

take the child's perspective

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By Darrin F. Coe, MA

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Over 90 per cent of American parents rely on physical punishment to correct children's behavior, according to The Journal of Sociology. 1999.

That statistic scares me. I'd like every parent or person in a position of trust to take the child's perspective before you impose physical punishment.

How would feel if you were only three feet tall and an adult was looming over you, yelling, screaming, and swinging their hands in your direction? Consider the fear this could instill. Imagine the confusion as the person who is supposed to nurture you, and provide you with safety, imposes some level of inescapable pain on you. Would you scream, cry, act out, or run away?

We should ask ourselves, "What are we teaching children by imposing physical punishment?" I see a moral paradox in teaching a child not to hit by hitting them or teaching them not to scream by yelling at them.

One of the most trying times in many parents day is bedtime. Parents seem to think that children should automatically fall asleep. Perhaps paddling or shouting will intimidate them enough to "shut up and go to sleep" when it's not automatic. Take the child's perspective. Have you ever had insomnia? Would getting slapped out of frustration convince you to fall asleep? Have you ever tossed and turned all night? Do you sleep well when you're scared? Children are no different.

Adults have options to help them get to sleep. Children are required to lay in bed, quiet and still whether they are tired or not. Eventually, they'll sleep but consider the trauma they may experience in the process.

Behavioral psychology teaches that rewarding positive behavior is more effective than punishing undesirable behavior. Developmental psychology has found soothing sounds, calm environments, and structure positively impact behavior.

Stop punishing and start rewarding. Figure out what you want your children to do and reward them for it. Rewards can be complimenting and praising them, small pieces of candy, time spent playing a favorite game, time spent watching a favorite television show, or anything else special to the child.

Acknowledge them as children who are loved and nurtured.

High energy, breaking things, not paying attention, spilling things, running wild and being loud are part of being a child. Children are not miniature adults and shouldn't be expected to act like adults.

Darrin F. Coe holds a master's degree in professional psychology and is the father of two pre-school boys. contact at <http://dcoe1.tripod.com>

Ten Things You Should Know Before Buying

By Michelle Andrews

Your young child's playtime is his first real learning experience, and toys can act as catalysts in your child's growth. The benefits of educational toys are many and varied, and by choosing the right toys, you create an environment that is fun and conducive to learning vital skills.

But currently it is hard to find what you need if you do not know what you are looking for. With a million toys on the market today, it is tough to pick out the best combinations of fun and learning. However, every beneficial toy should be fun, safe, and help the child develop and exercise some skill. When faced with so many choices, asking yourself some simple questions about your child's development can help you make the best selection.

The following is a list of characteristics you should look for in a good, educational toy:

- 1.Sensory attraction: How many senses will the toy occupy? Does it respond to and with lights, sounds, or movement? Is it colorful? Does it have a smell or a texture?
- 2.Activation method: Will the toy provide a challenge without frustrating your child? Will it be a fun and rewarding experience?
- 3.Self-expression: Will the toy allow your child to express himself, be creative, and make choices?
- 4.Success potential: How many "correct" ways are there to play with the toy? Can play be open-ended with no right or wrong responses? Will the toy adapt to your child's ability and style?
- 5.Ways of use: Can the toy be used in many different positions? Can it be used in different kinds of play?
- 6.Popularity: Is it a popular toy? Can it be tied-in with other media such as storybooks, television or movies?
- 7.Flexibility: Does it have adjustable volume, speed, and level of difficulty?
- 8.Opportunities for interaction: Does the toy provide a chance for you or other children to be involved? Will it build social skills?
- 9.Individuality and growth: Will the toy engage your child in activities that indicate the child's developmental age and growth? Does it reflect the child's interests?
- 10.Safety and durability: Is the toy durable, considering your child's age and strength? Is it safe?

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So, giving your child the right toys will be benefit for all. Your child's play time is not only a time of fun and development for them, but can also be a great way for you to relax and enjoy your child's company. With educational toys, you can follow, supervise and direct your child's development, and find great thrill and amusement in their playtime activities.

Michelle Andrews, a former middle school teacher who now stays home with his three children. He wrote "Parent's Guide on How to Raise a Smart Child by Choosing the Right Educational Toys." Visit his Website EducationaltoysGuide.com at



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