



PARENTING GUIDE ON PRE-SCHOOLERS

ABOUT THIS PARENTING GUIDE

As your child matures, you will find that your parenting techniques will change. While toddlers may have difficulty understanding simple concepts and explanations, pre-schoolers are at an age when they pick up things very quickly and learn how to reason.

Children learn by modelling adult behaviour. While it may sometimes be tempting to hit or lash out at your child, it is easier for children to correct their conduct if they are reasoned with and given the proper guidance. You can also build a better relationship with your child by telling him how you feel about his behaviour.

While you may sometimes feel like your child is misbehaving simply for the sake of it, there are usually reasons to explain your child's misbehaviour. In this guide, you are likely to find many scenarios which you can identify with. Using these scenarios, we offer tips on how to best handle these situations and explain why your child may be behaving in a certain way.

If you wish to discuss any of these parenting issues, do email us at **info@childrensociety.org.sg**

Associate Professor Cuthbert Teo

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MY CHILDREN
DO NOT GET ALONG

MY CHILD SPENDS TOO MUCH TIME ON ELECTRONIC GADGETS



TIP

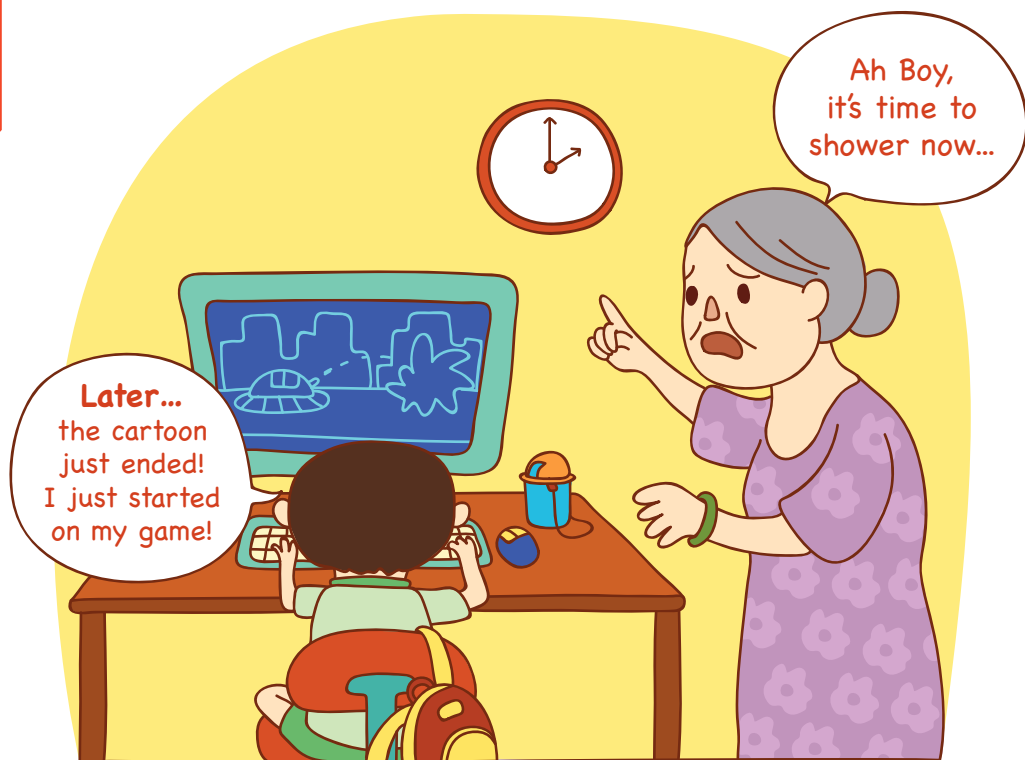
Watching TV, especially educational programmes, can be good for your child. But avoid letting your child eat and watch TV at the same time.

**TIP**

Eat with your child and use that time to engage him.

TIP

Watching TV together with your child will also help you ensure that the programme is suitable for his age.



TIP

Set basic rules.

TIP

Limit screen time and let your child know how long he is allowed. Take away privileges if he refuses to keep to the limit.



TIP

Warn your child 5 minutes before he has to stop watching TV or playing games.



TIP

When you take your child to the park to get away from the TV or computer, play with him. Avoid bringing electronic gadgets.

TIP

Watch your own time on the computer or TV if you are asking your child to cut down on their screen time. Children learn by following the behaviour of adults.

TIP

Set a password for the computer or mobile phone so that your child will have to ask for your permission to use it.



MY CHILD WANTS MY ATTENTION ALL THE TIME

TIP

Respond to your child's calls and ask him to wait. Ignore him if he continues shouting for you to come.



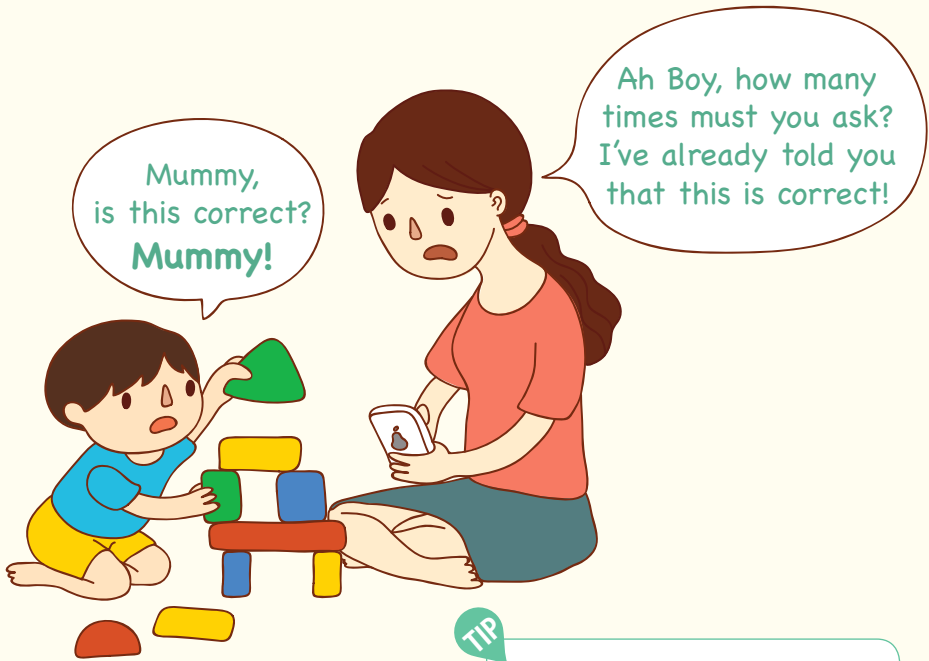
TIP

If the attention-seeking behaviour turns destructive, take your child to a corner and let him know that if he continues to misbehave, you will not play with him.

TIP

Set aside some time everyday to give your child your full attention. Honour your word. Over time, your child will learn the right behaviour to get your attention.



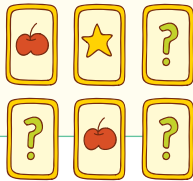


TIP

Appropriate praises are helpful. Rewards can be given to encourage your child to achieve short-term goals such as completing a puzzle on his own.

TIP

Your child may have low self-confidence and is looking for your reassurance. Help build his confidence by engaging in activities such as memory games and matching puzzles.



TIP

Reward your child with social incentives such as trips to the park or an ice cream treat.



TIP

A lot of patience is needed to help build your child's self-confidence.

TIP

It is important to give your child undivided attention.



TIP

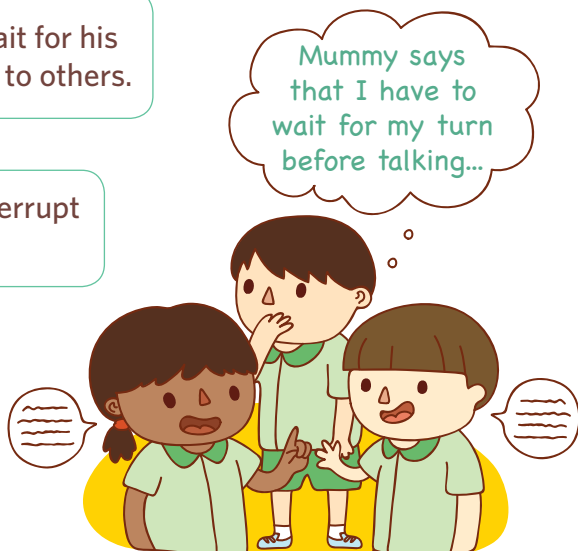
Encourage your child to wait for his turn to speak and to listen to others.

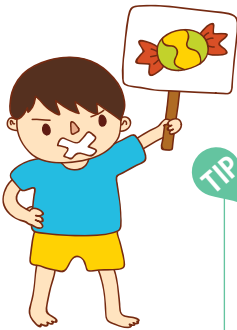
TIP

Teach your child not to interrupt when others are speaking.

TIP

If these good habits are practised at home, your child will be more likely to behave the same way in school.





TIP

Children sometimes use silence as a way to get attention or to protest.

TIP

Ask your child what is wrong. If he continues to remain silent, tell him that you will not be able to help if he does not speak up.

TIP

Tell your child to look for you when he is ready to talk and walk away.

MY CHILD CANNOT CONCENTRATE

**TIP**

Pre-schoolers usually cannot pay attention for too long. Break down an activity into smaller tasks. Try to keep each task to no more than 15 minutes.

TIP

Make learning fun. Include hands-on activities to engage your child.





Ah Boy always looks bored when he has to do his work, but he's so full of energy when it comes to play!

TIP

Like adults, children focus better on the things that they enjoy. This is normal. Look for ways to interest your child.

TIP

Plan a routine so that your child gets a good balance of work and play.





TIP

Remove distractions in the environment when you are trying to engage your child in an activity. For example, a TV programme playing in the background is likely to distract your child.



TIP

Scolding your child when he wanders off will not help. Try to coax him back to the story. Take a break, and if he continues to show no interest, find out why.

MY CHILD MISBEHAVES



TIP

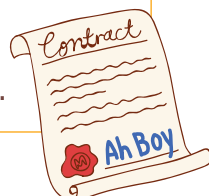
Getting into a quarrel when your child is upset will not stop him from misbehaving.

TIP

Explain to your child firmly and calmly that there is a routine to follow.

TIP

Exercise discretion and flexibility where appropriate. Discuss and negotiate an agreement if your child's request can be accommodated.





TIP

Shouting does not help. Catch up with your child and make him stop.

TIP

Tell your child that you are unhappy with his behaviour. This will help him understand that what he did was unacceptable.

TIP

Bend down to your child's eye level and speak calmly. This is more likely to make him listen.

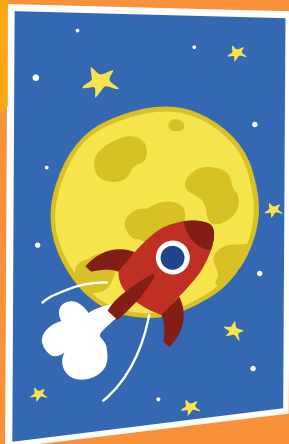


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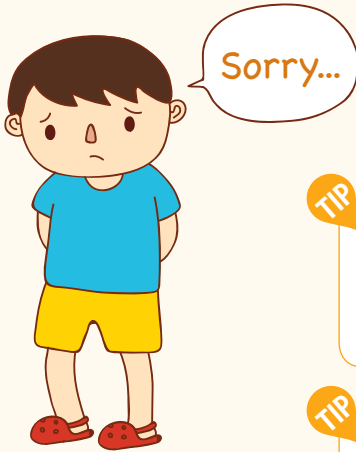
Give your child simple tasks to make him feel useful and helpful. For example, ask your child to help look for an item on the shelves when at the supermarket.

TIP

Praise your child for good behaviour.

**TIP**

When you scold your child, direct your comment at his behaviour and not him (e.g. "I don't like the way you are messing up your room" vs "You are a naughty boy for messing up your room").



TIP

When your child apologises, acknowledge that he is remorseful and stop scolding him.

TIP

Have simple and clear rules and make your child understand them. This will help to maintain his behaviour. Let him know that he will be punished if the rules are broken.

TIP

If your child continues to misbehave repeatedly, give warnings before punishing him and carry them out. Appropriate punishments could include getting your child to clean up the mess.

TIP

Avoid threatening your child with punishments that you are unable to carry out.



MY CHILD TELLS LIES





TIP

Denying a wrongdoing could be a reflex reaction because your child is afraid of punishment. Acknowledge your child's fear.

TIP

If it was an accident, tell your child that you know he did not do it on purpose. Get him to help clean up the mess.

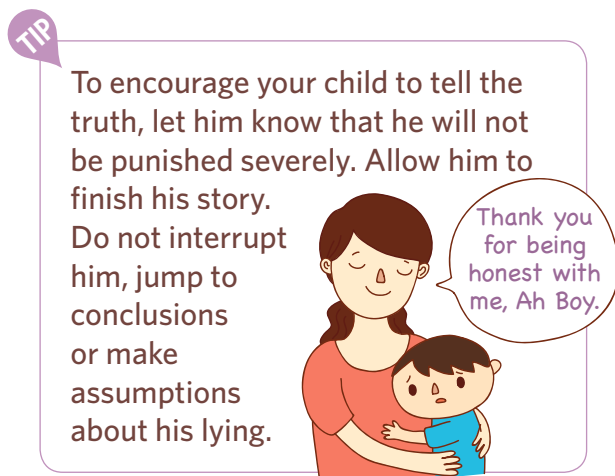
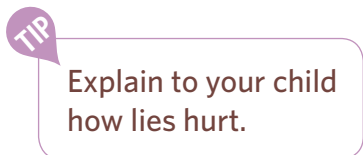
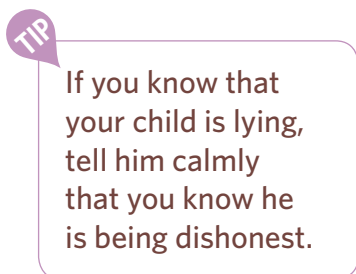
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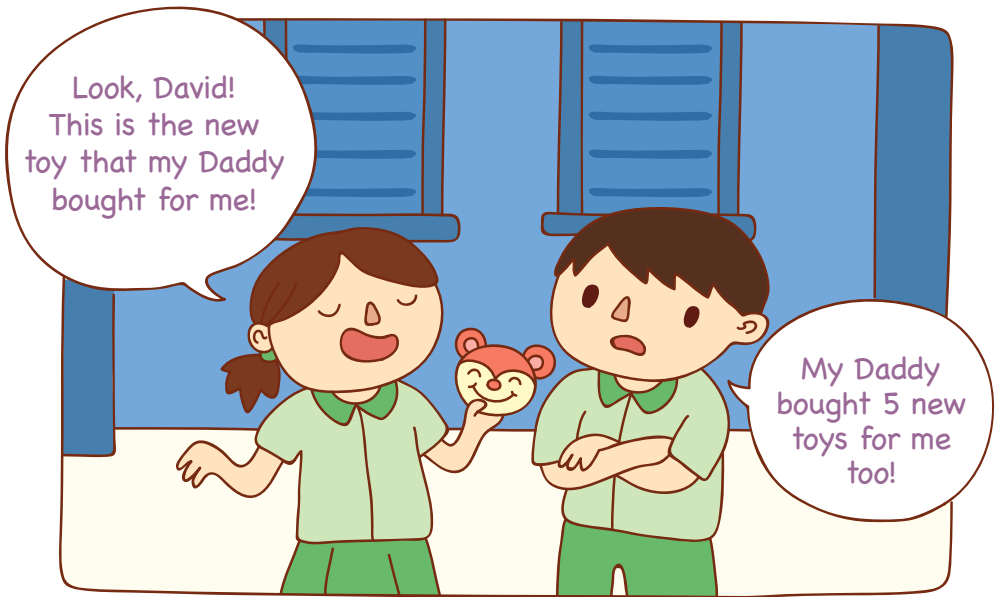
Tell your child that he has to be honest. Use stories such as 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf' to teach honesty.



TIP

Your child learns by copying the behaviour of others. Adults should be good role models.



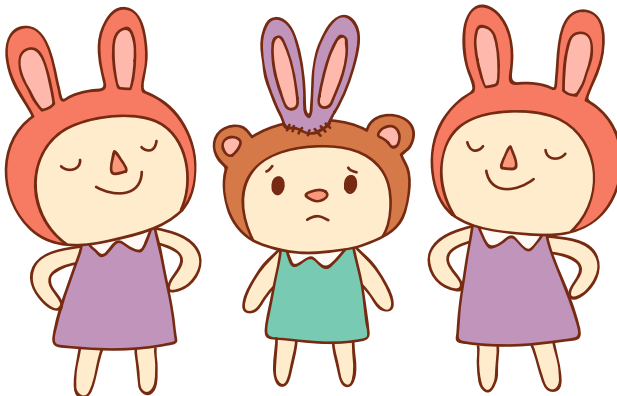


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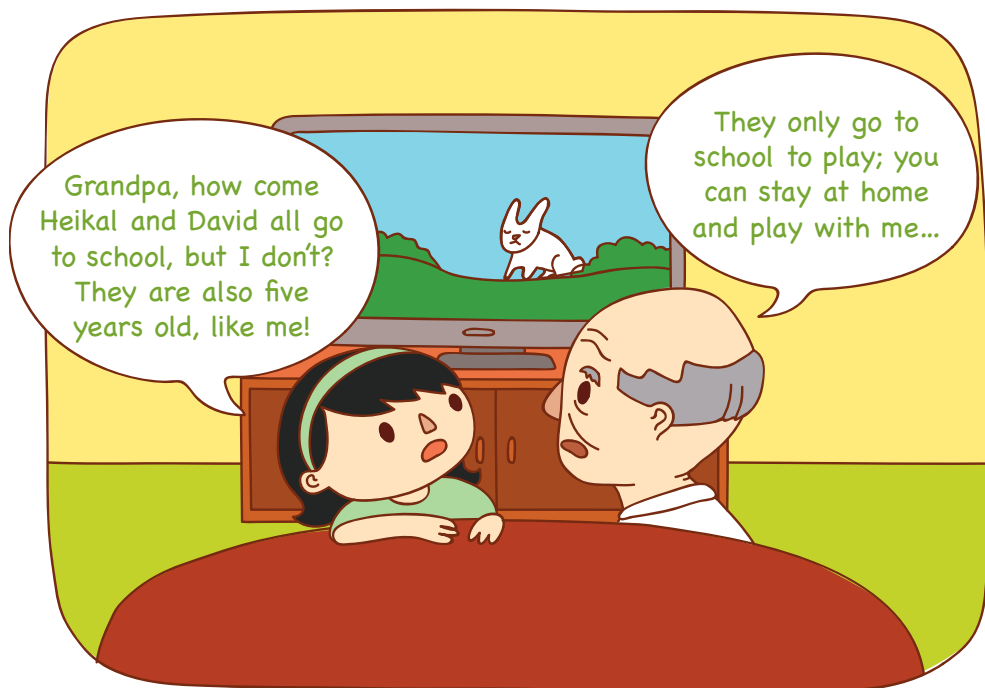
Peer pressure can happen to little children. Some children may have difficulties managing peer pressure and may lie to feel accepted.

TIP

It is natural to compare and compete. Children need to learn that they do not need to lie to appear better than their peers.



MY CHILD AND PRE-SCHOOL



TIP

Activities in pre-school are designed to help children with their math and literacy skills.



TIP

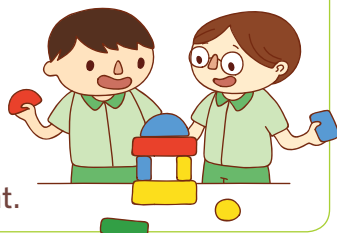
Pre-schools also engage children by allowing them to learn through play.

TIP

Pre-school allows for children to learn in a structured environment, giving them a good foundation for primary school.

TIP

Children learn how to interact with one another in school. Going to pre-school promotes your child's social and emotional development.





TIP

Avoid allowing your child to skip school as this sends the message to him that school is not important.



TIP

It is helpful to familiarise your child with the school environment before the term starts.

TIP

Prepare your child ahead for pre-school by establishing a routine before the term begins.



TIP

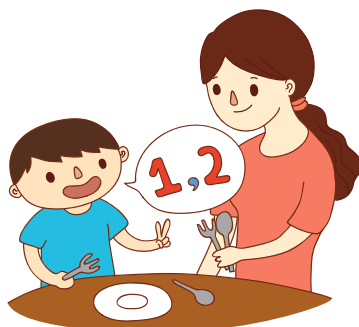
Children learn in groups in a pre-school setting. Teaching your child when he comes back from school will give him the focused attention he needs.

TIP

Going through what your child has learnt in school will help you understand his progress.

TIP

Your child can also learn through everyday routines. For example, your child can learn to count and sort by laying out cutlery on the dining table.



MY CHILDREN DO NOT GET ALONG

**TIP**

Ah Boy could be bored or restless. His poking at Ah Girl has no ill-intention. Ah Boy needs to learn that hurting others is not the proper way to have fun. Encourage Ah Boy to help guide and protect Ah Girl.

**TIP**

Ah Girl, being young, is probably unable to assert herself and tell her brother to stop. Explain this to Ah Boy rather than scold him.



TIP

Teach your children the concept of sharing. Demonstrate, for example, by sharing a cake.

TIP

Teach your children to take turns to play.

Please?

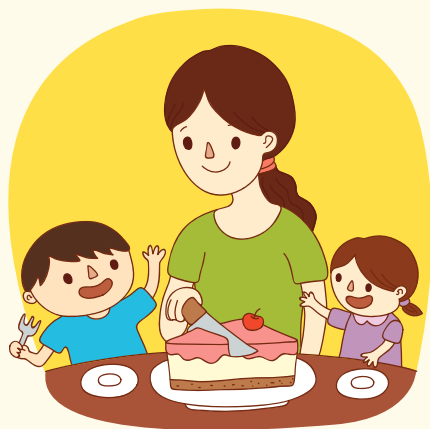
TIP

Teach Ah Girl to ask for permission to play with Ah Boy's toy.



TIP

Teach Ah Boy to ask for his toys back in a polite way. For example, "Emma, can I have my bus back please? Here, you can have the car..."




TIP

When your children hurt each other:

- Let them know that fighting is not acceptable. Set ground rules and make sure they understand.
- Keep your children apart until they have calmed down. Avoid discussing the conflict immediately after.





Ah Boy, Teacher Mala said you did very well in class today. Ah Girl, you should learn from your brother. He's such a good boy. You are such a naughty girl!

TIP

Avoid comparing your children as this is likely to lead to sibling rivalry. Each child is unique, and your parenting style may have to adapt to the personality of each of your children.

TIP

Acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of your children.



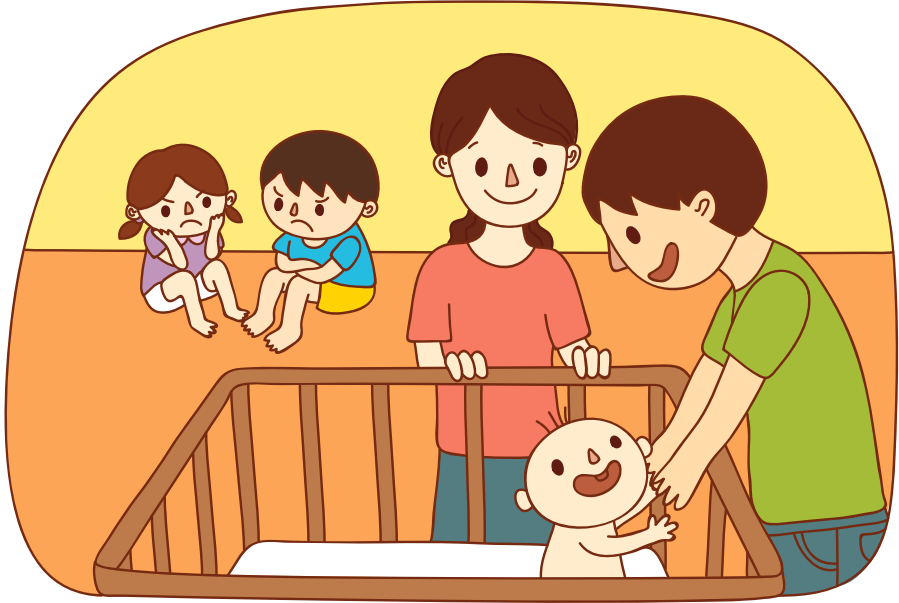
TIP

Have fun together as a family, and give your children a chance to interact meaningfully with each other.



TIP

Occasionally, arrange to spend time individually with each of your children.



TIP

Explain to your children the expected changes in their daily routine before the arrival of a new sibling.



TIP

Assure your children that they will still be loved.

TIP

Allow your older children to help make decisions for the new baby.

TIP

Avoid using emotional blackmail on your children (i.e., "If you're naughty, I will love baby more than you").



ABOUT SINGAPORE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Singapore Children's Society has been fulfilling a very meaningful role to disadvantaged children, youth and their families in Singapore since 1952. We are an independent and non-profit organisation that relies predominantly on public support for many of our programmes, including public education initiatives such as this Parenting Guide.

If you find this Guide useful and would like to contribute towards our programmes, please fill up your particulars and donation details on the following pages and mail it back to us at:

Singapore Children's Society

No. 298 Tiong Bahru Road

#09-05 Central Plaza

Singapore 168730

Your kind donation will help us touch the lives of needy children and youths and allow us to commit to our mission of bringing relief and happiness to children in need.

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If you have any feedback for us, please contact us at **6273 2010** or **info@childrensociety.org.sg**.

Thank you for your support!

OTHER TITLES IN THIS PARENTING GUIDE SERIES

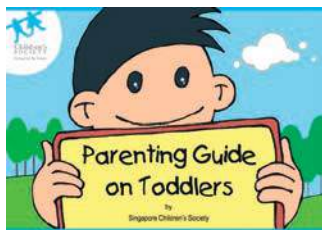
(downloadable from <http://childrensociety.org.sg>)



PARENTING GUIDE ON BABIES

This is the first in our series of parenting guides. This guide aims to provide parents with useful tips on how to care for their baby, from birth to one year old.

Topics in the guide include 'My baby won't stop crying', 'My baby chews on everything' and 'My baby dislikes baths'.



PARENTING GUIDE ON TODDLERS

The second in our series helps parents to understand the behaviour of toddlers from one to three years old. This guide gives parents suggestions on how to cope when their child misbehaves.

Topics in the guide include 'My child won't sit still', 'My child won't listen to me' and 'My child is rough'.



PARENTING GUIDE ON PRE-SCHOOLERS

(Available in English, Chinese and Malay)

Through a series of light-hearted illustrations, this guide on pre-schoolers provides tips on how parents can handle difficult situations with their pre-schooler, aged four to six, and explains why he may be behaving in a certain way.

Topics in the guide include 'My child wants my attention all the time', 'My child cannot concentrate' and 'My child tells lies'.

You may also find the following useful in your journey as a parent:

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention microsite

<http://preventchildabuse.childrensociety.org.sg/>

e-CSEW Directory

<http://csewdirectory.childrensociety.org.sg>

We hope the tips in this guide will come in handy whenever you are unsure of how to manage your pre-schooler. Most importantly, enjoy your parenting journey as happy parents make happy children.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to our volunteers and members of the Research and Advocacy Standing Committee (RASC), especially Mrs Maria Shiu, for their help and advice in putting this guide together.

We would also like to thank our interns, Jessica Driscoll and Delphinna Neo, for their dedication in this project. Our thanks also go to our focus group participants whose comments have been very helpful in the course of developing this guide.

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