

A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, smiling broadly. He is carrying a young child with dark, curly hair on his shoulders. The child is also smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

**BARBARA BURROWS**  
**PARENTING**

M A G A Z I N E

[www.barbaraburrows.com](http://www.barbaraburrows.com)

**Summer tips for parents from a child**

**Your baby's crying in the first few months of life • Standing By and Admiring  
Sleeping beauty • Sleeping like a baby • Getting a toddler to sleep**

**CANADA'S LEADING PARENT EDUCATION SERVICE • FATHER'S DAY ISSUE – JUNE 2002**

**BARBARA BURROWS**  
**PARENTING**  
 M A G A Z I N E  
 (formerly Parent to Parent Magazine)  
 Canada's leading parent education service

**Publisher**

Your paper Name Here  
 (905) 000-0000

Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine is published 6 times per year in conjunction with the Newspaper partners across Ontario in May, June, August, October, November and April.

**Founder and Director**

Barbara Burrows

**Executive Editor**

Barbara Burrows

**Managing Editor**

Angela Greenway

**Creative/Production**

Michelle Sharp

**Barbara Burrows Parenting**  
 3516 Mainway Drive  
 Burlington, ON L7M 1A8  
 Phone (905) 335-8803  
 Fax (905) 332-4611  
 E-mail: [bburrows1@cogeco.ca](mailto:bburrows1@cogeco.ca)

Readers are encouraged to submit parenting questions, their own stories or experiences to "Our Readers Share" and of course comment on anything in Letters to the Editor.

No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine, and Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine will not be held liable for any damages or losses, however sustained, as a result of the reliance on or use by a reader or any person on any of the information, opinions, or products expressed or otherwise contained herein. Where appropriate, professional advice should be sought.

Copyright Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine  
 June 2002

For information on bringing Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine to your community, call (905) 335-8803.

# Summer tips for parents from a child

**I** asked this twelve year old I know very well what we should be telling its readers about how to have a great summer with their kids. The conversation went something like this

**Him:** Tell parents to take their kids to Dairy Queen more often.

**Me:** What if parents are not willing to do that?

**Him:** Well, then parents should suggest a game to play instead so kids will still be happy.

**Him:** Parents should make sure kids don't get bored.

**Me:** How should parents do that?

**Him:** Be flexible. Let them play and do what they want. Let kid priorities come first.

**Him:** Give kids extra allowance so they can go bowling.

**Me:** What if parents don't have any extra money?

**Him:** Then the kids can do odd jobs like clean the car or something to earn some money.

**Him:** Kids should get to take a holiday from having to clean up their room.

**Me:** So who will do it?

**Him:** Well, let's say kids do their room only once a week.

**Him:** Let kids watch as much television as they want and stay up as late as they want.

**Me:** What if they become over-tired couch potatoes?

**Him:** So what — it's summer!!

So parents, throw caution to the wind. Your recipe for a great summer according to the kids is 1) either go to Dairy Queen or play games, 2) put your needs at the bottom of the list, 3) live in a pigpen and 4) be surrounded by crabby, over-stimulated monsters.

I started to write some serious stuff here and then

thought maybe that value of this piece is the humour. In a way, it doesn't really tell parents much about kids needs or their own, and I think it seems a little preachy to say "the poor kid ... only asks for a little love and attention in the summer! Working parents will love us for saying that! Probably should delete the serious stuff, but I leave it for your consideration. But wait ... maybe there is a helpful message here. This child asks for parents to play games if the Dairy Queen is out of the question; he asks that the normal pressure of daily life be relaxed in summer somewhat;

I just can't wait for summer! ☺

*Angela*

**What's Up?**



**ANGELA GREENWAY**  
 Managing Editor

JUNE 2002

**What's inside?**

**WHAT'S UP?**

**Summer tips for parents from a child**

by Angela Greenway

**TIP FOR BABIES**

**Your baby's crying in the first few months of life**

by Dr. Peter Sutton

**TIPS FOR KIDS**

**Standing By and Admiring**

**GOOD BOOKS**

**Sleeping like a baby**

**LETTERS****TIPS FOR TOTS**

**Getting a toddler to sleep**

**BOOKS FOR CHILDREN****FEATURES**

**Sleeping beauty**

by Abbey James

**What will you be when you grow up?**

by Peter Baylies

Dear Barbara returns next issue so we may make room for comments from readers of Barbara Burrows weekly Q/A newspaper column.

# Tip for Babies – Your baby's crying in the first few months of life

by Dr. Peter Sutton

*Dr. Peter Sutton is a child psychiatrist, a psychoanalyst and a member of the Canadian Association of Psychoanalytic Child Therapists. He was Head of the infant Program in the Department of Psychiatry at the Hospital for Sick Children from 1986 to 1995.*

**A** baby's ability to cry is well developed at birth. It is important for survival. It is our baby's means of signalling to us, the parents. We have to act as a "decoder" or interpreter. Broadly, the cry indicates that something is not right and stops when you make things right - babies do not suffer in silence. In the first few months of life crying is also a means of just saying, "Stay close, hold me". In other words, it is an early "attachment behaviour": it makes sure that you stay close to protect, comfort and learn about this new little person. Our baby needs us to try to find out what will help her or him settle down, and as we get better at it, the baby begins to get a sense that the world is a good place and we begin to get a sense that we can understand and make a difference to our baby.

Most infants cry often in the first three to four months of life - relatively little when they



## Excessive crying may be a signal for parents...

are first born, increasing a lot during the first six weeks of life and then decreasing. During these early weeks parents learn to figure out what might be distressing their baby. This is what it means to be a good interpreter. We learn to recognize when our baby is hungry, in pain, over stimulated, upset from being dressed or undressed or cold or hot or startled. In all these cases, we make a guess and

see whether what we do helps the infant. But babies in this early infant period (one to three or four months) will still cry. Holding them helps and reduces but does not abolish the crying altogether.

This early relationship can be disrupted when the infant's cry is too upsetting to us and we become angry and rejecting, feeling that the baby is rejecting our best efforts, or when the baby stirs something in us. For example, a mother who had been sexually abused in her childhood could not bear the movement of her infant's legs over her breasts when she held her baby close, because it reminded her of that abuse, so she had trouble soothing him. Another mother found her baby's crying "inexplicable" or "absurd" and so very irritating and impossible to empathize with. When she was helped to understand what her baby might be crying about and she came to understand her baby as a little human person, she was able to find the right way to soothe her daughter.

As parents, we can expect a certain amount of crying and for the most part, this works to help establish a strong attachment between parent and child. Excessive crying may be a signal for parents to explore deeper physical (digestive irregularities — colic) and emotional causes. ➤

## Barbara Burrows Parenting International Advisory Board

*Advisors to Barbara Burrows are professionals with extensive experience in both clinical work and research in child development. They are committed to helping families resolve the underlying difficulties that lead to psychological symptoms in children, without the use of medication wherever possible.*

*The members of the advisory board contribute articles to the magazine on a regular basis, and oversee the professional integrity of articles published in the magazine.*

*This advisory board insures that material printed in Barbara Burrows' publication reflects the body of knowledge developed by child psychoanalysts, together with developmentalists (attachment theory, developmental neurobiology and infant research).*

### **Thomas F. Barrett Ph.D.**

Clinical Psychologist, Child/Adolescent Psychoanalyst, Director and Faculty Member, Cleveland Center for Research in Child Development and Hanna Perkins School.

### **Sylvia Brody Ph.D.**

Post graduate work at The Menninger Foundation, Author of five books, numerous papers and seven films on maternal behaviour on infant and child development, Extensive clinical research in infant and child development.

### **James W. Deutsch M.D. Ph.D. F.R.C.P. (C)**

Graduate of Yale University (M.D.) and California Institute of Technology (Ph.D.), Director of Youthdale Psychiatric Crisis Service, Youthdale Treatment Centre, Toronto.

### **Judith Deutsch M.S.W**

Clinical Social Worker, Graduate of University of California at Berkeley, Post-Graduate Studies at Mount Zion Hospital Psychiatric Clinic, California.

### **Margaret-Ann Fitzpatrick-Hanly Ph.D.**

Psychoanalyst, Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry, U. of Toronto. Faculty - Toronto Institute of Psychoanalysis, Editor of a book on masochism, author of several papers on psychoanalysis & literature.

### **Erna Furman**

Faculty Member Department of Psychiatry, Case Western Reserve School of Medicine, Cleveland Psychoanalytic Society; Author of seven books and over 180 articles on child development, many of which have been translated into German, Dutch, Finnish, Spanish, Italian, & Polish and have been the topics of some 450 presentations to scientific and lay audiences.

### **Robert A. Furman M.D.**

Pediatrician, Psychoanalyst, Training & Supervising Child, Adolescent & Adult Psychoanalyst, Author of numerous papers on childhood development, published in both North America and Europe.

### **Norman Rosenblod Ph.D.**

Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst, Professor Emeritus of Humanities McMaster University Member of Faculty -Toronto Institute of Psychoanalysis.

### **Otto Weininger Ph. D, C. Psych.**

Clinical Psychologist - Psychoanalyst, Member of Faculty - Toronto Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Professor Emeritus O.I.S.E., U of T - Toronto, Author of 12 books and numerous papers.

# BARBARA BURROWS PARENTING MAGAZINE

## Mandate

**B**arbara Burrows Parenting Magazine provides insightful information that helps parents gain a deeper understanding into their children's behaviour, themselves and family dynamics. The goal is to help parents raise emotionally healthy, happy, responsible children.

The publication acknowledges how many "right" approaches there can be to parenting — as many approaches as there are mothers, fathers and children. Barbara Burrows Parenting believes that the "RIGHT" approach helps parents and children build their relationships.

Barbara Burrows Parenting provides expert opinion, current research and clinical findings from an international network of professionals in normal and abnormal psychological development. Barbara Burrows Parenting also relies on parents to share their own solutions to difficult child-rearing dilemmas. All editorial is presented in an enjoyable and easy-to-read format. ◀

## About Barbara Burrows

**B**arbara Burrows is a psycho-therapist in private practice. She is founder of Parent to Parent Magazine and Positive Parenting. In 1999, these companies merged to form Barbara Burrows Parenting. Her syndicated column runs in newspapers across Canada.

Barbara helps parents raise emotionally healthy children and experience joy in parenting. After graduating from McMaster University in sociology and psychology, she worked to help parents with children's behaviour in Hamilton at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals before developing her own parent education program.

She and her husband have two daughters and a son, and live in Burlington Ontario. ▶

In researching various approaches to parent education, CBC TV's "the fifth estate" found that parents made the most gains with Barbara Burrows.

## GOOD BOOKS - MORE THAN A REVIEW

# Sleeping Like a Baby

**Avi Sadeh**  
**Yale University Press**  
**ISBN 0-300-08824-8**  
**www.yale.edu/yup**  
**Hard cover - US \$19.95**

**S**leeping Like a Baby outlines much of what is known through scientific research about sleep as well as thinking about the psychological influences that can determine whether or not babies, children or even adults sleep well.

Dr. Sadeh is Director of The Laboratory for Children's Sleep Disorders, Department of Psychology at Tel-Aviv University and draws very much on his extensive clinical experience with sleep disorders in infants and young children.

He points out the parents whose children may later be diagnosed as "hyperactive" often report sleep difficulties that have been ongoing from infancy. Adequate sleep is required also for good cognitive functioning. The need for a "good night's sleep" for both parents and their children must not be underestimated.

This book explores in a clear way the psychological issues that may interfere with developing good sleep habits. Sadeh states "sleep is the most sensitive barometer of emotional stress, tension and anxiety". (P54) Adults may wake up many times during the night to check the clock if they must get up earlier than usual for some reason. If we have something on our minds, we don't sleep as well. 3-year-old Lisa, it turned out, was waking at night in response to her mother's sadness since the death of her mother. Once this was uncovered at Sadeh's clinic, Lisa's mother spoke with her, assuring her that she didn't need her help at night, that she would be fine. To everyone's surprise, Lisa again began to sleep all night again immediately. (P55).

A chapter on soothing techniques speaks of the importance of a child developing the ability to calm herself and to attain in inner sense of stability in times of distress. Sadeh points out the sleep means a separation from parents (even if the baby sleeps with the parents, when he closes his eyes and withdraws into sleep, he is separate.) He explores different ways parents can help their children develop the emotional space that allows children to be comfortable enough to separate and go to sleep. Transitional objects are helpful here - teddy bears, blankies, thumbs, soothers - anything that reminds the baby or child of the

nurturing given by the beloved parents and allows the baby to soothe himself in a way that feels nearly as good.

The book explores the pros and cons of babies and children sleeping with parents, nightmares and night terrors and frequent and ongoing nighttime waking. (Dr. Sadeh says waking 1-2 times per night is pretty average for babies and nothing to worry about.) Chapters are dedicated to sleep apnoea, breathing disorders and sudden infant death.

Then the book discusses various approaches about what to do. It outlines a number of popular techniques and does say the "cold turkey" approach - just leaving children to cry it out - does upset many children to the point that they are less able to settle down and get to sleep. He speaks of two main tactics - 1st "checking" and 2nd "constant presence". "Checking" is the method of periodically going to check on the crying baby; "constant presence" means slowly weaning the baby from each parental dependency, until she can fall asleep alone. Although his short-term study showed babies learned to sleep with both approaches equally well, other research has shown, that in the long run, babies and children do better when changes in their lives are introduced gradually, making the 2nd (constant presence) the far superior approach in my opinion.

Suggesting that "checking" is a sound technique seemed to contradict earlier insightful information that the causes of sleeping difficulties can be quite complex (due to either the parents' or child's emotional pressures, for example). Sadeh's clinical work outlined many thoughtful examples where all factors coming into play in the child's (and parent's) life were considered (therapeutic intervention) to help with sleep problems.

This book made clear the connection between sleeping disorders and children labelled "hyperactive" later in life. I don't think it stressed enough the importance of searching for the underlying difficulties, in some cases at least, and not just leaving babies or children to cry with parents "checking". This approach may get babies to sleep, but if the underlying cause of sleep difficulties has to do with anxiety, and this is not addressed, the anxiety will lead to a new "difficult" behaviour.

One invaluable chapter is how to prevent sleep disorders in the first place. Research has shown that mothers who were educated during pregnancy on how to prevent sleep disorders fared better than those who were not once the babies arrived. ▶



## FEATURE

# WHAT WILL YOU BE when you grow up?

by Peter Baylies

Publisher of "At Home Dad" Newsletter

www.athomedad.com

Two years ago as my six-year-old daughter and I were exploring in the woods behind our house, she told me she was going to be a plant scientist or maybe a blood scientist when she grew up. I was a few feet ahead of her and did not turn around when I answered, "Both of those ideas are great! You know your mom is a blood scientist." Then I heard her footsteps stop, and I turned around to find her. Our eyes made contact, and she asked, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" I laughed at first, then thought her question deserved a sincere answer. My response to her at that moment was, "I don't know, but I'm really enjoying being your dad right now." Her question and her quiet acceptance of my response were clear signs to me that I had accomplished something worthwhile the past year and a half that I had spent at home with her.

When I was my daughter's age, I dreamed, along with my male friends, that I would be a policeman or fireman or something of the like. My two most serious dreams as I entered my high school years were to be a professional football player (all 5'7", 160 lbs. of me) or a sports writer. I never included dad in my list of what I wanted to be because I think I sensed even then that fathering was beside the point of what we boys were going to be when we grew up. I remember that several of my female friends dreamed of being moms someday, and I remember thinking that must be exclusively the dream of young women.

When my wife gave birth to Liza the summer before my ninth year of teaching, I was the second human being to hold her to my chest. As I raised her face toward mine that evening, she managed to breathe new life into me, even through the surgical mask that I



selfishly wanted to remove. I instantly felt a passion for her that I had never felt for my career. Suddenly, fathering was not beside the point. It was precisely the point for my being on this planet. Being a dad consumed me. I realized I had to get a grip only a few weeks after Liza was born. A well-meaning nurse stuck a small needle into Liza's heel to draw some blood, and Liza looked at me as if to say, "How can you let her do this to me?" and then let go a hair-raising scream. I turned away and wiped my tears. It was only a heel stick!

After Liza's birth, that common question, "What do you do?" began to bother me, but I continued to respond, "I'm a teacher." The question, of course, should be more specific, perhaps "What do you do to earn money to support your family?" or "How do you spend

**"I don't know, but I'm really enjoying being your dad right now."**

your day away from your family?" I was always tempted to answer that shorter and more general question with, "Don't you know I have a daughter now? That's what I do." Oh, the reactions I get when I do make it known that I stay at

home with my daughter! The first reaction is usually a sincere "Gosh, that must be nice!" or "Wow, I wish I could do that!" It's the second question that usually upsets me. It goes something like this. "How long are you going to do that?" or "Are you just taking a break from your job?" or "Are you going to start an at-home business?" or, the worst of the worst, "What do you do all day long?" I wonder if stay-at-home moms must also answer those second questions. Obviously, the necessity for two incomes is a major factor in this concern for many stay-at-home dads, but I

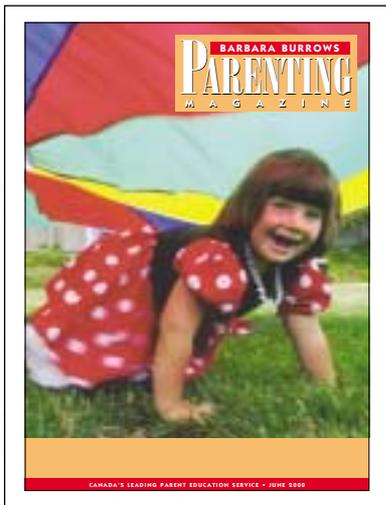
think another, more significant factor is at play here. You folks out there and we stay-at-home dads in our laundry rooms see men primarily as wage earners for the family.

How strange it must seem to society that a man might actually prefer to be at home with his one or more children. Perhaps it even seems a bit strange to those of us who are doing it. I've been asked if my relationship with Liza has changed significantly since I began staying at home. My answer is yes, definitely. I now have time to participate in paragraphs of conversations with her, not just brief sentences. I now have the energy to give her my undivided attention for much longer periods of time. I no longer feel guilty when I tell her that I need some time alone and then take that time. Neither Liza nor I feel the pressure of cramming in quality time, so we're more relaxed together. I can't tell you how many bombs that has diffused.

Society needs accountants, teachers, computer scientists, doctors, lawyers, professional football players, sports writers, fire fighters, law enforcement officers, etc. Society also needs children and attentive parents to help them feel safe and loved. It is sometimes necessary and perhaps even preferable for an adult to be both a parent and a wage earner. When the double role is not necessary and not preferred, though, it should not matter whether it is the father or the mother who chooses to stay at home.

I suppose I have worn many hats in my thirty-eight years, but today I am a dad. I've never been more at peace or more proud of myself. Ask me what I am, and I will tell you I am a parent. Ask me what I do, and I will tell you I spend time with my child. I hope my generation is able to raise children, both boys and girls, who feel comfortable in answering those questions in the same way. ◀

*Reprinted with permission from At-Home Dad, Summer 1997, Issue 14*



# Don't miss the next issue

of Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine

**COMING AUGUST 2002**

**BARBARA BURROWS**  
**PARENTING**  
M A G A Z I N E

*Canada's leading parent education service*

# Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine welcomes

...your questions, comments or parenting stories that you wish to share with others.

**mail:**

Barbara Burrows Parenting  
3516 Mainway Drive  
Burlington, ON L7M 1A8

**fax:**

(905) 332-461

**e-mail:**

bburrows1@cogeco.ca

**BARBARA BURROWS**  
**PARENTING**  
M A G A Z I N E

*Canada's leading parent education service*

## Tip for Tots – Getting a Toddler to Sleep

by Sheila Pin  
of Toronto

**B**arbara Burrows and I have been exploring ways of helping our son, now 2 1/2 sleep well. I am writing because Anthony's nap troubles seem to have ironed out. I think primarily because the stress in our lives has been reduced somewhat. But I did use a little trick that seemed to have got the ball rolling. I had a friend visiting with two small children - she is a school teacher. Her 3 year

old came down with some sort of bug while they were here and so they stayed for a couple of extra days as he was unable to travel. Anthony was having a very hard time with the other children playing with his toys and I found myself saying "No" an awful lot. I also have found that if he's doing something particularly not okay and won't stop, if I tell him calmly that I'll have to take his car away (he always has one in his hand) he usually stops. I don't feel it's an ideal solution but it's something he understands, it works, and it has us avoiding a long, drawn out scene. So anyway I asked my friend if

she had any tips about napping and she said, "positive reinforcement works better than negative reinforcement". Point taken. So she suggested giving him something every time he napped. I told her I had tried telling him if he slept he'd get a treat but it didn't work. She said, no, don't tell him, just give it to him if he does sleep.

**I'm also starting a little thing you mentioned in one of your parenting classes - the company toy box.**

So I bought a bag of second-hand cars at Value Village and started giving him a car every time he napped. That went on for a few days and then he just stopped fighting me for naps. Now he is back to 2-3 hour naps every day. And his nighttime sleeps are undisturbed.

I'm also starting a little thing you mentioned in one of your parenting classes - the company toy box. I just find it too hard to referee all the time when kids are playing at our house with Anthony's toys. So I've started putting together a box of toys that will come out only when guests are in the house — and most of Anthony's toys will go in his room.

*Chaos conquered for the time being!* ☺



F E A T U R E

# SLEEPING BEAUTY

by Abbey James

**A**s a small child, my greatest wish was to be able to stay up late. In those days, 'late' meant until Batman was over on the TV (am I dating myself?). Now of course, I can't wait to 'hit the sack' or sneak an afternoon nap - my current definition of pure indulgence.

I am not sure who is more tired at the end of the day - my husband and I or the kids. We all have early mornings and busy days. When bedtime does arrive I look forward to everyone settling down quickly and easily.

Both my husband and I have noticed how extended the nighttime routine has become with our oldest daughter, now 8. As a small child, she drifted off to sleep quietly, happily and quickly. What used to be a fairly streamlined routine - bath, story and 'night-night' kiss has stretched into hours of frustration for all of us.

Our solution was to allow her to stay up a little later, which has been met with great success. She seemed delighted in being able to stay up later than her brother and combined with having some free time to play, create and generally 'do her own thing', we have noticed a much calmer evening routine.

Not long ago, we had a bad night. Our son (age 6) is usually so tired he falls asleep after dinner - no trouble at all. The two year old has the confines of a much-loved crib to play in before she curls up on top of all the books, blankets and toys to sleep (not my idea of comfort but she likes it). But the oldest just decided not to go to bed - at all! She wanted to play just one more game, and then one more again, read the 'last story' again, tidy up her room for the morning - anything but get into bed. Could she colour at her desk for just a few more minutes she asks? "Sure" I respond (trying to be agreeable), "but not for too long".

An hour passes by and she is still up. I ask her again to get changed and hop into bed. She says she's not a bunny - I laugh (sort of) but I insist it is still bedtime. I am now at the 'ugly, over-tired, out of patience and generally bad-tempered mother stage'.

She was adamant about remaining dressed, sitting at her desk, listening to music and doing any or everything unrelated to



bedtime. Phrases like, "it's getting late - better get to bed", "you'll be tired in the morning" and "it's bedtime now and I mean it", all fell on deaf ears. As I ventured back downstairs I could hear music from her tape player grow louder and her words became even more defiant. When I didn't respond she moved to the top of the stairs, obviously upset and yelling, "I'm not going to bed you know!" followed by, "I'm coming downstairs now."

Things escalated. I yelled and then screamed and so did she. I knew in the back of my mind that certainly was not managing very well at all. NOW WHAT?!

I pulled Jim away from his office work to help. "She is unbearable and she is all yours!" I announce. Surely with his gentle, soft touch he could help her into bed and at the same time help me find something for my headache! As it turns out he was just as unsuccessful, at least in getting her to bed.

He found the aspirin without any trouble.

We decided it was time to 'lay down the law' and insist she go to bed - for the last time. No more attention from us! I could tell that she knew we were angry as we closed the door to where we were sitting downstairs, giving her the very clear message that she could not engage us anymore. We assumed that she would eventually get into bed and go to sleep.

It was a good try but a bad idea. We found her curled up asleep on the floor of the upper hallway. I felt terrible. We carried her into bed, still in her clothes. By now we had calmed down and knew in our hearts how wrong the entire evening had been.

The next morning she arrived downstairs, not rested and certainly not with her usual morning smile. "I'm sorry," she says to my back. "I'm sorry too" I reply. We hug. But what to do another time.. I asked Barbara Burrows.

**With quiet moments and a variety of thoughts to deal with alone at bedtime children often feel more vulnerable.**

Continued on page 00

Continued from page 00

She provided a deeper understanding in what might be happening between us that night. Here is a paraphrase of our discussion.

**Barbara:** "With quiet moments and a variety of thoughts to deal with alone at bedtime children often feel more vulnerable. The desire to connect with the parent through this period is heightened if the child is upset in any way. The entire time she spent stalling was, quite possibly, her unconscious way of telling you she needed you more than usual."

**Me:** "At the time I thought she was trying to be manipulative. In my mind, we could have talked earlier or do creative work after school instead of at 10 p.m. I was sure she was just being difficult - one of those pre-emergent teens!"

**Barbara:** "She didn't need to talk to you or do her activities after school - she wasn't anxious then. Perhaps she had an unusually stressful day. Maybe she has had a frightening dream the night before. She couldn't tell you why she didn't want to (or couldn't) sleep, probably because she didn't really know herself. She could only say that she wasn't going to!"

**Me:** "Admittedly, I know for myself that it is always more difficult to rest when I am worried or upset, even if I am not exactly sure why."

So what's a mother to do? Occasionally I know there are going to be similar nights. Even with this knowledge, I also know there are going to be times when it is difficult to find that last drop of energy to spend extra time with her, especially at the end of the day. In a selfish way, I am anxious for those few cherished hours when all is quiet and peaceful. But it has helped us to stop and think of what might be troubling her and try to be patient and supportive as best we can. I know already that the times when we are able to "read" her needs correctly, things definitely go more smoothly. ◀

## Tip for Kids – Standing by and admiring

by Barbara Burrows

**F**our-year-old Darryl refuses to dry himself after his bath, or undo his overalls to go to the bathroom, or wipe his own bum. He has done all of these self-help things in the past quite well. Now he refuses. Should his mother do for him, as he wants? If she does, she robs him of the "big boy" feelings that come from accomplishing self-help tasks alone. She has discovered from experience that insisting he do these things alone can provoke a power struggle.

What might help is "standing by and admiring". Often, when children finally are able to do things alone, harried mothers say "thank goodness" and turn away to the next task needing to be done. This leaves the child alone with his new skill *and* losing the attention that he had from his mom when he needed her help. Sometimes, that is enough to lead a child backwards, and insisting once again on "mommy do it".

If your child regresses in this way, stay with the child, admiring how well he is able to manage getting dried, or dressed or wiping his bum. Stay away from comments like "you help mommy so much", which suggests the child should struggle with this task to meet the mother's wishes. Instead speak about how good it feels to be able to look after oneself so well. Then the child is being encouraged to notice and enjoy the good feelings that come from becoming more capable.

Children need a surprising amount of "standing by and admiring" from the parent

until the new skill is solidly a part of the child's behaviour "repertoire". Parents will find it is time well invested, as there is far less regression to "you do it" when the child fully masters the task with this parental support. ▶

*Thanks to advisor Urna Furman's thoughts in *Toddlers and their Mothers* (International Universities press) for this idea.*



## L E T T E R S

# A mother's worry about 15-year-olds drug use

*A question from a mother about her nearly 16-year-old who skips school, smokes dope and wants to move out 16th birthday generated reader response. This column appeared the week of March 29/02 in a number of newspapers in Ontario. The readers' comments follow this reprinting of the question and answer.*

## Dear Barbara

I am frantic about my son, soon to turn 16. He skips school frequently, is failing miserably at school and is stoned on marijuana most of the time. He tells me that he intends to move out of the house as soon as he reaches his 16th birthday.

He has no job and I believe he is selling pot. We have always had reasonable rules which he has respected. Even now, with all the drug use, he still comes in right on time — according to his curfew. Over and over I've suggested that he might like to talk to someone that could help him understand what is troubling him, what has caused his life to change so much. He says no.

What can we do to stop him from moving out and how can I possibly stop the drug use?

## Dear Parent

It is sometimes thought that teenagers are "making poor choices" with frequent truancy and drug use. In fact, these behaviours almost always signify that the teenager is deeply troubled and simply cannot cope with everyday responsibilities. Something is interfering with what I am sure your son wants badly — to cope well with his life in a way that will allow him success in adult years.

Treatment is very likely warranted, and yet your son is not receptive. If he was showing signs of serious psychological illness, you could have him committed, at least temporarily to a psychiatric facility under the Ontario Mental Health Act. Failing grades and pot use does not suggest a serious illness, but rather a struggle with the vicissitudes of adolescence.

Do your best to keep him at home so you can fight this problem together. Talk to your son about how difficult some aspects of teenage life can be and point out since he leaves reality so frequently with his drug use, you can only guess that his life must be very painful.

Stress that getting high does not really resolve his difficult feelings — but it does make it very difficult for him to achieve other goals, such as feeling successful day by day, doing well at school etc.. Suggest that it could be difficult inner feelings (guilt?) that make him want to move away from home before he is financially ready, as this will surely make his life more difficult. Remind him that there are professionals who can help him with the hard feelings he faces.

## Reader Responses:

### Ms. Burrows,

In a recent column, where a mother wrote to you about her young son's problem (I don't remember exactly what it was) you recommended that he be institutionalized if a couple of solutions you recommended first didn't work.

Well pity that kid if that is followed. There is nothing more destructive today than psychiatry. Whatever problems he had will pale in comparison to what will become the ruin of a life through the use of dangerous anti-depressants and pseudo-psychological (pseudo-scientific) "counselling".

That's all they do - is push drugs. They can't help a soul. And you are living in the dark ages having given that advice.

Read "The Myth of Mental Illness" by Thomas Szasz (www.szasz.com), a psychiatrist! Oh yes, you very much would have to open up to a new look at things, by educating yourself. I am daring you.

Have you ever read the side effects of these drugs? These drugs can CAUSE suicidal-homicidal tendencies, among other (physical) problems. This is documented. There are warnings.

Eric Harris (Columbine high school shooting) was already on a couple of these. In all these stories in the newspapers of "schoolyard", "McDonalds", "post office" shootings over the last few years, INVARIABLY the person responsible was on these dangerous and very addictive drugs.

The common response is "Well he must have had some very serious psychological - emotional problems". Yeah, probably. But once on those drugs the shooting began in earnest.

Please understand - there IS a connection. This level of random violence (which never existed before, I know- I grew up in the 50's) has a CAUSE. And it's not "violent videos", or "dysfunctional family".

Bob B.

### Dear Barbara,

I read the letter from the parent whose 15-year-old son is taking drugs and skipping school. I know what he's going through, because I went through the

same thing. It has nothing to do with his home life. Obviously he has good parents, or they wouldn't be concerned about what he's doing. Part of it is probably peer pressure, but something traumatic may have happened in his life that caused him to head down a road to self-destruction.

I had a traumatic experience when I was about 13, and I started using drugs and alcohol. By the time I was 16, I was a full-blown alcoholic and drug addict. I was only at a grade 6 level when I quit school at age 16. My parents got professional help for me, but it didn't work. The person who was finally able to help me was an adult who had gone through a similar experience. He became my mentor, and he stuck with me all the years it took me to straighten my life out. He eventually became my AA sponsor. It took a stranger who had gone through what I did, and who could relate to me without judging me. That's how I turned my life around. He made me work for it, but he was there when I needed him.

I'm now 44, with a wife and 2 children, and I own my own business. My girl is 6 and my boy is 16. My boy is a good student, with A's and B's in every subject. He doesn't drink, smoke, or do drugs, although there are drugs around his school, and he's been to parties where drugs and alcohol

were available.

Over the years, I have helped several teenagers who have had problems. I have also worked with young offenders. I am not a doctor or social worker, and I am in NO way shape or form, affiliated with the police, or any social agency. I'm just a guy who, through his own experiences, tries to help troubled kids.

It doesn't say in the letter if this family lives in or near my community (withheld) but if they do, I would be more than happy to talk to this young man, and see if I can help him. Or, maybe he can find an adult friend in his community who would be willing to help him. Sometimes strangers can help more than parents or other close relatives, because they can be more objective.

If you would like to get back to me, I will e-mail you my name, address, and phone number. You can give it to this family if they want me to try to help. From the sound of the letter, this boy needs help, and fast. If he quits school and moves out of his home, and he doesn't get off drugs his future doesn't look very promising.

Name withheld

**I'm just a guy who, through his own experiences, tries to help troubled kids.**

## L E T T E R S

**Does this show disrespect? You decide.**

*This column appeared march 15/02 and a reader responded*

**Dear Barbara**

**M**y 16-year-old son is becoming increasingly withdrawn towards my husband and I and is always in his room in front of his computer. He has been a computer "nut" for many years and since he got his own computer in his room we only see him at mealtimes. We have never been able to have a conversation with him where he would give us complete answers to our questions and the only thing he likes to talk about is computer-related. He goes out with his friends sometimes on weekends and stops at one friend's after school frequently. We do know most of his friends who have been at our house, too. I'm told this is perfectly normal for this age but I'm still concerned that he doesn't share anything with us. When we approach him in his room, he merely tells us to "go away". His relationship with his 14-year-old sister has never been amicable and he shows no concern at all towards her.

What he does mostly is play computer games and develops web sites. I don't think he "surfs" the net so I'm not too worried that he'll access non-appropriate sites. But one never knows. Should we be worried?

**Thanking you in advance.**

**Dear Parent**

**T**he behaviour you describe can certainly be within "normal" especially if your son is doing well at school. Teens need to withdraw emotionally from parents, and as they do their relationships with others outside the family strengthen - best friends, boy-friend/girl-friend relationships etc. It usually feels to parents that they are losing their children, which in a way they are, as emotionally, teens are working towards becoming adults who can manage without the emotional support they had in the past from parents. Parents feel "left in the cold".

If you find him withdrawing from friends as well, and losing interest in computers, that would be time to worry. For now, it sounds to me as if he is making sure there is emotional distance between his family and him, and this is what teens do. He seems to have friendships with others.. a good sign.

Don't be critical of him for leaving you in this way; realize he is doing what he needs to do. Continue to be friendly when he is with you, and recognize that your feelings of wanting him closer are also normal, but that it is important not to pressure him to maintain the emotional closeness you want. It does happen some-

times that children do not leave the parent home, even in adulthood. In order for children to achieve independence, parents must let go when the teen shows a readiness.

**Reader Response:****Dear Ms Burrows,**

**I**would like to comment on your response to the mother with the 16-year-old son who was withdrawing from his parents and only wanted to be on his computer and be with his friends. You were absolutely correct in describing the emotional withdrawal process that teens go through as they begin to detach themselves from their parents. We and our friends have all experienced it in raising our children to adulthood.

My concern though was in the mother's description of her son's reaction to his parents when they approached him. He simply told them to "go away". Although no details of the interactions are given, my feeling is that if he reacts with this type of expression to his parents without them having done anything to provoke such a strong reaction other than to try to reach him, then this is not "normal" behaviour. It suggests a lack of proper respect for the position that parents ought to hold in the eyes of their children, unless the parents have seriously abused their position.

Certainly teenagers have to be given more leeway in their behaviour than

smaller children (I had to learn to bite my tongue on more than one occasion while raising mine) but there are certain lines which should not be crossed. Telling your parents to essentially "beat it" definitely crosses the line in my opinion.

You addressed the problem quite well in assessing what the parents ought to do to help the situation, but I believe you left out important information about the obligations and responsibilities of the teenager. Learning to express one's disagreement with respect for the person one disagrees with is an important lesson for people of all ages to learn and teens should not be denied this valuable learning opportunity.

I don't know whether you respond to e-mails but I wouldn't mind reading your thoughts about my comments. My address is dean\_love@hotmail.com

**Yours sincerely,  
Dean Love**

*Editor's Note: In order to achieve independence, teens need eventually to stop submitting to parents wishes and become secure in acting according to their own. It is such a difficult line for parents to walk - deciding when to "lay down the law" and when to overlook behaviours in order not to have teens submitting to parents' authority too much. In my opinion, this teen is forming a boundary between his parents and himself as he struggles to separate which*

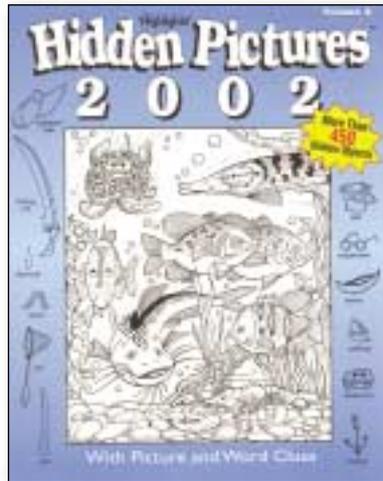
*does not show disrespect. If the parents chose to make an issue of this, insisting upon a "more respectful" response, I believe they would be interfering with the psychological separateness that their son is trying to achieve.*

*Send questions or comments to Barbara Burrows via e-mail:bburrows1@cogeco.ca*



BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

# Hidden Pictures 2002



**Hidden Pictures**  
 Published by Highlights  
<http://www.boydsmillspress.com>  
 Published by Boyds  
 Mills Press.

Is your family travelling this summer? Long drives are often difficult for young children - they simply can't sit as long as adults. Hidden Pictures by "Highlights Magazine" will pass away many long hours in the car. Here is one of the 38 pages, all with hidden things to find. But don't forget to plan for frequent stops on your journey where children can actually play and exercise their bodies (public playgrounds in small towns are perfect!). And take lots of snacks. These ideas will help young children manage, and maybe even enjoy their summer travelling.

March is Youth Art Month.

Busy Art Students

mug

crown

key

toothbrush

fish

ring

magnet

Can you find these hidden pictures?

closed umbrella

envelope

feather

pencil

book

Illustrated by Rocky Fuller

3

For more information on how to order,  
 contact <http://www.boydsmillspress.com> and follow "activity book" link.