

young families

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
DOCUMENTSNo. 56
July — August 1983

JUL 20 1983

ST. PAUL CAMPUS LIBRARIES



Child Abuse

What is child abuse and who is guilty of it? Child abuse is any act that causes a child needless pain. Sometimes children are considered abused when their punishment is out-of-proportion to what has happened. A young child learning to feed himself or herself, and not yet possessing the coordination to put food or liquids into the mouth without spilling, should not be punished for it.

Many people consider only the physical forms of child abuse, but there is mental or emotional abuse as well! Examples include expecting a child to take the blame and punishment for an act she or he did not commit or deliberately denying love and respect and making the child feel worthless! When children hold in these feelings of not being forgiven by their parents, they suffer mental torment.

If Children Lie

If a child lies, parents may not know what to do. Should they discuss the situation, ignore it, or punish the child? Perhaps the first thing to do is find out why the child told the lie.

The "lie" may not be an intention to deceive. Children are tellers of tall tales. They often do not distinguish between fact and fantasy. Indeed, most children do not fully understand the meaning of telling the truth until they are about eight years old.

Children might also lie to avoid punishment. If this is a possibility, take another look at the type of punishment that is typically used. Does it "force" children to protect themselves or "save face"?

Parents can help their children learn the importance of telling the truth by not using lies themselves. For example, if a parent sends a child to answer the door and tell the visitor that the parents aren't home, the child will become confused about when it is okay to lie and when it is not.

Guard against overreacting to a child's lie or boast. Children seek attention. If they get it only when they tell a lie, they will continue to do so.

Stop Letting It "Bug" You

Sometimes it is the little things that bug us the most. If we can find a different way of looking at those irritations, they might not bother us as much. Some people think of this as changing the definition of the situation. Others encourage us to 'reframe' the situation.

For example, an older woman was awakened several times

a week by the noise of her garbage being loaded into the garbage truck. This always happened before 7 a.m., just outside her bedroom window. She got so worked up that she was unable to return to sleep and often spent the remainder of the day angry. She believed that she had earned the right to sleep until 8 a.m. because of 60 years of hard work.

One day during the winter, the temperature was well below zero and the wind sounded bitterly cold. She again was awakened by the noise of the garbage truck compacting all of the garbage. This time, she felt *very* grateful that someone else was out in the bitter cold and that she could stay comfortable in her own warm bed. From that day on, she seldom awoke or even heard the garbage truck.

This woman had looked at an irritating situation from a totally different perspective and found that her reaction was drastically different. Some situations really can be reframed and result in much less stress or anger.



Playfulness In Marriage

One factor which contributes to long and satisfying marriages is the ability to play. This playfulness allows couples of all ages to share concerns and needs in a humorous way without hurting each other. It does take the ability to laugh at yourself and a willingness to loosen up (for those who need it). As couples grow older, sometimes they act much more serious than they feel. Playfulness can make parents far more approachable to their children. In time, it also becomes a model of some of the more positive things about marriage.

Some couples act out the roles of couples on television or in the movies — from the delicately feminine to the fiercely tyrannical — with accents and all. Some can play at being outrageously rich or exceedingly poor. Playfulness can allow us to express the ridiculousness of our partner's "super-clean" phase while showing respect for the contributions of cleanliness. The use of pet names for each other can reinforce the playfulness over time.

Won't this playfulness make you look undignified? Certainly! The intimacy of marriage allows us to act undignified, even ridiculous. The mere act of playfulness can enhance intimate feelings. Playfulness can add to the most intimate parts of the marriage relationship.

There are few rules or guidelines for playfulness, and thus, it really reinforces the relationship even more than pre-set suggestions might. Try a little or a lot of playfulness in your marriage.

This archival publication may not reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations.
Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>



Summer Stain Remedies

During the summer, and especially on children's clothing, there's a good chance that you will discover stains from grass, mustard, catsup, mud, tar, or mildew. The key to getting out stains is to treat them quickly and with the right method. With our resources increasingly limited, it becomes more important than ever to conserve and care for clothes.

Here are some helps for quick and easy stain removal:

- **Grass** stains on *cotton, linen, acrylic, or polyester* can be treated by working laundry detergent into the stain and rinsing well. Try all-fabric bleach if any stain remains or chlorine bleach if the fabric can take it.
- **Mustard** is next to impossible to get out because it acts like a dye. Scrape off the excess and sponge with a nonflammable dry-cleaning solvent, or apply a pre-wash soil and stain remover. Rinse and work into the stain a light duty liquid detergent and a few drops of vinegar. Rinse well again. Treat *catsup* stains with this same method.
- **Mud** stains should dry thoroughly before treating. Brush to remove the soil. Soaking in concentrated detergent solution should remove the stain. Bleach if necessary.
- **Tar** stains must be treated before they dry and can be impossible to remove. Place the stain face down on a paper towel. Sponge it with a nonflammable dry-cleaning solvent and let dry. Repeat this as long as the stain remains and then launder in hot water.
- **Mildew** is a fungus which destroys or weakens the fibers. First, brush off the mildew out-of-doors. Most mildew stains can be removed during regular laundering if they are moistened beforehand. An alternative method is to treat the stain with salt and lemon juice, rinse, and launder. A paste of all-fabric bleach and water could also be used if chlorine bleach cannot be used.

Mealtime Hassle?

When your child develops eating difficulties, ask yourself several questions.

- Are serving sizes larger than what's needed?
- Are your expectations in keeping with the child's eating abilities and capacity?
- Are between-meal snacks of an appropriate size and type and given at the best time?
- Are meals at regular times?
- Is your child overtired or overhungry?
- Is your child excited and keyed-up at mealtime?
- Is mealtime a pleasant time?

If you expect your child to eat more than he or she wants, then threats or bribes may result. If snacks are eaten too close to mealtime or scoldings or punishment occur just before or during a meal, a child can easily find it difficult to eat. A quiet playtime before meals is best.

Encourage your child to eat, but don't let the issue develop into begging or bribery. After a reasonable time, remove the plate. And be careful that your child doesn't fill up on snacks shortly after the meal.

How Do Your Snacks Rate?

Candy and soft drinks can be a real threat to your child's growth and development. If children acquire a sweet-snacking habit, they may substitute these for nutritious foods. They are likely to eat fewer nutritious foods and could become undernourished. Have nutritious snacks on hand and easily available to children, particularly if they are on their own after school.

Try raw vegetable sticks, enriched or whole grain bread or crackers, milk or cocoa, fruit juices, cheese, peanuts, peanut butter, raisins, oatmeal cookies, ice cream, popcorn, and fresh fruit. All of these foods help maintain a balanced diet and contribute to good health at any age.



1-800-222-1222

(toll free—Statewide)

221-2113

(Twin Cities)

Minnesota Poison Control System

Emergency Help Is at Hand

Did you know that all Minnesotans have access to the Minnesota Poison Control System through a toll-free state WATTS line? This phone service provides rapid, accurate emergency poison information throughout the state. All calls will be answered by poison information specialists (trained pharmacists) who will determine the priority of the needs of each caller. Emergencies will be handled first. Physicians as well as toxicology consultants are on call to the poison center specialists around the clock.

For additional information, and a pressure-sensitive telephone label, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Minnesota Poison Control System, St. Paul Ramsey Medical Center, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

This Issue

This newsletter is published for Minnesota young families by the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota and distributed through your local county extension service office. Please call your county extension agent, HE/FL with your suggestions for its content.

Eileen G. Anderson, Acting Program Leader,
Home Economics/Family Living

The University of Minnesota, including the Agricultural Extension Service, is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or handicap.