



Emotional Flooding- Using Empathy to Help Babies Manage Strong Emotions

All of us can think of times when we have been overwhelmed by our emotions. Now let's consider the young children we care for and think about some of their challenging behavior. Often young children's challenging behavior may be the result of emotional flooding.

How Emotions are Processed

Most of the time, as adults, we can manage our emotions by processing them through the "thinking brain"—the cerebral cortex. This part of our brain is responsible for self-control and judgment. In children the "thinking brain" is not fully developed. Children get emotionally flooded much more easily than adults because they process their experiences through their "emotional brain"—the limbic system. This part of the brain handles emotional responding and pleasure seeking (Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research n. d.). Young children have not yet fully developed the skill of stopping and thinking through possible actions and their consequences. Teachers can provide support that can guide children in learning the skills used to regulate or manage their emotions.

Empathy as a Teaching Strategy

It might be helpful to think about what helps us manage our strong emotions as adults. One of the first things that can help adults and children to calm down is for someone to empathize with them. When we empathize with someone, we validate their feelings.

Where Does Empathy Come From?

One of the ways empathy develops is in the context of relationships. A patient, caring adult who understands child development and knows a particular child and his or her preferences can help that child learn about emotions and how to regulate them. One of the best ways to learn about individual children and development is through

observation.

Observation helps us anticipate and perhaps minimize potentially challenging situations. We can observe the environment, the child, and our practice to see what might be contributing to the child's loss of emotional control. Next, we can reflect and ask ourselves what the child is trying to tell us.

Helping children cope with their strong emotions is a first step in helping them become self-regulated. The ability to regulate our emotions is an important task to master at any age!

Putting Empathy Into Practice

When toddlers are overwhelmed, pediatrician Harvey Karp (2004) says it is best for our response to match their intensity and limited language. Once toddlers see that an adult understands their feelings and message, they are ready to move on.

Our objective as educators is to use the strategy that is most effective in helping a particular young child feel heard and understood. Sometimes empathy is all that is needed for a child to move on and for order to resume.

Try It

Next time you observe a young child becoming emotionally flooded, try empathizing with her. Depending on what you know about her, you can match her intensity or talk softly to her. Notice how she reacts. The important point is to help the child know you understand her feelings.

Excerpted from Young Children magazine, September 2008. Young Children is a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

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From the Director's Desk

I hate having to call any company for assistance. Why? Because I hate having to navigate the automated systems that companies have and then be on hold for various long amounts of time before I get to speak to a live person. I also detest having to hear that there is no one available to take my call, so I should please try again later and then I am either disconnected or told to leave a message that never gets a response whether a call back or a letter or any other reasonable solution to the problem. None of these things happen when you call The Child Care Connection to speak to us or let us know of an issue. Our receptionist answers the phone then either transfers you to a live person or voicemail. Once your message is received by either method, there is assistance of some form. If you are calling with a problem, we listen and try to help you to come up with a solution. If you are calling with a concern, such as not having received a training schedule that was supposed to be included with the very nicely written letter that you received, then you receive the schedule a few days later (and thank you all for the heads up). ☺

By the time you receive this newsletter you should have also received a letter from OCFS telling you of some updates that are important for you to be aware of. Please read the letter thoroughly. Some of these changes are coming about in preparation for the implementation of the New York State quality rating and improvement system, also known as QUALITYstarsNY, which I introduced in the last newsletter and the letter from OCFS did talk about. You can get detailed information at www.earlychildhood.org.

One of the issues explained in the letter involves EIP and the changes to the way that it will be distributed. There will be preference given to courses toward a CDA or that are for college credit. This is because with QUALITYstarsNY there will be increased emphasis on professional development through higher education. Along with the new preference for how scholarships are distributed is the fact that there is less money to start with. If any of you have been considering working towards a CDA or taking college classes, now would be a good time to start.

Another way to keep abreast of updates and changes and get some professional development is to join a professional membership organization such as the Association for the Education of Young Children. We are lucky in this area to have a local chapter — the Tri-County

AEYC. You can visit the NYSAEYC website at www.nysaeyc.org. Another organization is the Family Child Care Association, which has a state network located in Albany.

You can visit their website at www.fccanys.org, and there are others such as Prevent Child Abuse New York. Search out a professional organization that highlights something in the field that you are passionate about and would like to become more involved in or one of the more broad organizations, being involved is the key.

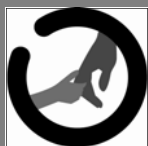
The Child Care Connection has recently begun using a new system to process the claims of our CACFP participating providers. The system is called Minute Menu. Minute Menu allows providers to keep their menus and attendance online and submit virtually all forms online. This program streamlines the process of participating in CACFP and makes it much easier for providers and much less time consuming. For anyone without access to the internet, there is an alternative paper-based system available using forms that are scanned. Even this system is streamlined to reduce the amount of paperwork that must be filled out on a monthly basis. If any of you are considering participating in CACFP or have participated but stopped due to the amount of paperwork involved, it is a great time for you enroll in CACFP and start getting reimbursed for the meals you are feeding to the children involved in your day care program.

Please also remember that The Child Care Connection now has a very nice website with answers to many questions, a calendar with scheduled training listed, an e-newsletter that you can sign up to receive and the ability for you to contact us via e-mail from our site. Parents can also go on our website and get information and a personalized referral anytime. Tell everyone to visit our site. The address is:

www.childcareconnectionny.com

Have a happy spring!

Christy Houck



The more you know about how children are developing, the more you will be able meet their needs. Information about how well children are progressing helps you to plan your program. You want the children in your care to feel successful and confident, but you also want to offer experiences that will help them to develop further. Also, by learning where children are in their development when they enter your program and by checking their progress from time to time, you can tell which children need special help or who face extra challenges.

Here are some ways that you can keep track of children's progress.

- Observe them every day. Watch children as they play with each other, respond to your directions, take part in activities, and use language.
- Collect samples of their drawings, paintings, and writing.
- Keep notes about what they say and do.
- Encourage them to talk about their own progress.
- Talk with parents and other caregivers.
- Ask them what they have observed at home. Tell them about their children's strengths. Let them know about any concerns you may have.

Also, remember to talk often with children about what they are doing. Be sure to focus on their strengths—what they can do and the progress they have made. This will help children be more confident and eager to learn now and when they get to school.

*** Adapted from US Dept. of Education and US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Early Childhood Head Start Task Force, Teaching our Youngest, Washington, DC 2002*



*Provider
Appreciation Day
is Friday,
May 8th.
Thank you to all of
our providers for all
that you do for
children and
families!*



Recall Alert!

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announces the following recalls:

- ImagiPLAY: Bead Maze Toys. Sold by toy retailers nationwide from 8/2008 - 10/2008.
- Regal Lager, Inc: Phil & Ted's Dash Buggy Strollers. Sold at independent juvenile specialty stores from 7/2008 - 9/2008.
- Evenflo Company, Inc: Majestic Highchairs. Sold at juvenile product and mass merchandise stores nationwide and online from 1/2006 to 5/2007.
- Munire Furniture, Inc: "Newport Rubbed Black" Cribs and matching furniture. Sold at specialty furniture stores from 4/2006 - 11/2008
- Woodstock Percussion, Inc: Calypso Steel Drums. Sold by mail order catalogs, websites and retail stores nationwide from 12/2006 - 12/2007.
- Jardine Enterprises: Cribs. Sold at Babies "r" Us, Toys "r" Us, KidsWorld, Geoffery's Stores and at Babies"r" Us online from 3/2004 - 1/2009.
- Top Goods Trading: Flashing Pacifiers. Sold at retailers in the Los Angeles area from 11/2007 - 11/2008.
- Stork Craft Manufacturing, Inc: Stork Craft Baby Cribs. Sold at major retail stores and online from 5/2000 - 1/2009.
- The Land of Nod: Rolling Toy Xylophones. Sold at retail stores nationwide, in The Land of Nod catalog and on their website from 10/2007 - 3/2008.
- Fisher-Price Simplicity, Inc. and SFCA, Inc: Rainforest Portable Play Yards. Sold at retailers and specialty children's stores from 1/2007 - 1/2009.
- Infantino LLC: Lion and Lamb Grabby Rattles. Sold at Walmart, Babies "r" Us and other retail stores nationwide from 5/2007 - 9/2008.
- The Land of Nod: Children's Canopy. Sold at The Land of Nod stores, in their catalog and on their website from 9/2003 - 10/2005.
- Dorel Juvenile Group USA: Safety 1st Stair Gates. Sold at mass merchandise and juvenile product stores nationwide from 1/2005 - 12/2007.
- Playland International: Swing Sets. Sold by Playland International Dealers from 9/2001 - 5/2006.
- Disney Stores USA, LLC: Playhouse Disney "Handy Manny" Toy Tool Sets. Sold The Disney Store nationwide from 10/2007 - 1/2009.
- Evenflo Company, Inc: Evenflo Activity Centers. Sold at mass merchandise and juvenile product stores nationwide from 10/2006 - 2/2009.

For more recall information:

- ➔ Call CPSC at (800) 638-2772.
- ➔ New Federal Website launched: www.recalls.gov
- ➔ CPSC's website: www.cpsc.gov **OR**
- ➔ Contact The Child Care Connection for more information on how to view the recalls online.

*Congratulations
to the following
newly registered
Family Day Care
Provider
In
Otsego County

James Stark*

Child Care Connection Training Schedule

Important: For trainings located at Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta, please use the rear entrance, opposite the parking garage on Water Street. There will be no food allowed in the training room.

Regulations Pertaining to Child Day Care

- **Mar. 18: 7:00 - 9:00 PM:** Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta. Cost \$25.00. Registration deadline: 3/4.

First Aid Recertification Class

- **Apr. 8: 7:00 - 9:00 PM:** Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta. Cost \$25.00. Registration Deadline: 3/26.

Infant/Toddler Workshop: Meaningful Meals

- **May 7: 7:00 - 9:00 PM:** Presbyterian Church, 27 Church Street, Cooperstown. Guest Presenter: Wendy Sullivan, Infant/Toddler Specialist, Capital District Child Care Council. There will be no charge for this training.

Mandatory CACFP

- **May 20: 7:00 - 8:30 PM:** Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta. This is the first of two Mandatory CACFP trainings offered in 2009. There will be one more class in September to satisfy the 2009 requirement. Every provider participating in CACFP **must** attend a yearly mandatory training. No cost for CACFP participating providers. Registration deadline: 5/6.

Red Cross First Aid

- **May 27: 6:30 - 9:30 PM:** Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta. Cost \$40.00. Registration deadline: 5/13.



SAVE THE DATE!

July 22nd

Red Cross Infant/
Child CPR Re-cert
6:30 - 9:30 PM at
Foxcare Center
\$25.00

Check out the training calendar on our website. Changes and updates will be listed there.

www.childcareconnectionny.com

SUNY VIDEOCONFERENCES

Call SUNY to register: (518) 443-5940

www.tsg.suny.edu/videoconferencing.shtm

Free training for child care providers sponsored by NYS OCFS and SUNY Early Childhood Education & Training Program. Videoconferences begin promptly at 6:45 pm at Catholic Charities, 176 Main St., Oneonta. Participants **must** register for all videoconferences through SUNY.

Please Note: Those registered for videoconferences should use the rear entrance, opposite the parking garage on Water Street. **There will be no food allowed in the training room.**

How Children Learn and How We Teach

- Mar. 26 6:45 - 9:15 PM

Fostering Communication Skills

- Apr. 30 6:45 - 9:15 PM

Appropriate Learning Materials

- May 14 6:45 - 9:15 PM

Funding Sources

SUNY Training Strategies Group (518) 443-5940

- Medication Administration Training Grant Program
www.tsg.suny.edu/matgrant.shtm
- NYS Educational Incentive Program
www.tsg.suny.edu/eip.shtm
- Health and Safety Training Rebate
www.tsg.suny.edu/hs_rebate.shtm

OCFS Start-Up Grants for Family Day Care and Group Family Day Care within Otsego County:

- Catholic Charities Child Care Services
(607) 432-0061 / (866) 814-1117
childcare@charitiesccdo.org

OCFS Start-Up and Health and Safety Grants for Day Care Centers and School Age Child Care Programs:

- Early Childhood Development Programs RFP
(518) 473-6233 / kathy.aunkst@dfa.state.ny.us
www.ocfs.state.ny.us

Regulatory Information

Group Family Day Care / Day Care Center

Office of Children and Family Services

155 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210
Ph: (518) 402-3038 / Fax: (518) 473-0492
www.ocfs.state.ny.us

The NYS OCFS Bureau of Training now offers **FREE 24/7 online Mandated Reporter Training in Child Abuse and Neglect/Maltreatment.** You can register anytime by visiting www.nysmandatedreporter.org. The training takes 2 hours to complete. You will receive an online certificate upon completion.

Training Series

Please call
The
Child Care
Connection
for more
information
or to
register at

(607) 432-0061
or
Toll-free in
Otsego Co:
(866) 814-1117

Community News and Training Opportunities

Medication Administration Training

For more information or to register for a class call Public Health Nursing:
(607) 547-4230

For more information on MAT Training, or for a MAT Training Voucher, visit:
www.tsg.suny.edu/matgrant.shtm

Health Care Consultancy

Child Care Connection offers Health Care Consultants through Otsego County Public Health Nursing for registered or licensed programs in Otsego County. The Health Care Consultants and their phone numbers are as follows:

- **Jean Lilja (607) 547-4383**

SUNY Educational Incentive Program

(518) 443-5940

www.tsg.suny.edu/eip.shtm

The **Educational Incentive Program (EIP)** can be used to pay for all types of training, from college courses, to workshops, CPR & First Aid classes and full day conferences. You can receive a 2009 EIP application from Catholic Charities or online at www.tsg.suny.edu/eip.shtm. Child Care Connection staff can help you complete the application if you have questions. Applications should be completed as soon as you know you will be taking a training so that your application can be approved prior to the start of the training. Training certificates will need to be sent as proof of training attendance.

RADON TEST KITS

If you are a provider who needs to have a radon test completed, you may contact Cathy Chase at Otsego County Public Health at (607) 547-4230 for Radon information and to arrange to have a test kit mailed to you. You may receive one free radon test kit through Otsego County Public Health.

Food Safety for Family Day Care Providers

is an online mini-course designed for child care providers. The next four week course session begins on April 15. For more information and to register, go to www.umassone.net/foodsafetydaycare/index.html

The **Oneonta Water Lab** will be increasing the cost of water tests from \$30.00 to \$35.00 effective March 1, 2009!



Otsego County Public Health Nursing Services

Immunization Clinic services are open to the public. Children under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian (for informed consent). It is very important that you keep track of your child's shot record and bring it with you every time you come to the clinic. **Please call Public Health if you have any questions. (607) 432-4410 in Oneonta or (607) 547-4230 in Cooperstown.**

March 2009

*Not available at time of printing

April 2009

*Not available at time of printing

May 2009

*Not available at time of printing

Please call Public Health for the Current Immunization Clinic schedule.

**Week of the Young Child 2009
is
April 18th-25th.**

WOYC Parade — April 23rd
Gather on the corner of
Chestnut St. Ext. and Main St.
at 9:45 am
Bubble man to follow at the YMCA

FAMILY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF NYS, INC. 2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 20 & 21, 2009
The Sagamore
Bolton Landing on Lake George
Up to 15.5 training hours available
For more information, visit
www.fccanys.org

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month

2009 NYS Child Abuse Prevention Conference

April 20 - 22, 2009
The Marriott Hotel, Albany, NY
Visit
www.preventchildabuse.org
for more information

What's in the Regulations...

417.9 Discipline(FDC/GFDC)
418-1.9 Discipline (Day Care Centers)

417.9 Discipline

(a) The family day care provider must establish written disciplinary guidelines and provide copies of these guidelines to all caregivers and parents. These guidelines must include acceptable methods of guiding the behavior of children. Discipline must be administered in such a way as to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care. The caregiver must use acceptable techniques and approaches to help children solve problems.

(b) Any discipline used must relate to the child's action and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the caregiver so that the child is aware of the relationship between his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.

(c) Isolating a child in a closet, darkened area, or any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by the caregiver is prohibited.

(d) Where a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child must be placed in an area where he or she is in the view of, and can be supervised and supported by, the caregiver. Interaction between the caregiver and the child must take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior. Separation of a child from the group in a manner other than that provided for in this subdivision is prohibited.

(e) Corporal punishment is prohibited. For the purposes of this Part, the term corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body including, but not limited to, spanking, biting, shaking, slapping, twisting or squeezing; demanding excessive physical exercise, prolonged lack of movement or motion, or strenuous or bizarre postures; and compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth soap, foods, hot spices or other substances.

(f) Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited.

(g) Discipline may be administered only by the caregiver.

(h) Methods of discipline, interaction or toilet training which frighten, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited.

418-1.9 Discipline

(a) The child day care center must establish written disciplinary guidelines and provide copies of these guidelines to all staff and parents of children in care at the center. These guidelines must include acceptable methods of guiding the behavior of children. Discipline must be administered in such a way as to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care. The staff must use acceptable techniques and approaches to help children solve problems.

(b) Any discipline used must relate to the child's action and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the staff so that the child is aware of the relationship between his or her actions and the consequences of those actions.

(c) Isolating a child in a closet, darkened area, or any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by a staff member is prohibited.

(d) Where a child's behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to the child, others or property, or seriously disrupts or is likely to seriously disrupt group interaction, the child may be separated briefly from the group, but only for as long as is necessary for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child must be placed in an area where he or she is in the view of, and can be supervised and supported by, a staff member. Interaction between a staff member and the child must take place immediately following the separation to guide the child toward appropriate group behavior. Separation of a child from the group in a manner other than that provided for in this subdivision is prohibited.

(e) Corporal punishment is prohibited. For the purposes of this Subpart, the term corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body including, but not limited to, spanking, biting, shaking, slapping, twisting or squeezing; demanding excessive physical exercise, prolonged lack of movement or motion, or strenuous or bizarre postures; and compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth soap, foods, hot spices or other substances.

(f) Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited.

(g) Discipline may be administered only by the caregiver.

(h) Methods of discipline, interaction or toilet training which frighten, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited.

For more information on NYS OCFS Day Care Regulations, visit:

www.ocfs.state.ny.us



Child and Adult Care Food Program

Food for Thought

Minute Menu!

Congratulations to everyone for completing the first month on the new system!

- A reminder for those using the **full bubble forms** not to staple, fold, mark the forms that you will be submitting to us! Don't forget to fill in all the sections and sign everywhere designated. Also, don't forget to submit your CIF form with your forms!
- For those using the **online version**, please be careful not to duplicate children that have been in your program in the **recent past** by enrolling them as new children. Instead, update the information on the withdrawn child, print the enrollment, have it signed and submit it to us.
- Those of you using the **online version** should now try to plan out your meals for the month and make some meal templates for your favorite meals or snacks!

SELECTING BUDGET-FRIENDLY HEALTH FOOD

Eating healthy is often perceived to cost a fortune. There are several ways that careful shoppers can save money while still making healthy choices.

- Applesauce, unsweetened, with added vitamin C. Serve it warm or cold, with or without added cinnamon. It can also be used as a dip. Stir it into vanilla yogurt or warm oatmeal or to top whole wheat pancakes.
- Beans are one of the best ways to save money while getting plenty of protein. By replacing two or three meat-based meals a week with beans, you can really stretch grocery dollars. An added benefit is that you will also be increasing fiber intake and reducing saturated fat intake. Try these options: black beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), kidney beans, pinto beans, refried beans, hummus, lentils, and dried peas.
- Multigrain or Whole Wheat Pasta is more nutritious than traditional pasta. Though sometimes it can cost more, it can be mixed with one or two other items for an inexpensive meal.
- Tomato paste, is a nutrient powerhouse that can be used alone or to coat pizza crust or tortillas before adding cheese. It can be mixed with crushed tomatoes and spices to create homemade pasta sauce.
- Yogurt is often overlooked as a source of protein, calcium and vitamin D. 32 ounce containers represent a cost savings over smaller containers. Low-fat vanilla yogurt can be served on its own or topped with fruit, granola or nuts. By adding a small amount of juice you can create your own flavors. Plain yogurt can be used in recipes. ~ *Potpourri*, February 2009, Association for Child Development

**For more information on the
Child and Adult Care Food Program:**

www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/consumer/nutrition.htm
NYS Department of Health Division of Nutrition
150 6FL W, Albany, NY 12204-2719
(800) 942-3858



Spring Vegetable Hash

2 teaspoons oil ♦ 1 onion, chopped small ♦ 1 potato, chopped small ♦ 1 carrot, chopped small ♦ 1 bunch asparagus (or 1/2 pound), chopped ♦ 1 cup chicken broth ♦ salt and pepper to taste ♦ 8 eggs, fried or poached (optional)

Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium high heat. Cook onion, potatoes and carrots over medium high heat until lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Stir often. Add asparagus and broth. Cook until asparagus is soft, about 3-5 minutes. Continue to cook until broth has cooked away and bottom of hash is crispy. Serve each portion of has topped with an egg, if desired.

Just Say Yes to Fruits & Vegetables Cookbook



Black Beans and Rice

1 tablespoon vegetable oil ♦ 1 onion, chopped ♦ 1 green pepper, chopped ♦ 2 garlic cloves, minced ♦ 1 can diced tomatoes (14.5 ounces) ♦ 2 cups cooked black beans ♦ 1 teaspoon chili powder ♦ 1 1/2 cups uncooked brown or white rice ♦ salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion, green pepper and garlic. Cook until soft. Stir in tomatoes, black beans, 3 cups water, and chili powder. Bring to a boil and stir in rice. Reduce heat, cover, and cook until rice is cooked, about 30-40 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes and then serve. Refrigerate leftovers.

Just Say Yes to Fruits & Vegetables Cookbook



Cranberry Orange Nut Bread

1 cup rolled oats, instant or old fashioned ♦ 1 1/4 cups orange juice, heated ♦ 3/4 cup butter, softened ♦ 1 1/4 cups brown sugar ♦ 1/2 cup reduced fat sour cream or plain yogurt ♦ 2 teaspoons grated orange peel ♦ 1 egg ♦ 2 1/2 cups flour ♦ 2 teaspoons baking powder ♦ 1/2 teaspoon baking soda ♦ 1/2 teaspoon salt ♦ 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon ♦ 1 1/4 cups chopped cranberries ♦ 1/2 cup walnuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mist two loaf pans with cooking spray. Stir together oats and hot orange juice. Let stand for 5 minutes. Beat butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Add oat mixture, sour cream or yogurt, orange peel and egg, blend well. In a separate bowl combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Add dry ingredients to wet ones, mix. Fold in cranberries and nuts. Spoon batter into pans, smooth. Bake for 50 - 60 minutes. Cool.

**Potpourri Feb. 2009 / published by the Assoc. for Child Dev.*





The Child Care Connection
A Program of Catholic Charities
of Delaware & Otsego Counties
176 Main Street
Oneonta, New York 13820

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the biggest killer of babies over one month old in developed nations. What SIDS actually is, though, is a mystery. Recently, some chance observations may shed light on causes.

According to **The Economist** (July 5, 2008), post mortem data from SIDS victims has revealed that nerve cells which regulate basic bodily functions, including breathing and body temperature, are more numerous and less mature than they are in other babies. Those cells communicate using a messenger molecule called serotonin. Recently, Italian researchers who were investigating serotonin's role in aggression found that changes in serotonin levels frequently resulted in death from abnormally low heart rate and hypothermia.

The research suggests that genetics may explain some cases of SIDS. In the past explanations have concentrated on environmental factors such as smoking habits of parents and babies' sleeping positions. These conditions certainly are involved in SIDS deaths. However, research on possible genetic factors may make it possible for babies to be screened for those at risk, giving parents an alert to take suitable precautions.

***Reprinted from "Exchange Everyday,"
a daily online excerpt from articles printed in
Child Care Exchange magazine.*

Discoloration of Children's Teeth

If you have noticed a discoloration to a child's teeth (often the teeth appear gray) and are wondering what the explanation could be, it could be one of several causes. One thing that can cause stains on the teeth when they erupt is if tetracycline (or an antibiotic similar to it) was taken prenatally.

Other causes of gray looking teeth could include a mouth injury. Poor dental hygiene and food stains could cause the problem. It is important that children's teeth are brushed once they come in. Medications that the child has taken or infections that the child has had could be at the root of the problem, as could some diseases of the liver and the blood. Also problems with the enamel on the teeth could be an explanation, however this is rare.

As you can see, the different causes range in seriousness from cosmetic to health risk. Because of the many different possible causes, it is best for parents to talk to the child's doctor and come up with a treatment plan, if necessary. The doctor will also be able to tell you if stain removal is possible.

*Written using information found in the
"on call kids' health" section on
Parenting.com.*