

## See the World Through My Eyes

**Hey!** Remember when I was born? You cuddled me and played with me. You took care of me and laughed with me. And even now, we have great times together. I love being with you!

My arrival has also brought many challenges. At times, it may seem like I'm trying to make you crazy. I'm sorry. That's not what I want to do. I'm just trying to figure out this world and how to grow up in it.

The things you do make sense to you. You understand why you do them. You have a good reason for doing them. The things I do make sense to me. I have reasons for doing them, even though you may not understand them. Unfortunately, I can't always communicate with words the things I want or need.

In some ways I'm similar to most children but in other ways I am different from any other child you know. I'm unique. Just because you understand other children doesn't mean you have me figured out.

It takes a long time to learn all the things an adult is supposed to know. When I was first born, all I did was eat, fuss, and fill my diaper. In the first years of my life, I am learning many new skills: cooing, smiling, crawling, climbing, walking, talking, playing, sharing—and grabbing, helping, spilling, hugging, phew! So much to learn! All along the way I hope you will enjoy the miracle of life.

Inside you'll find guides to help us work through some of the challenges we'll face in the months and years ahead. Will you try to see the world through my eyes? When you do, we will get along better.

Thanks for being kind and patient with me as we learn and grow together.



## You make a big difference!

There are a few things you can do that will help me grow up to be a person you will be proud of.

- 1. Live well.** Your life doesn't end just because mine began. Keep learning, growing, and building strong relationships. When you are enjoying your life, we will have a better time together. For more ideas on having a good life, study a copy of *The Personal Journey*.
- 2. Love me.** Nothing matters as much to me as having good adults love me and enjoy my company. Pay attention to the way I like to be loved and love me in that way. The love you show me will teach me how to love others.
- 3. Try to understand the world as I see it.** When you understand what life is like for me, almost everything I do will make sense to you. When you feel compassion for the struggles in my world, I will feel safer and less lonely. The information sheets in this folder can help you understand what I'm experiencing and how you can help me.
- 4. Teach me.** I won't learn the rules for being a good adult without your help. Rather than punishing me when I frustrate you, show me better ways. Show me how to be kind, loving, and responsible.

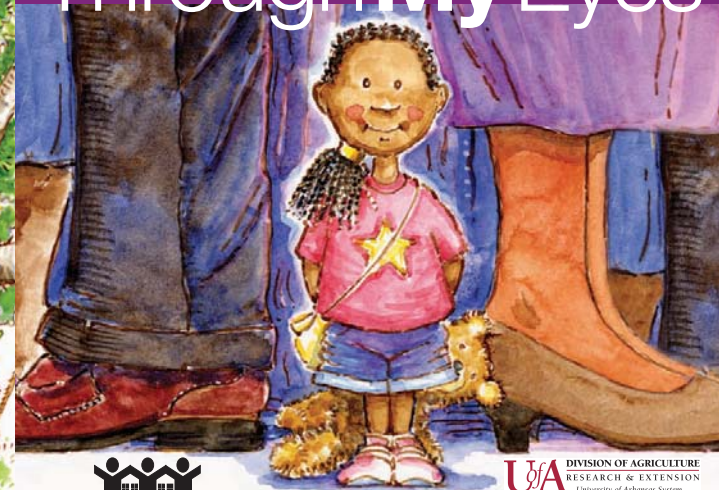
You can find helpful ideas for loving, understanding, and teaching me in the *Parenting Journey* publications.

As you already know, having a child requires lots of time and patience. Yet there is nothing quite as rewarding as helping a baby become a strong and caring person. Let's have a great time together!

For more family resources, and to get copies of the recommended publications, visit your local county Extension agent or visit [www.arkfamilies.org](http://www.arkfamilies.org) and select Family Life.  
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# one year two years three years four years five years



**Guides for "See the World Through My Eyes"**

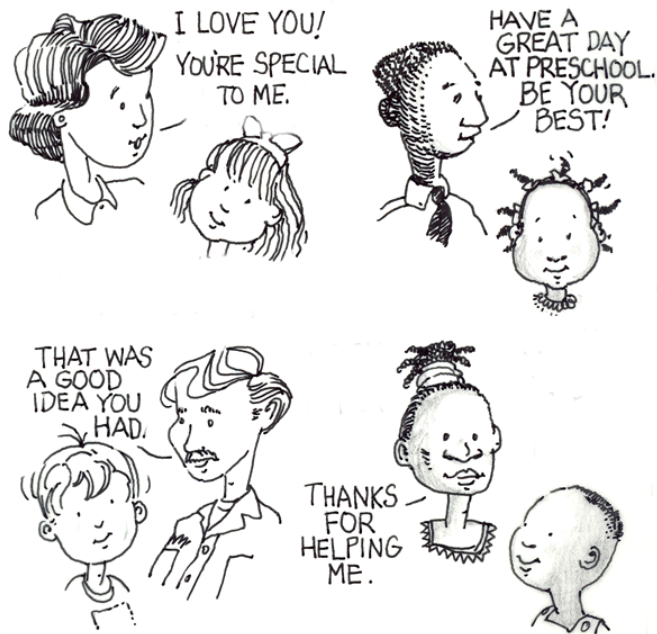
# See the World Through My Eyes

## Let's Enjoy Life Together!

I love being with you! When you take time to play with me, I giggle and laugh. When you hold me or when we read a book together, I feel close to you and loved by you. I know I can be a challenge at times. But, when you don't make time for me, I get lonely and frustrated.

### What I Want You to Know

Some adults do make time for their children. They play with them. They talk to them. They take them places. I hope you will do this with me. I know that I take a lot of work and that sometimes my needs get in the way of your wants. But, when you take time for me and enjoy me, my life is so much better! I feel more safe and happy. And I learn more too.



### Here's How You Can Help Me

I know this is a lot to ask, but I wonder if you would *organize your life to take care of me*. For example, it takes a long time for me to learn to sleep and eat well. Would you be willing get up with me in the night when I am lonely?



Would you be willing to plan meals with foods that are healthy for me?

As time goes by, I will be learning to use my hands and feet. Please provide me toys to grasp and places to go. *I love it when you notice my progress.* I will move from making funny noises to speaking, laughing, telling stories, reading books and telling you how much I love you. *I hope you will laugh with me and enjoy every step along the journey.*

Even more, I hope you will *enjoy the miracle of my development.* I started out as a small, squirmy, dependent baby. Before long, I'll be going to school, learning to read, and, someday, getting a job and starting a family of my own.

It would be great if you *take pictures and write down some of my most important experiences as I grow up.* As I grow older, I will cherish those reminders of my childhood.

Caring for children is hard. I hope you will *learn from books and caring adults* how to be a great caregiver.

You might wonder what you get for all your work. Well, you get a ringside seat at nature's greatest miracle: the development of a human being! And you will get an admirer; I will always look up to you. And you will know that you have made this world a better place.

Let's enjoy this journey together.

# See the World Through My Eyes

## Take Me and My Cooing Seriously

**S**ometimes, it seems like no one cares about what I have to say. I babble and coo and make all kinds of interesting noises, but sometimes you're too busy and don't notice.



### What I Want You to Know

I know my babbling and cooing don't sound like much right now, but I'm actually talking to you. I'm also listening carefully to the things you say. Every day I'm learning new things about how to communicate. You're my most important teacher.

When you take me and my cooing seriously, it sets the stage for good development and growth in the months and years to come. When you notice me and talk back to me, it makes me feel loved and important. I know you care.

I'm also learning important language and conversation skills. I learn from hearing your voice and imitating what I hear. The sounds and rhythms of language are interesting to me. I want to try them out. Listen closely. One day the sounds I'm

making will become words and sentences.

When you talk to me and then listen for my response, I learn to take turns. This is an important thing for me to learn for our future conversations.

### **Here's How You Can Help Me:**

Oftentimes *we'll connect best when you're holding me close and making eye contact with me.* Other times we may connect when I'm sitting in my child seat.

When I'm looking back at you, *talk to me in gentle, loving tones.* Then give me time to talk to you. When I smile at you or coo back, you know I'm enjoying our give and take. Let's keep this going. Tell me how much you love to hear me talk. *Imitate my sounds and facial expressions* and I'll imitate yours.

When you interact with me this way, it sends rich chemical and electrical impulses through my little brain. The interactions reinforce brain paths that will one day lead to very meaningful interactions between you and me and everybody else in my world.

*I love playing sing-song games* like "Peek-a-Boo," "Pat-a-Cake," or "Itsy Bitsy Spider." Singing to me in simple words and rhythms really gets my attention. It helps me to learn the rhythms of language and also prepares me to think in abstract ways. How about that!

After a while I may get tired. *I'll let you know when I'm ready to stop* by looking away.

Do you see how important all of this is? Interacting with you lays the groundwork for healthy relationships and language development.

# See the World Through My Eyes

## I'm Not a Cry Baby, I Just Need Your Help

**C**rying is a normal, everyday event in my life. It's really hard for me to tell you in words when I need something. The only way I know how to tell you that I'm hungry, sick, wet, uncomfortable, lonely, bored, tired or in pain is to cry.

### What I Want You to Know

*Crying is my way of asking for help.*  
My crying doesn't mean you are a bad parent or that I'm a terrible baby. Some babies cry very little while others cry a lot.

I'm not trying to upset you or cause you stress. Crying is the only way I know to tell you what I need right now.



Responding to my cries will not spoil me. Actually, I feel really secure and safe when you respond to me in a loving, calm way.

Sometimes, no matter what you do, you may not be able to soothe me. This



kind of constant crying is called colic. No one really knows what causes it. When you've tried all the usual things to calm me and they haven't worked, don't get upset. Ask a friend or family member to watch me for a while. My colic should end by the time I'm three-months-old.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

It's hard for you to know what my needs are when I'm crying. Pay attention to me when I cry, *be patient*, and *try different things to soothe me*. When you do this, you'll learn a lot about what I need when I cry. I may need you to feed me or change my wet diaper. I could be crying to tell you that I'm hot or I need to be burped. Sometimes, I simply get bored or lonely and need you to give me a toy, pick me up, smile, talk or sing to me.

*Notice what comforts me*. Play soft music, pat me on the back, talk and sing to me, and hold me in the position I like best. It really helps me when you walk around with me, hold me close and rock me.

I know you get frustrated sometimes when I cry so much. Please *don't ever shake or spank me* to make me stop crying. I'm too young to understand and I'll just cry more if you hurt me. If you get rough with me, you can easily injure my soft bones, organs and brain.

If you take time to understand why I cry and how I like to be soothed, you'll have an easier time responding to my needs. Meeting my needs in a sensitive, supportive way during the first several months of my life helps me feel safe and loved.

## Let's Read!

**O**ften, grown-ups are so busy doing their own things that they won't take time to read a book with me. I am too young to read by myself but I love to have you show me the pictures and tell me the stories. I like spending time with you and reading together is a good way to do that. Will you read with me?

### What I Want You to Know

When we read together, I feel close to you and it helps me learn language and reading skills. Reading together helps me learn my ABC's and 123's and all about the world we live in. Invite me to participate when we read. Ask me questions about what we're reading.



Let me point to the animals as you name them. Let me turn the pages. I love it when you get me involved.

## Here's How You Can Help Me

*When we read a book, it's like going on an adventure together.* Wouldn't it be fun if we read a book about birds and then went outside to look for all the birds we could see? We could even build a bird house or put out food for them.

*I love it when you use fun voices and exaggerated actions.* I know you might get tired of reading my favorite book over and over, but it helps me learn the words that go with the pictures. Sometimes you can invite me to tell the story in my own words.

It might be a good idea to *get me into a reading program* at the local library or take me there for story time. *Help me pick out books that are right for my*

*age and interests.* As I get older, introduce me to different kinds of books.

You could *make a little quiet place for me* that has a cozy chair and a bookcase full of great books. Make a few minutes before bedtime when we can sit and look at books and take turns reading to one another.

Help me read other things too, like cereal boxes, road signs, and billboards. You'll be helping me gain access to the world around me.

Remember, establishing a love of reading will help me become an eager learner. Someday I will be too big to sit in your lap, so let's *treasure this time.*

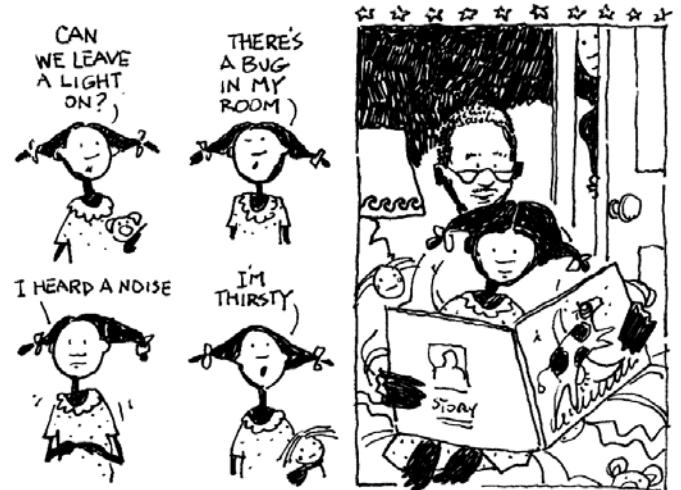
## Is It Time for Bed?

**W**hen I was a newborn, I couldn't sleep through the night. I needed to be fed and changed regularly. By the time I was 6 months old, I was big enough to sleep through the night. But I needed your help learning how to do that.

Now my problems are that I hate to miss out on things and sometimes I have a hard time settling down. That's why I find lots of excuses to stay awake.

### What I Want You to Know

*Calming down and falling asleep are things I have to learn.* There are things you can do to help me sleep better, regardless of my age.



When you get angry or when you threaten me, it is harder for me to calm down and go to sleep.

*Pay attention to how much sleep I need.* Some children need more sleep than others in order to function well. If you plan my sleep routine around my body's needs, we may have fewer struggles at bedtime.

## Here's How You Can Help Me

When I am first learning to sleep through the night, I may need your reassurance that I am okay. You can do that by patting me on the back and talking to me.

A dark room can be a scary thing to face all alone. I might feel safer with a night light.

As I get a little older, *night time can be our special time*. Some of the things that help me settle down and let me know it's time for bed are: taking a bath, brushing my teeth, getting in my pajamas, reading books, singing, talking about the day, and snuggling.

I may also need a special blanket or stuffed animal.

If you want me to go to bed at 8:30 p.m., maybe you could start getting me ready about 7:30 p.m. *Let me know what the routine is, including time limits, and help me stick to it.*

Don't send me to bed as a punishment. It will only make me dislike going to bed.

Bedtime can be a time for settling down and ending the day on a positive note. *I feel loved and important when you take time to help me get ready for bed.*



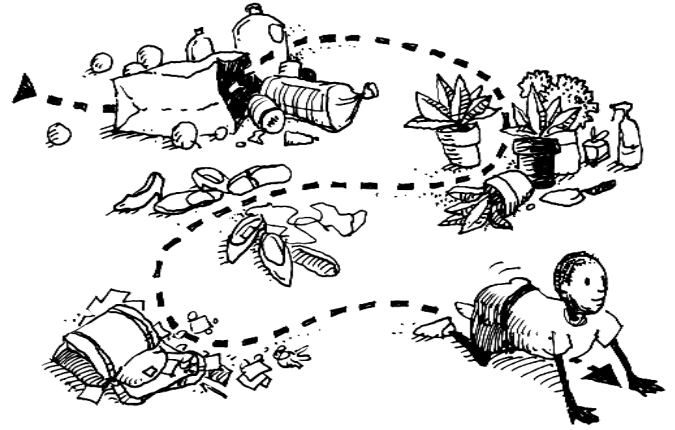
## I'm Learning by Exploring

I'm having a great time playing with the pots and pans I pulled out of the kitchen cupboards. Before that, I had fun exploring the trashcan I tipped over in the bathroom. And before that, I was having fun making marks on the living room wall with a red marker. The marker looks good on my face, arms, and stomach too.

I don't understand why everyone gets so upset when they see all the neat things I've done.

### What I Want You to Know

*I learn about the world around me by exploring.* The world is full of new and interesting things! I want to touch, taste, push, and play with everything I can get my hands on.



My constant exploring and mess making won't last forever. As I get older, pots and pans, trashcans, and marking on walls won't seem so interesting. I'll get interested in other things like games, creative play, and building with blocks. By then, I'll have a better idea what things I shouldn't do. I'll also be able to ask for your help and advice as I get older. I really

appreciate your gentle guidance as I explore the world around me.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

*I need to explore*, so not everything should be off limits. Make some places that are just for me. Have a special drawer for me in the kitchen filled with child-friendly stuff. Keep a basket of toys in the family room, bedroom, and bathroom. I will need some things that are safe to play with (and that won't drive you crazy) everywhere I go.

*I am doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing* for my age. When you get mad, yell, or punish me, it scares me. I don't understand it either. I may not even know why you are upset. Please be patient with me.

I'll bet you got into things too when you were my age, even if you don't remember. Ask grandma. She'll tell you it's true.

*Make sure the things you don't want me to play with are out of my reach.* Store household chemicals and medications up high. Put latches on the cupboards if you don't want me pulling out the pots and pans. Put trashcans inside a cupboard or somewhere out of reach. Don't leave markers where I can get them. I need your help to resist all the cool stuff in our house that's unsafe for me.

Please *provide me with lots of interesting things to play with that are suitable* for a child my age. By doing that, I'll become a happy and inquisitive adult.

## It's Hard to Say Goodbye

**I** really like exploring. But I'm not big enough to take care of myself. *I need grown-ups I know and trust to take care of me* and protect me. That's why I get upset when you leave me. I'm afraid you won't come back. Also, if you get too far away, I'm afraid something bad might happen to me.



### What I Want You to Know

I tend to melt down when you leave me or when I can't find you because you are one of the people I have come to know and trust. We have a strong emotional bond that makes me feel safe.

It's common for kids like me to first experience separation anxiety when I am around 8 months old. My anxiety may peak around 14 months. Usually by the time I'm two, I'm getting used to being apart more often.

I know it is frustrating, but I need you to be patient and compassionate with me as I learn to feel safe, even when you are not around.

## Here's How You Can Help Me

There are ways to *prepare me when you will be leaving* me with someone else. Tell me who I will be with.

Remind me when you'll be back.

Create a special routine for our goodbyes and be willing to take some time. Talk about the fun things I'll be doing while you're gone. If I can keep my favorite stuffed animal or blanket with me, that makes me feel safe.

Please don't sneak out on me while I'm playing. *Be sure to say good-bye.* When you leave me without saying

goodbye I feel abandoned and fearful, and I become untrusting of you. Don't get mad at me for missing you. I love being with you.

Goodbyes are hard and *I miss you a lot when we are not together.* But as I get older, I will learn that you'll always come back. Together we can work through my fear of being apart from you so that I feel safe when we're not together.

# See the World Through My Eyes

## Hitting is My Way of Asking for Help

**W**ow! I sure get in trouble for scratching, biting, and hitting. People seem to think that I'm a little bully. They get mad at me and treat me like a bad kid. They don't seem to understand what I'm trying to tell them.



### What I Want You to Know

I am old enough to know what I want. But I'm not old enough to tell people what I want in words. And I'm not very good at controlling my feelings. So, when I don't get what I want, I might hit, scratch and bite.

I know this is wrong. I want to do better. But it takes a while to learn better ways.

If you see that I am asking for help, maybe you can help me learn those better ways.

### Here's How You Can Help Me

You can do a lot to *prevent problems*. It's not a good time for me to play with other children when I am tired and



hungry. I'm more likely to act up when I am playing with children who are not nice to me.

Sometimes I get so upset that I bite them, hit them, or scratch them. They probably don't realize that I'm just trying to say, "Hey! Be nice to me."

When I lose control and hurt someone, it does not help me if you hit me, scratch me, or bite me. That only makes me more upset and confused. I need you to *teach me*.

*Help me to calm down.* Maybe you could hold me or rock me in a rocking chair. Talk to me quietly and *help me feel safe*.

When I am calm, maybe you could remind me that my hitting, scratching, and biting hurt another child. Help me think of better ways to act when I'm frustrated. Teach me to be kind while you *show me how to be kind*.

As I get older and better able to use words, I am less likely to hit, bite, and scratch. I want to become a kind and caring person.

Thank you for helping me get through the challenges of childhood.

## Me and the Potty

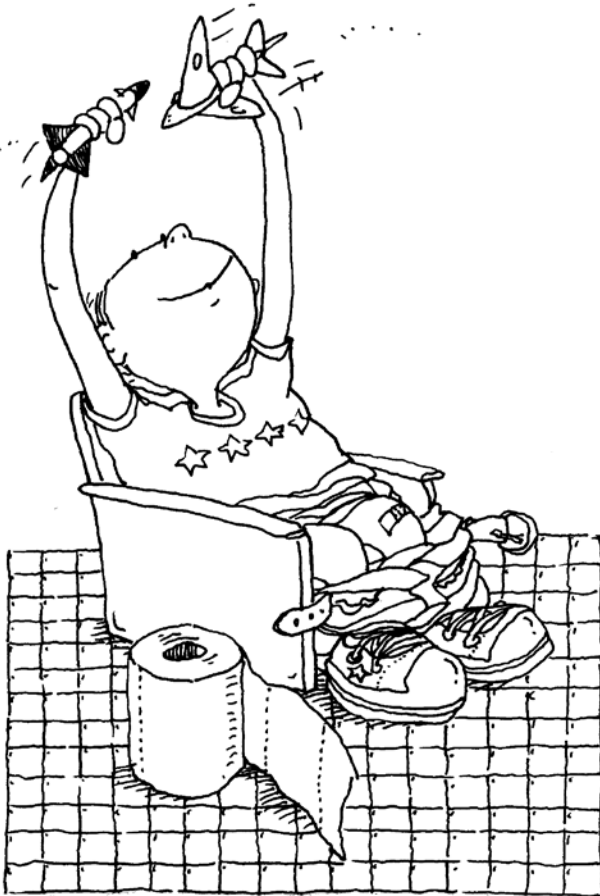
I get in a lot of trouble when I wet or soil my pants. Sometimes people yell at me or punish me, and this makes me feel bad.

I'm just a little kid! I'm not used to managing all this stuff inside me. I get distracted. And sometimes I just forget.

### What I Want You to Know

Most of the time I don't even notice that I need to go to the potty until it's too late. Besides, I can't control my bowel and bladder muscles yet. And then I get involved in playing and forget all about stuff like that.

Please be patient with me. It will take me a while to learn. Somewhere around two to three years of age is when most kids start learning to use the potty. And I will probably have accidents at least until I'm in kindergarten.



## Here's How You Can Help Me

When I'm about 2 or 2½ years old I might have the muscle control and the interest I need to start learning to use the potty. Rather than push me, maybe you could notice when I show an interest. *Encourage my interest.*

Sometimes, grown-ups are too busy to stop what they are doing to take me to the potty. Then I'm the one who gets in trouble. Try to *notice my need.*

If you get mad at me, yell at me, try to force me to use the potty, or leave me in a soiled diaper, I will probably learn to hate potty training. I may never learn to use that stinkin' thing!

The thing that matters more to me than anything else is feeling safe with you and loved by you. If you *help me feel safe and loved*, I will probably want to figure out this potty thing. Maybe you

can read me stories while I sit on the potty. It may help if I am around kids who already know how to use it. I know it helps when you stay calm. I like it when you make an adventure out of it.

When I slip up, *be patient.* We all have accidents!

You can help me by teaching me to notice when I need to go. Maybe you can dress me in clothes I can easily pull off. Regular underpants may be better for me than pull-ups so I can feel when I have had an accident. Don't forget to *pack lots of extra clothing* when we leave the house.

Most kids will be pretty good at using the potty by the time they are 3 or 3 ½. I will learn. We'll get through this. Thank you for being patient as I learn.

## I Said “No!”

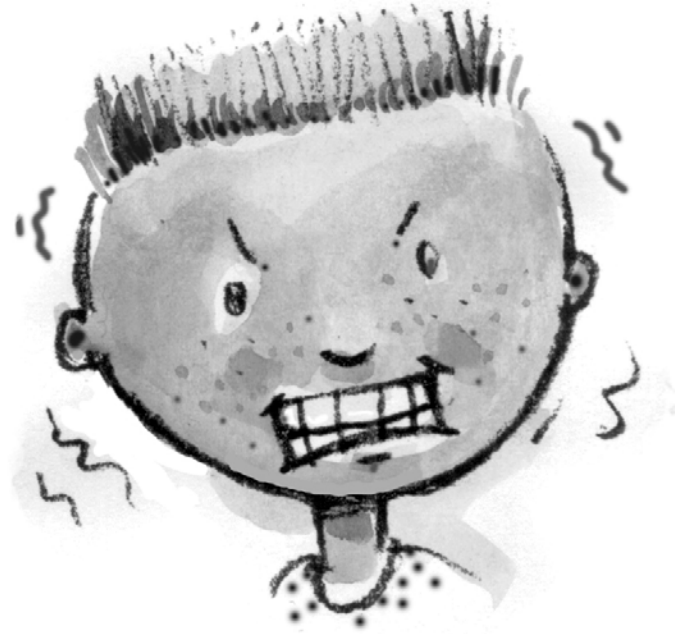
**S**ometimes you want me to do something and I shout, “NO!” Other times, when there’s something you don’t want me to do, I do it anyway.

You may think that I’m being a pest. I’m really not. *I’m just a kid trying to grow up.* You can help me grow well if you understand what’s happening in my life.

### What I Want You to Know

People are used to me being a baby. Since I was born, folks have carried me, done things for me, and bossed me around.

But I’m not a baby anymore. I’m growing up. This is good news, isn’t



it? I’m sure you don’t want to be pushing me in a stroller when I go to high school!

*I want to do more things for myself.* I’m still not very good at lots of things – like feeding myself, getting dressed, taking a bath, and putting things away.

Please don't take my growing independence as a sign that I'm a bad child.

I can learn only if you give me a chance to try things. Please help me learn to do more things on my own.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

The world is full of cool stuff. When I see interesting things, I want to play with them.

Be wise; keep dangerous things away from me. But I hope you will surround me with lots of things I can play with! Give me safe toys. *Let me explore. Let me make lots of choices.*

I hope you will understand that when you tell me to do something and I shout "NO!" I may be saying, "Hey! Give me a break. I'm capable of doing

things on my own, please give me a chance to show you how much I can do." And sometimes, when you ask me to *not* do something and I do it anyway, it's because I want to do my own thing. *I'm not trying to be rebellious or disrespectful.* I'm just trying to grow up. *Give me a safe choice.* You can calmly help me do things that are safe. If something's not safe – like playing with a knife – give me something I can play with. I shouldn't use a steak knife to cut my clay, but maybe you have a plastic knife I can use.

Please don't make too many rules or I'll feel like I can't do anything.

I hope that when the time comes for me to go to school, you will be proud of all the things I have learned to do on my own.



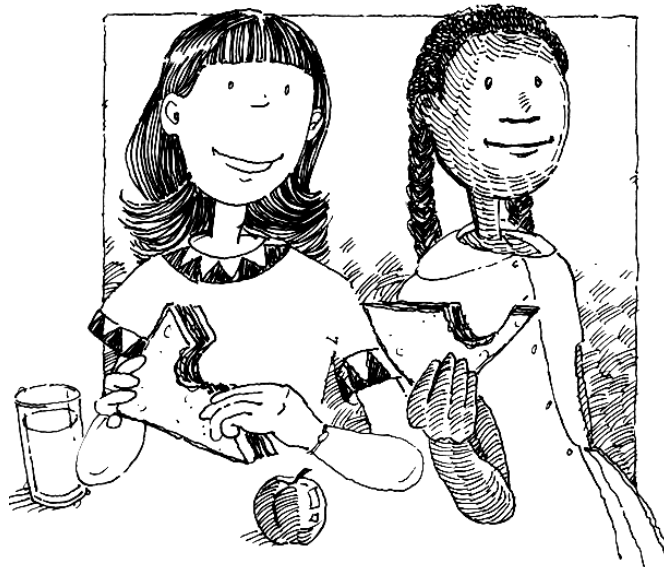
## Help Me Be a Healthy Eater

**M**ealtime is a struggle for me. When I was a baby, you used to feed me whenever I wanted. Now, you're asking me to eat what you want me to eat on your schedule. But if I throw a fit, you give me whatever I want. I'm confused!

Besides that, *eating can be frustrating!* I can't control my hands very well, I spill things, and I have trouble managing my spoon. It's going to take me a while to get the hang of all this.

### What I Want You to Know

I learn to be a healthy eater when you provide pleasant mealtime experiences, teach me to enjoy a



variety of healthy foods, and help me set limits on eating.

As I grow older, I start paying more attention to what I'm being fed. Some of that stuff looks pretty weird! Being pushy won't make me want to eat a certain food.

When I'm having a growth spurt I may eat more than usual. Other times I may eat less. My appetite will guide how much I eat. Your wise and loving guidance will help shape my eating habits for the rest of my life.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

I may not notice when I'm hungry and my stomach is small. That's why it's good for me to *have regular meal and snack times*. If we have breakfast at 7:30, I may need a healthy snack, like a banana with peanut butter, by 10:00. If I have lunch at noon, I will need another healthy snack, like string cheese and apple slices, by 3:00.

*Planning ahead will make mealtimes easier* for you and me. If you ask me what I want to eat, I may choose foods that are not good for me. Instead, *let me choose from the healthy foods*

you've provided. You may have to offer me a new food several times before I'll try it. I appreciate your encouragement when I try something new.

*I learn healthy eating habits from watching you*. If I see you enjoying healthy foods, I will enjoy them too. Buy foods that aren't high in sugar, salt or artificial colors and flavors. That way, I'll learn to enjoy a nice ripe strawberry or a juicy tomato from Grandma's garden.

If I know I can get the juice or food I want whenever I ask for it, it will keep me from trying other foods at meal time. If I ask for something other than what's on the menu, *don't give in*. I need limits on what and when I eat.

Helping me make healthy choices now will set me on a path of good health.

## That's Mine!

**S**ometimes I'm just minding my own business playing with a toy. Then my little brother comes over and grabs it right out of my hand. I get mad at him and take the toy back. Sometimes, I'm so mad I even hit him or push him down.

My parents get mad at me when I yell at, or hit, my little brother. They say things like, "Why don't you share with your brother? Why are you so selfish?" I don't get it! My little brother takes the toy I'm playing with and I get in trouble.

### What I Want You to Know

Like most kids my age, *I think almost everything belongs to me.* That's why I have a hard time sharing. I don't think



I should have to share toys, especially with my pesky little brother. If I do share, I want to decide when I do it. I don't like people taking things from me or pressuring me to share.

*It's tough to learn how to share. And it's tough to learn why I should share.*

Please be patient with me. It will take me years to learn how to share. Sometimes even adults have a hard time sharing.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

Try to understand what it's like for me to share. It's hard—especially if I am tired, hungry, or threatened by other children.

If I'm not in the mood to share, don't always force me or tell me that I have to. That teaches me that sharing is no fun. *I like to have some choices, and sometimes I will choose not to share.* Maybe you could distract the other child with a different toy or activity.

When I do share something with my brother or a friend, I sure like it when you notice that I shared. When I hear

you say, "Thank you for sharing your toys with your brother," it makes me feel good. That helps me know that sharing is good. With some encouragement and help, I may be pretty good at sharing by the time I am 5 or 6.

Set a good example, too. I notice when you share with others. Like just the other day, you shared your dessert with me. "Wow! That must have been tough." I also notice when you share with the neighbors and people like that.

Whether I'm in the mood to share or not, I want to know that you love me and that I'm okay. *If you help me feel loved, I will probably be more willing to share.*

## I Want to Do It My Way

**A**s part of growing up, I want to make more decisions in my own life. Sometimes my desire for independence makes you crazy. But experiencing new things and making choices is part of growing up.

When you always tell me what to do and don't let me make choices, I get frustrated. For example, let me choose what shirt I wear.

### What I Want You to Know

Between 1 ½ and 3 years of age, I will get serious about growing up. I may suddenly refuse to take a bath, get dressed, eat my food, put on a coat, or go to bed. It may seem like I say "NO!" all the time.



I probably seem like a brat to you.

Being contrary or independent doesn't mean I am bad. I am doing exactly what I should be doing at this point in life - learning to make decisions.



## Here's How You Can Help Me

Don't get mad and punish me for saying "no." That won't help. There are several things you can do that will help.

You can *get rid of the rules that don't matter so much*. Sometimes I may want to wear clothes that don't match. Also, it's okay if I get dirty every now and then.

You can *give me many chances to make choices*. You might let me pick which vegetable I eat at dinner.

Tell me about the things I can do, rather than all the things I can't do. Instead of telling me to leave my brother alone, you can ask me to help you in some way.

You could *use distraction or humor* to prevent a battle. If I am fighting with my sister, you could invite me to help you make dinner rather than yelling at me to stop. Or, if the dog needs to be fed, you could jokingly say, "Fido told me he's starving."

Allow me time to move from one activity to the next. You might give me a five-minute warning before I need to come in from playing.

*Show an interest in my needs and preferences*. For example, you could let me pick the book we read at bedtime, or the fruit we buy from the grocery store.

Thanks for helping me grow up to be an understanding and capable adult.

## Can We Talk?

**F**rom the time I was born, I have wanted to tell you what life is like for me. I wanted to tell you how I feel, what I think, and that I love you! But I haven't had the words to tell you these things.

Finally, I'm starting to learn words to express myself. This is so exciting, but it's also frustrating. I really want to talk. But right now, all I can do is make funny sounds.

### **What I Want You to Know**

My words come slowly at first - simple words like "mama" or "dada." I need you to respond to my attempts at language. Imagine we are having a conversation. Use words that I already



know or will soon learn. If I use one word, respond with two or three. If I

point at the light and say "LIGHTS!" you could respond, "The lights are bright!" As my abilities increase, so should your responses.

I understand a lot more than I can say. Having you speak to me using correct language will prepare me to speak well. Someday I may be a great teacher or an inspiring leader.

## Here's How You Can Help Me

*Talk with me throughout my day.* At meal times tell me what I'm eating. At bath time, tell me about the water. Tell me about your day, how you're feeling. When I get older, ask me how I'm feeling. Let me tell you about my day.

*Try to notice what my body is telling you.* Sometimes I may seem happy, frustrated, hungry, or tired. Talk about what you see. Help me learn the words that describe what I am feeling.

I love story time. When I'm young, *read books to me* that contain simple and repetitive language and big colorful pictures. As I get older and more capable, you can provide books that are more challenging for me.

When story time rolls around, let me pick out my favorite book for you to

read to me. As we read the story, you can ask me questions about it or let me guess what will happen next.

I love to sing with you. *Singing in simple words and rhythms* helps me to learn the rhythms of language and prepares me to think in abstract ways.

*Play games with me.* When I get a little bit older, games like "Simon Says" will help me develop listening skills.

*Playing with other children is especially important.* Play dates will help me to develop social and language skills that will be important the rest of my life.

This really is one of the most exciting times of my life. All of these things will help me to love reading and learning.

*Hey, can we talk?*

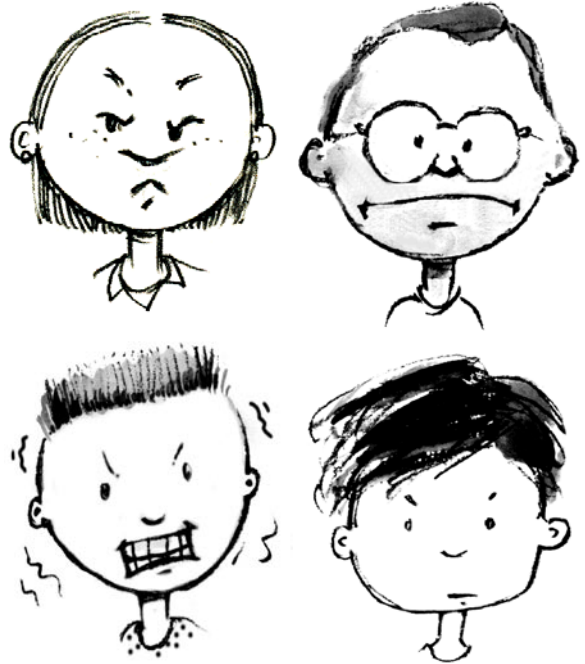
## It's Hard for Me to Get Along with Others

**M**y brother and I are constantly at each other's throats. We fight over toys, parent time, and anything else that is important to us. Sometimes, I don't even want to be in the same room as my brother. I just wish he would go away.

### What I Want You to Know

My number one goal is to get my needs met. Anyone who stands in my way is an enemy. Naturally, my brother or sister will seem like an enemy. So we often fight.

No one has taught us a better way of handling our feelings. This is where we need your help.



We need your help to learn how to negotiate. Help us think about each other's needs and how we can help each other get those needs met without fighting.

## Here's How You Can Help Me

*Make time for me.* Help me feel important and loved by spending one-on-one time with me doing something I love to do. Make sure we have space and time to each do our own thing. This can help prevent fights.

When we're fighting, *we need you to be a calming influence.* We need your help to stop and feel safe. You can sit us down and assure us that you're interested in what each of us has to say.

Once we've settled down, you could invite each of us to tell about our

needs. *Be patient* with my brother and me. It does no good to lecture and yell at us for fighting. *Listen to what we are saying.* See if you can find the need that each of us is trying to get met. We will need your help figuring out the best way to get our needs met.

If I want quiet time to work and my brother wants to play games, you might help each of us find our own space. We will learn problem solving skills as you help us find good ways to work things out. *Someday we'll be able to solve problems without fighting.* Maybe someday we'll all be friends.

# See the World Through My Eyes

## Are You Serious About the Rules You Make?

I'm confused. Sometimes you tell me to do something but don't notice whether I do it or not. Other times you get real mad if I don't follow directions as soon as you give them. It seems like your rules depend on how busy you are or how you are feeling. I never really know if you mean what you say. Help me figure it out.

### What I Want You to Know

I remember one time when I was playing outside and you told me to come in right away. I kept playing. It was an hour later before you realized I was still outside.

I remember another time when you told me to come in and I didn't do it.



A few minutes later, you were back outside dragging me in.

It's hard for me to tell whether you mean what you say or not.

### Here's How You Can Help Me

*I know that you are serious about the rules you make when I see you enforce them.*



Now that doesn't mean you need to make a whole bunch of rules. You don't. But when you *make a rule that really matters*, make sure you stick to it. That's how I'll learn to respect you and the rules you make.

The way you enforce your rules makes a lot of difference. If you get mad at me and punish me, I learn to be resentful. If you *show me in a kind way* that you mean what you say, then I learn to take you seriously.

For example, if I'm playing when dinner is almost ready, you might warn me, "Ten minutes until dinner." Then, when it's time for dinner, you could tell me, "Time to come now."

But don't run off after telling me to come in for dinner. I probably will have a hard time setting aside my toys.

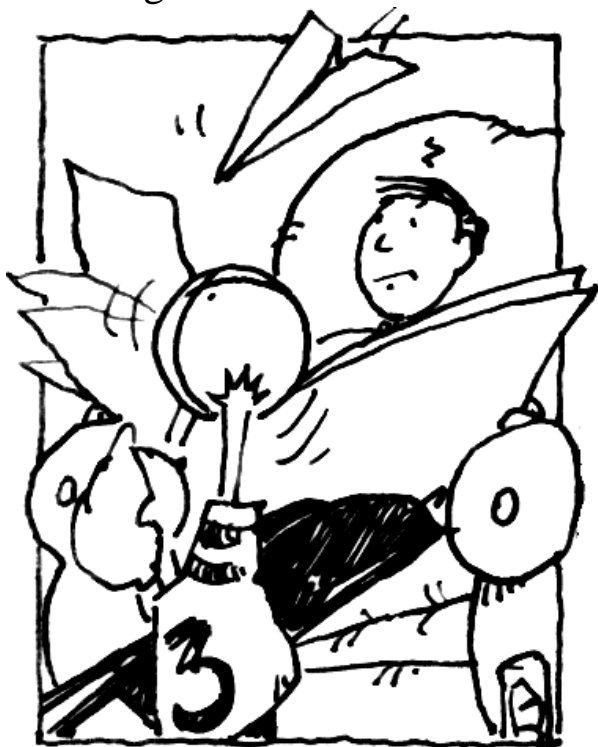
So give me a few seconds and then ask, "Are you having a hard time leaving your toys? Do you need my help?" If I don't come right away, you can take my hand and say, "It is so hard to quit playing! But it's time for dinner now."

This may sound like a lot of work. But when I learn that you really mean what you say, I will come when I'm called. When you show this firmness while being kind, I also learn to trust you and feel close to you. Even when I do something that upsets you, please don't spank or hit me.

Thank you for helping me grow up.

## Let's Play!

I enjoy playing by myself. I really like playing with other children too. But *I like playing with you the best*. When I don't get to play with you I feel lonely and unimportant. I start wondering how I can get you to play with me again.



### What I Want You to Know

Children don't play with me the same way you do. I love it when you are willing to sit on the floor and build a block tower with me. I like it when we wrestle and tickle each other too. One of the most important things you can do to *help me grow up to be a good person* is to *spend fun time with me*.

I know you are very busy. There are many things that you want to do. You also feed me, bathe me, and wash my clothes. But I want you to play with me too. *Play brings our two worlds together*.

### Here's How You Can Help Me

Some people say playing with children is a waste of time. But you're helping

me grow and learn! That's important!  
*When you take time for me, I learn  
how to be with people.* I can't learn  
that from my toys!

A couple times each day, *ask me if I  
want to play.* It doesn't have to be for  
very long. Tell me stories or read me  
books. I also love building things,  
taking walks, and making snacks with  
you.

When I come looking for you, *be  
willing to spend a few minutes playing  
with me.* Even if you are in the middle  
of something else, maybe it could wait.  
I may want to show you the picture I

drew, the book I want you to read to  
me, or the neat tower I built.

Even helping you with some of your  
jobs is fun to me. *I could help you get  
dinner ready, set the table, plant  
flowers, or dust the furniture.*

When I come to find you, sometimes it  
means I'm bored or lonely. I'm ready  
for some one-on-one time with you. If  
I don't seem to have an activity in  
mind, help me out. Maybe you could  
suggest that we make things with play  
dough, draw a picture, or throw  
together a makeshift fort.

It doesn't really matter what we do. *I  
just like playing with you.*

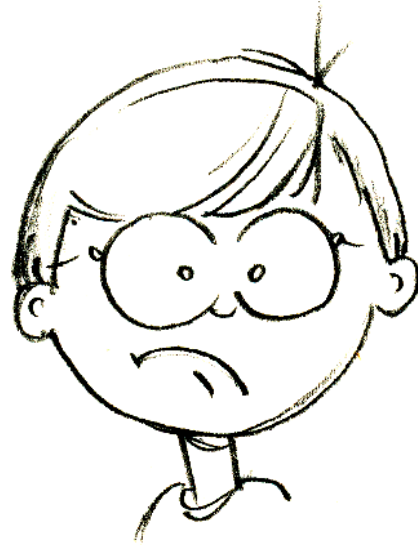
## I'm not Lying, I Promise!

Really! The lamp fell over when I didn't even touch it!

**S**ometimes I tell stories to avoid getting in trouble. Other times I may tell tall-tales. My imagination and my real life tend to run together and I can't always tell them apart. Normally, I'm not trying to deceive you. I just get carried away.

### What I Want You to Know

*I'm not trying to be bad when I tell you stories.* In fact, sometimes I get confused about what is true. If you punish me, I feel sad or angry. You can teach me to be honest if you set a good example, understand my feelings, and *patiently help me learn what is*



*true.* Then, I'm likely to learn while also feeling loved.

### Here's How You Can Help Me

Please *don't label me a liar.* If you do, I may think that's what I will always be.

Don't tempt me to lie. Imagine that I have eaten a cookie when you asked

me not to. When you see the cookie crumbs around my mouth, you don't need to ask, "Did you take a cookie?" You already know the answer. Instead, you could say, "I see that you ate a cookie. I'm disappointed. I hoped you would wait until after dinner." Or you might say, "I can see that you have already eaten your dessert for tonight."

Sometimes I may tell you something that you know to be false. For example, maybe I will tell you that I didn't take my brother's toy. If you know that I did, you can first show understanding by saying, "You really wanted to play with that toy didn't you?" Then you can teach me: "We don't take each other's toys without asking. Please ask before you borrow."

You encourage me to lie when you won't accept what I truly feel. If I tell you that I hate my brother, it won't help for you to make me say I love him. Instead, you might simply understand without agreeing or disagreeing: "Sometimes you wish your brother would leave you alone."

*At times I may exaggerate.* I may tell you that I am the fastest person in our neighborhood. You don't need to correct my error. You can just say, "You really love to run!"

*It will take time for me to learn the difference between truth and imagination.* By the time I start school, I will probably know what is true and what is not. Thanks for your help.

## There's a Monster in My Closet!

**T**here are monsters in my closet and snakes under my bed! I'm afraid of going down the drain when I take a bath! I worry there are bad guys out there trying to steal me! Is that barking dog going to eat me? This world is a scary place!

Lots of grown-ups just tell us kids to stop being afraid. That doesn't help me very much. In fact, that makes me feel confused and like my feelings don't matter.

### What I Want You to Know

When I am a toddler, I might be afraid of lots of things. The thought of you leaving me is very scary. I am also scared of noises, falling, bugs, or big



animals. I may even be afraid of the toilet or my dark bedroom.

As I get older, I notice more of the world around me. I've had a few painful and scary experiences and my imagination is growing more and more vivid. It is hard for me to figure out

what is real and what is imaginary. Monsters, ghosts, and getting lost seem especially scary to me. I also hate the idea of losing my mommy or daddy.

My fears might seem silly to a grown-up, but they are real to me. I need to learn to sort these things out and not be scared. It will take me a while, and I need your help as I learn to be brave.

### **Here's How You Can Help Me**

Please *help me feel safe*. When I am frightened, hold me. *Listen to me* when I talk about my fears.

Help me see that *it is normal to be afraid* and worry about things. Tell me about things you were afraid of when you were my age and how you learned not to be afraid.

*Help me think of ways to cope with my fears*. If my imagination is running

wild, teach me how to use it to turn scary situations into funny ones. If I think there are monsters in my closet, help me think of them as friends instead.

Give me a chance to face my fears, but *don't try to force me* to do something I'm not ready for. Help me ease into facing my fears.

*Comfort me and reassure me* as I learn to face my fears. Gently remind me that I will learn how to overcome or control my fears. When I finally overcome a fear, point it out to me so that I can learn from my success. Tell me how “grown up” I acted.

If you help me learn to face my fears now, I will be able to face my fears on my own when I get older.



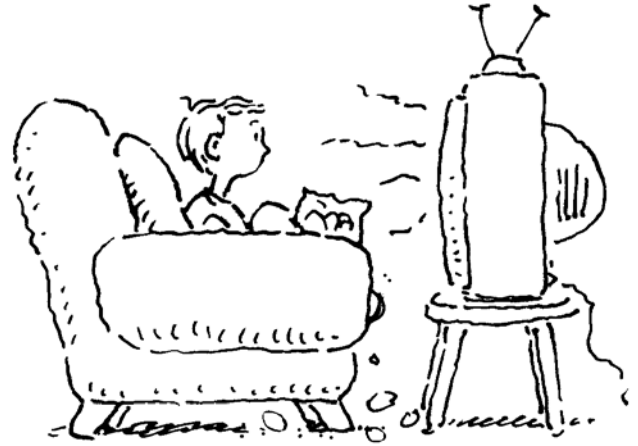
## Hey! I was watching that!

I love television, movies, and video games. They are so cool! There is so much action. I get caught up in the stories, sights, and sounds. I start to feel like I'm the super hero or rock star.

The excitement of these things makes it difficult for me to pay attention to other things. That's why I often don't hear or remember what you say to me while I'm watching a show or playing a video game. I also have a hard time stopping, so I sometimes whine, get upset, or beg for just a few more minutes.

### **What I Want You to Know**

When you call me for dinner or ask me to clean my room while I'm watching



a show, please be patient. There's a good chance I may not even hear you. Getting mad at me, yelling, and making threats doesn't help the situation either.

I hate it when you come in during the middle of a show and say, "That's it. Turn off the T.V." It bugs me when you tell me to end a video game right in the middle.

I'm glad you kept me away from watching television or playing video games until I was two years old. But even now I need your help to limit the amount and type of shows and video games I'm exposed to. Some programs, even those you see as harmless, may give me nightmares or make me aggressive.

### **Here's How You Can Help Me**

Watch a show or play a video game with me once in a while. Ask me about the characters. Ask me how to play. Ask me what I like best about the game or show. I know you care about me when you *take an interest in the things I like to do.*

I need you to *help me set limits.* If I know I can watch only 30 minutes of T.V. or play 20 minutes of video games per day we won't need to have a daily argument about how long I get to do these activities.

*Give me a 5 or 10 minute warning* before I have to move to a different activity. It may be hard for me to stop on my own. Telling me I have to stop when the current video game or show is over makes the transition easier. When my time is up, help me move to another activity and turn off the television.

*Monitor the types of programs I watch* and the games I play. Make sure that they are appropriate for my age and our family's values.

## Let Me Help

**W**hat a day I've had! I know I don't make my bed perfectly every time, but it's hard for me to reach the middle of my bed. And sometimes I can't get the covers even no matter how hard I try.

I wanted to help you out this morning so I fed Charlie. I managed to pour the whole bag of dog food on the floor all by myself. Why are you so upset? Charlie won't have to be fed for a month. Aren't you proud of me?

I know you told me not to walk on the pansies, but I wanted to surprise you and show you I can help you garden. It's too bad the weed that needed pulling was at the back of the flower bed.



There's water on the floor? Where? You think I did it? I didn't do it. I've been standing here washing dishes like you told me to. So I couldn't possibly have done it.

## **What I Want You to Know**

I like to help you. I love trying to do the things I see you do.

I wish you wouldn't get so mad at me when I make mistakes. I'm really just trying to make you happy. I don't mean to make so many mistakes. It just happens sometimes. I'm trying to do my best, but I'm pretty new to all this stuff. I need your help learning how to do things. It may even take me years to learn how to do some things.

## **Here's How You Can Help Me**

Give me jobs that I can handle. *Show me how* you want them done. Even before I am capable of doing them, demonstrate for me and explain to me how we feed the dog and when we make our bed.

I also need *gentle reminders* of what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

*Appreciate my efforts* even when they are not perfect.

Sometime I may want to help you but you're afraid I'll be in the way. Please *find a way I can help*. If you don't want me to help you cook on the stove, let me wash vegetables or wipe the counter tops.

*I will learn the most from watching you*. Tell me about the helpful things you do for other people. It will be easier for me to learn how to be helpful if I grow up watching you being helpful.

Do you think you can help me until I get the hang of all this?