps them become more ready for the next developmental level of challenge, be it school, work, or developing their talents to a higher level.

To begin formation of Christian spirituality development the parent during lap time could: 1) read an early childhood book with colorful pictures about Jesus 2) teach a short song such as "Jesus Loves Me" or "This little light " or 3) recite a brief prayer or a psalm (Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd, works well). This can enhance bonding and also helps reinforce the seeds of conscience formation which begins when the toddler learns the meaning of and behaviors that go with the words "yes" and "no". Healthy conscience formation is an integral part of Christian development.



Marilyn Ciaramitaro is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and sees clients in our Lombard location.

CCCC News...

New Staff...



Cheryl Gamen
Intakes/Scheduler
Orland Park location

New Location...

Give thanks with us for God's leading to a second New Lenox location!

We are thankful to partner with Peace Lutheran Church 1900 E Lincoln Hwy where therapist Greg Rodriguez MA LCPC, started seeing clients in July.



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Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

Parenting a Stubborn Child - continued from page 1



Galatians 6:9 states, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." To deal with stubborn behavior, you may have to respond consistently 5, 10, or even 100 times. You can be just as stubborn as your child. Whether it's ignoring behavior that is annoying but not dangerous, or putting your child in time-out for the 500th time

this morning, consistency is the most difficult parenting technique out there. A good therapist will spend time working with you alone, helping support you as you learn to respond patiently and consistently to your child's behavior. A strong-willed child needs a strong-willed parent who is willing to try new techniques with patience and persistence, rather than look for immediate results.

Parenting a strong-willed or stubborn child is not easy. It is also not a reflection of failure on your part; it simply means you have been given the job of parenting differently than you anticipated. Your parenting will be dependent

upon grace and consistency. As you see the fruits of your own grace and patience (and I promise you will!), you will also grow in faith and love. I believe God knows exactly what we are going through, and He wants you to seek out help (in the form of a spouse, friend, pastor, or therapist) so that you can show these traits to your strong-willed child.

As you model these fruits, they will begin to bloom and grow in two hearts: yours and your child's.



Dr. Melinda Hammond is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and sees clients in our New Lenox and Orland Park locations.