

PARENTING

BARBARA BURROWS

M A G A Z I N E

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The Emotional Life of a Toddler • Helping older babies sleep through the night Part 3
"A story about Billy" • Better watch out! Better not pout! • Adoption Part 2
Helping children feel safe as they settle for naps • Children's fantasy at Christmas

CANADA'S LEADING PARENT EDUCATION SERVICE • OCTOBER 2002

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

Publisher
 Barbara Burrows
 (905) 335-8803

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

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 December 2002

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Calm Waters Under the Bridge

Angela Greenway

As I write this, our family is trying to find the right way to mend a broken bridge. Here's what happened....

Last Monday, our 14-year-old grade 9 student had quite a day - school, rugby practice, dinner, flute lesson and then dance class

(all her choice - not mine!). Finally home and exhausted at 10 pm, she headed downstairs to the computer to work on a science lab. I told her she HAD to go to bed and could finish it in the morning (she had already actually fallen asleep sitting in the hall at school in one of her spares one day recently) to which she replied, "Mom, I am handling things. Leave me alone and I'll finish soon. It's no big deal". She doesn't even HAVE science on

Tuesday - so why stay up now? I then figured out that she had forgotten her books over the weekend and had missed the homework deadline. In an angry voice I said, "to bed! NOW!" Wanting to finish up and annoyed I had found out this was past due, she then let loose with screaming and swearing. Her father overheard, and got into the fray, telling her she was NEVER to swear at her mother. She swore at him too. He grounded her and took away MSM (teenage chat room) for a week. Together, we became embroiled in a standoff with a belligerent (and very tired) teen. It was easy to fall into the punishment trap and the evening ended up badly for everyone.

The next day, when feelings eased a little and communication started opening up, there was a wish on both sides to get over what happened and move on. I realized that I had been hard on her for making an effort to get homework done when she was dead tired. (Believe me - that did-

n't make sense to me the next day! How could I have been critical of a child who was just forgot - not something she normally does? She is a very conscientious student, doing so well at managing so many things and happy most of the time).

The question is how to get over it. This is day three. Feelings

have eased and everyone is rested, but the grounding and restrictions are still there like a broken bridge that is keeping our daughter and us apart. In retrospect, had we resisted the urge to punish, we would be over the difficult flaring of tempers on both sides, and the evening would have been behind us.

The wish to 'make kids behave' by using punishment or consequences happens so often in the heat of the moment that we rarely understand how much harder it becomes to 'make it right' later on. Hubby thinks we should stay the course (wanting to make sure his word is good) except he doesn't like it when,

days later, his daughter is still very upset or angry with him. And now we're the parent police - making sure she lives through her sentence.

What I can't stop thinking about was how different things would be if I had stayed calm that night. If I had remained calm, she would have finished her work and gone to bed. There would have been no swearing and no punishment. There would be no broken bridges to repair. We could have talked about it the next day. Of course, all of this is much easier to do (and write about!) after the fact. Maybe next time...

What's Up?



ANGELA GREENWAY
 Managing Editor

...although Halloween can seem like fun to children, in fact, they can become easily overwhelmed and frightened...

Angela

DECEMBER 2002

What's inside?

WHAT'S UP?

Calm waters under the bridge
 by Angela Greenway

DEAR BARBARA
 Heading for here

GOOD BOOKS
 The Emotional Life of a Toddler

TIPS FOR BABIES
 Helping older babies sleep through the night PART 3

TIP FOR TOTS
 "A story about Billy"

TIPS FOR KIDS
 Better watch out!
 Better not pout!
 by Barbara Burrows

FEATURES

Helping children feel safe as they settle for naps
 by Maria Kaiser of The Grandmothers

Children's fantasy at Christmas

Adoption PART 2

About Barbara Burrows

Barbara 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. b

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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).

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GOOD BOOKS - MORE THAN A REVIEW

The Emotional Life of the Toddler

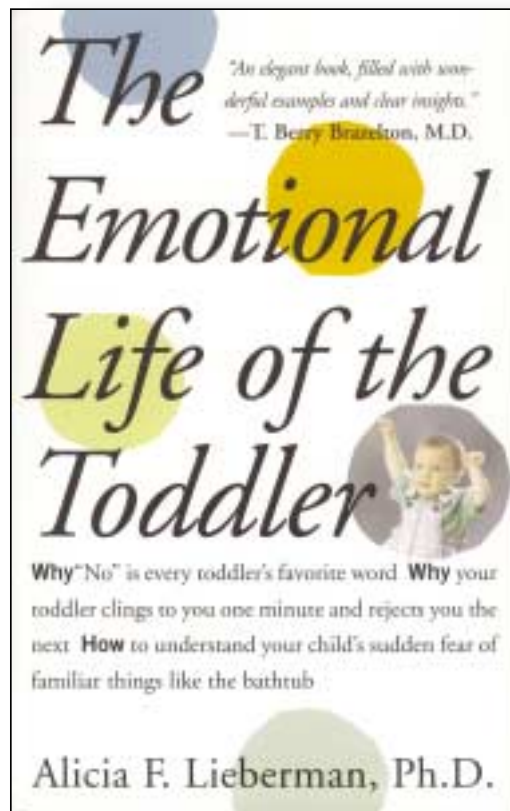
The Emotional Life of a Toddler

Alicia F. Lieberman Ph.D.

Published by The Free Press

Canadian \$21.50

ISBN 0-02-874017-3



Living with a child 1-3 years of age is an exhilarating experience, says Alicia Lieberman in "The Emotional Life of the Toddler" - but also an experience fraught with puzzling dilemmas. Why, for example, is every toddler's favourite word "no"? Why do toddlers cling one minute and reject you the next? Or become suddenly terrified of familiar things like the bathtub?

These questions are answered and many typical "toddler behaviours" discussed, with practical suggestions of what one might do. Take temper tantrums for example. Tommy, at 18 months wants his older brother's shiny new trike (P39). He cries and screams. His mom helps by taking Tommy outside to look for bugs, which he loves, so this calms him. Later, she coaxes Daniel into letting his brother "have a turn" after the crying is done.

Tommy's mom didn't insist Daniel give up his bike in response to Tommy's tantrum. Lieberman says, "When a parent knows she is right and does not give in for the sake of temporary peace, everyone wins. The parent learns that denying some pleasure does not create a neurotic child and the child learns that he can survive momentary frustration." (P40).

But what about when a parent is wrong, and knows it? When 18 month Mary gleefully ran after the golf ball reserved for the dog, her father told her not to touch it. Mary wailed in despair. Her older brother questioned his dad. She doesn't put it in her mouth, why can't she play with it? Her father realized what he said was foolish, but hated to change his mind, felt the need to be consistent. (P44)

"Being consistent" or not being willing to reconsider when we know full well that we

**Why, for example,
is every toddler's
favourite word "no"?**

**Why do toddlers
cling one minute and
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**Or become
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of familiar things
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have spoken without thinking, or out of anger, is really rigidity - not consistency. Dr. Lieberman says, "Willingness to change our minds in the face of persuasive evidence teaches the child a higher form of consistency: the readiness to engage in dialogue about differing points of view." (P45)

She reminds us also that there are many times when the parents' goals need to take precedence over the toddlers - even when toddlers don't like it. She cites the example of adults going out when toddlers want them to stay home. This is not an easy situation. Parents feel torn between their own needs

and the needs of the toddler who is clearly unhappy at their departure. Dr. Lieberman points out how many things need to be considered. Does the toddler know and like the babysitter? Has there been ample opportunity during the day for the toddler to fulfill her attachment needs with her mother? Can the parents feel certain the toddler will feel safe with the sitter? If all these factors are taken into consideration, then the parents may feel better about leaving, even if their child protests.

But what if the sitter cancels at the last minute and a friend of mom's steps in whom the child doesn't know? And the adult event simply must be attended. Then what? Dr. Lieberman says toddlers can cope well even with this upheaval, as long as parents carefully explain the circumstances (i.e. you don't know our new sitter, but Mommy does and knows she is a good person to look after you) and make it up to the child (i.e. I know today was very rushed and we hardly had any time together, but tomorrow we will make a special time together to make up for today). P46

This book explores issues of toddlerhood rarely seen in parent literature - like anxiety in toddler years. It explains that reducing all anxiety in a child's life - trying to protect one's child from all worries - can actually prevent a child from developing strategies for coping with small difficulties in life. The example of Nadia (P117) explains how her parents were so "in tune" they could anticipate nearly every wish of Nadia's quickly, trying hard not to hurt her in any way.

Unfortunately, by 2 1/2 Nadia often scratched friends, spit at adults and cried loudly when scolded. She was very unhappy. Nadia did not feel secure and had not enough ordinary, everyday experience at coping with frustration and enduring small amounts of unpleasant experience.

This book explores the ins and outs of helping children cope with frustrations, anxiety and anger, using relationships with parents, play and language. The shy, aggressive, anxious or inhibited toddler are discussed. So are toileting, siblings, marital squabbles, separation and divorce.

This book is exceptionally insightful in understanding the emotional life of a toddler and will be an enormous help to parents as their toddlers move forward in their development.

F E A T U R E

Children's fantasy at Christmas

by Barbara Burrows

Thinking about Santa at Christmas brings tremendous pleasure to children, parents and grand-parents alike. Because of this shared pleasure, there is a benefit to adults and children to share the Santa myth. Yet most parents want to be truthful with their children in all circumstances, and may feel uncomfortable when they hedge on the Santa question. There may be a way to tell the truth and still enjoy Santa. When you are asked, "Is Santa real?" you can answer that he is a special pretend person and both grown up people and children feel happy and excited when they think about him. Remind your child of some make believe characters that you have enjoyed together, like Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, who isn't real either, but you both know and love him. You might also refer to a stuffed animal that is not real, yet your child loves and enjoys pretending it is real.

By talking about Santa in this way, you tell the truth, but do not take away his belief as you would by saying, "You're right, Santa isn't real". You might feel more comfortable enjoying the Santa fantasy with your child, if you do not feel that you are deceiving him. Some of us experienced bitter disappointment when we found out Santa was not real. Acknowledging that Santa is pretend is truthful and yet encourages the child to enjoy the fantasy.

Long before children ask outright, they suspect that Santa is not real. They may not ask when they first suspect, because they still enjoy pretending and do not want to know the truth. When they do ask, they are not necessarily ready to give up the fantasy. They may be trying to make sense of their own perceptions. They realize what Santa is supposedly able to do is impossible. Your child is right when he says there is no way that Santa can fly from house to house, sliding up and down skinny little chimneys. Your child is thinking things through clearly, and you can praise his ability to figure things out. Remind him that even though he is able to figure out what is possible and what is not, does not mean that he can't continue to pretend that Santa can do these things. By stressing how much you enjoy pretending those things with him, you allow him to continue the fantasy, and let him enjoy the good feelings that come from figuring out something puzzling.

It is easier, from the very beginning, to say



There may be a way to tell the truth and still enjoy Santa.

that Santa is make-believe. If your child says others say Santa is real, you say, "We like to pretend that Santa is real too. It is fun to think about Santa and Mrs. Claus and their house at the North Pole, with the elves making all those lovely toys for good girls and boys." This way, you can enjoy Santa, without deceiving your child, or ruining it for other children. The way in which your child thinks of Santa will slowly change over the years, his wishes will also change, and although fully aware that Santa is not real, he can continue to get genuine pleasure from thinking about this make-believe person.

Is it such a problem to tell children this one small white lie? Don't children love to believe in Santa? Children do love to think about Santa, and can do so more freely once they know he is pretend. They don't have to worry that he will see them in the midst of a tough time, and decide to withhold gifts for example. At the same time, there is much about Santa that can frighten children. Take a look at some of their faces as they head up the ramp to see him at the mall, looking back over their shoulder at Mommy and Daddy. Once again, knowing that it is all pretend can make it more fun.

A more important issue is the question of differentiating reality from fantasy. Convincing children that Santa is real confus-

es their thinking and ability to figure things out. Not being able to figure things out can lead to other troubles. Children experience many fears, based upon their difficulties separating their imagination from reality.

All parents will know how very difficult it can be to convince a 3-year-old a monster isn't hiding in the closet but instead it is in his imagination. When parents are willing to help children differentiate between fantasy and reality it helps them master fears and experience the good feelings that come from understanding things clearly - of feeling "smart". The more committed parents are to explaining things as clearly as possible, the more helpful they are to children as they grapple with understanding reality and mastering fears. As much as it might be fun for parents to tell little children that Santa's elves are peeking in the window to see if they are being good, this confuses a child's grasp of reality. Can this really be true if the child does not see it? Maybe it is true if Mommy says so. The child doesn't know what to think and is confused. She doesn't get the good "I'm thinking clearly" feeling that comes from knowing what is real and what is not. One mother realized how difficult the Santa story was for her 6-year-old who developed a serious fear that a robber would get into his window at night and take him away. As she tried to reassure her anxious son that this wasn't possible for the robber to get into their locked house, the child reminded her that Santa can get down the chimney, so the robber could too.

There is much to be considered before telling even one little untruth to children. Surprisingly, your children may enjoy Santa so very much more knowing he is make-believe.



Tip for Kids – Better watch out! Better not pout!

by Barbara Burrows

Do you ever tell your children that “Santa is watching”? This is often what we say when children’s behaviour during the weeks leading up to Christmas isn’t the best. Did you know that little untruth can actually increase poor behaviour? The worry that one can be seen by some invisible person can evoke fantasies in a child. It stirs up the imagination and fears. When children feel unsettled, they cannot control themselves as well

... and behaviour deteriorates!

Think of what it would be like, if each of us were told some secret police force has secret cameras and could watch us - any time - without our knowledge or permission. Would this not stir paranoid fantasies in us? Wouldn’t it be likely to bring out our worst, most “stressed-out” behaviour?

We can see then, how difficult it is for children when we tell them that Santa is watching

them to see if they have been good, and worse, Santa will then decide whether they may have what they wish for, based upon their behaviour.

Telling children that Santa is watching is untrue. Suggesting that a child’s wish will only be granted “if they are good” is also untrue. And even worse, stirring children up with this myth makes managing children’s behaviour at this exciting time of the year even more difficult for parents, who themselves are under far more pressure than usual.

How much more reassuring it would be for a child to know that we only pretend that Santa is watching. It is a fun game that people of all ages enjoy. Children will love to pretend Santa is watching - as long as they know it is a game. Be prepared to hear Santa is watching you and enjoy this make-believe game with your children this season. This is a much better way to encourage reasonable behaviour in your children.

Children will love to pretend Santa is watching - as long as they know it is a game.

Tip for Babies – Helping older babies sleep through the night

PART 3

Teaching babies to get to sleep without nursing (May 2002), and developing transitional objects to increase night-time security (June 2002) have been discussed in helping babies sleep well - all through the night.

In this issue, we will discuss having babies sleep in the parents bed. One reason parents like having babies in their bed is that it reduces the time it takes to settle night-time wakers and allows parents to get more sleep. On the other hand, when babies are used to nighttime bodily contact - they wake up far more often looking for the gratification from the parent’s body - usually wanting nursing from the mother. In the long-run, many parents find “the family bed”, especially for the older baby, decreases everyone’s sleep.

Many mothers have told me that their babies are quite restless at night, even in the family bed. They awaken frequently, squirm and fuss and seem frustrated at times, even when the mother tries to comfort them. Surprisingly, older babies don’t always want to be in their mother’s and father’s bed. They show this by their restless and agitated behaviour. They are coming to the stage when they view them-

selves as a separate person from their Mom, and don’t like being altogether as much as they once did. At the same time, they don’t want to be alone in their own beds, which they are not used to. They don’t know what they want.

One step towards helping restless babies who sleep with parents become more settled at night is to stop nursing during the night. Tell the baby at bedtime - no more nursing if you wake up. Mommy and daddy will help you get back to sleep, but Mommy won’t nurse you until morning. And then stick to it. Dad will likely have to help.

Even if the baby cries, Dad can get up and walk around with him until he settles. Talking calmly, reminding the baby that it is time for sleep, not nursing will help. Dad can offer a drink from a cup or a small snack if the baby really seems hungry. Even if the baby really cries for his mom, he will eventually accept the comfort offered by his father and will calm down.

Over time, when he understands that there really isn’t going to be any nursing at night, he will not wake up as frequently looking for it.

Watch next issue for ideas of how to get babies into their own beds at night.

Surprisingly, older babies don’t always want to be in their mother’s and father’s bed.

D E A R B A R B A R A

Helping Lee Ann over her tantrums

Dear Barbara

I have a 4-year-old daughter, Lee Ann. She has had tantrums since she was about 17 months old, but they have been improving as she gets older. For about a month, she has become very saucy (yelling "no" at me and saying she doesn't like me and so on). She can also be this way with her Junior Kindergarten Teacher. Small things seem to frustrate her and set off a screaming fit (e.g. like not being able to get her shirt on, for instance). We've tried everything from time outs, to spanking (doesn't work), to taking away privileges, to ignoring her, to talking to her and explaining that her mouthiness and outbursts are inappropriate but nothing seems to make things better. We tell her to be patient and use her words to explain what she is feeling when she gets so mad.

She's better in one-on-one situations, but family get-togethers or school are difficult. I think all the people and activity may over-stimulate her and then she has a "melt-down". When I see her getting agitated I try to convince her to go take a break by herself to have a rest and regroup. Lee Ann's teacher suggested that I take her to my doctor but I don't want her on Ritalin. I am getting to the end of my rope. Any suggestions?

Dear Parent,

Can you think of any changes over the past month that would interfere with the improvement your daughter has experienced with her tantrums? You are describing a child whose frustrated feelings build up more quickly than she is able to master, and sometimes new outside pressures can cause this.

Rather than encouraging her to take a rest or break, which I think she will interpret as a "time-out" or punishment, notice with her that she is getting upset, and try and explain what you think might be the matter. As you have observed, children do much better with parent support (one-on-one) when having impulse control troubles.

For example, when she starts getting frustrated about not being able to get her shirt on, you might observe, "I notice that you are getting upset with your shirt. I wonder whether it makes you feel stupid when you have trouble with it, and the stupid feeling makes you cry." You can add, "I think you are too hard on yourself, because we both know that you are a smart little girl. Whatever could be making you feel stupid today?" (Of course, you'll have your own sense of what does make her upset, and will express it and then offer support in your own way.)

Explain that when people feel upset on the inside, they often have difficulty with behaviour. If you can help her figure out what is happening inwardly that gets her so upset, it helps her work the feelings through before they cause her to fall apart in anger. This will help her cope better.



BARBARA BURROWS
Director,
Barbara Burrows
Parenting

Photo by Murray Pellowe

Tip for Tots – "A Story About Billy"

This excerpt is from "Your Child & You" by Eleanor Weisberger. For more information about this book, see www.aboutchildrearing.com.

It is easy to teach a toddler about concrete things like "This is your nose." Or "The stove is hot." It is much more difficult to teach a toddler about his inner world - his thoughts, his emotional life and his feelings. A parallel story offers a wonderful way to help a toddler understand and think about this experiences, and here is the parallel story a mother tells her little boy.

"There once was a little boy. His name was Billy." Danny, age three gets closer to mother on the couch. "There was a mommy and a daddy living with him but he was the only child," she goes on. Danny nods contentedly. This is the "Billy story" he has asked his mother to tell him every night for the past two weeks. He knows what she is going to say before she says it but he wants to hear what is coming anyhow.

"Billy's Mommy used to take him to the store," says Dan's mother. "They bought him things to eat and Billy liked to have his mother make him lunch." She enlarges on the story and inserts elements of her own child's life into it. "His favourite was peanut butter and jelly." She stresses how much Billy likes being the only one. Dan is rapt with attention.

"And then I went to the zoo with Daddy," he adds. "Don't forget the monkeys." He likes the parallel she draws because it gives him a chance to ruminate about his life experiences. When we consider how much growing up is an assault on the egocentric position of babyhood, we can understand the enjoyment of the

story better.

"And then came a baby brother," his mother goes on. "Billy didn't like that one bit," Dan nods in response to this. "The baby can't even throw a ball!"

His mother agrees. "Billy wanted a friend to play with but instead he got a baby!"

"Babies stink!" Dan's voice rises. "They make poop in their pants!" His pride in his own rather recent accomplishment is evidenced in his disdain.

"The hardest part for Billy wasn't being the only child anymore. He liked being the only one. Before the baby came, he used to have Mommy all to himself."

"And you walk him while I'm at school!" The enormity of her offence overwhelms Dan for a moment.

"Billy hated to be away. He thought his mother and the baby were having too much fun."

By telling stories like this we can recognize with children that emotions exist. We can dignify them and admit to our children that they have a right to these feelings. In this way, feelings become more explicable to the child.

We often have great difficulty talking to our child directly about his emotional life. This is what makes the story so valuable. It helps the child learn more about his emotions and at the same time think about other issues. Was Billy really the only one? Wasn't there a father and didn't his mother have other interests of her own that had value for her, despite his childish wishes to the contrary?

Parallel stories can be used to explore all kinds of children's experiences and can be a great source of enjoyment for both parents and children.

It helps the child learn more about his emotions and at the same time think about other issues.



F E A T U R E

Adoption PART 2

by Marilyn Thorpe

Marilyn Thorpe BA, MD, FRCPC is a Part-time Assistant professor at University of Western Ontario in the Department of Psychiatry and a Adolescent psychiatrist and psychotherapist in London.

A second major difficulty involved in adoption is the idea of belonging. Part of functioning well in a society or club or family is feeling like we belong. It is feeling like we fit in and fit together. Very definitely a feeling of family involves feeling that we are a set. This becomes an issue when parents adopt a child - they do not belong to each other at first and must make ties. This is not impossible - certainly many feel a more connected sense of belonging with friends than biological relatives.

When we raise our own child, we search for likeness. It is emotionally and physically exhausting to tolerate and nurture the child with a difficult temperament. When the child is our own it is made easier BECAUSE the child is our own and perhaps because, for example, the rowdy behaviour reminds us of good old Uncle Doug. It is not unusual to hear parents express shock at how unlike two biological siblings are.

With a natural child, these differences can be tolerated more easily. When we raise the child of another, we may search for similarities - but the risk is that we will see the differences of temperament as something the child inherits from the biological parents and as something to be rejected. Of course parents have preconceived ideas of what their children will be like, based on unconscious fantasies of what they *want* them to be like. When our own children don't measure up we are more likely to tolerate the child or even joke about the similarities between the child and the spouse's family.

But when someone else's child doesn't measure up, we may reject the child.

The fact is that the child is genetically connected to others and may be like the biological parents. Some difficulties the child has may be biological and inherited or the result of a young, poorly nourished and substance using birth mother. While characteristics which parents might not like can be present in both natural born children as well as adopted, the attitude towards adopted children may be different - the feeling that the child could have come from "bad blood" or "the bad seed" may diminish the parents will-



Understanding that this idealization of biological parents is the child struggling to find value in himself may help adopted parents feel less threatened.

ingness to work through issues. It may even be used as a way to disown the adoptive parents' part in the trouble. Such everyday behaviour issues may leave parents angry and resentful feeling that another's genes play a part in "messing up their lives".

The child must grapple with the fact that he or she belongs two places - one biologically and another actually. The child may wonder who he or she 'matches' - remembering that young children are very cued by physical appearance as a sign of connectedness. In the event that the child is of a different race this will be even more of an issue. Parents should realize this and be prepared to reassure the child of a belonging deeper than appearance.

The child may wonder where the child physically belongs. Who do I look like? Whose nose is this? Who had such big feet? If a parent is not ready for the child's questions, the parent can be devastated. More and more we learn of adult adoptees who seek out their biological parents in search for the empty place in the puzzle where the child will at last fit. Adoptive parents may feel that

this wish to know results from an inadequacy of parenting. Such parental insecurity can be worsened (if the child knows this is a good button to upset the parents) when the child being disciplined calls out "But you are not my real mother". The sense of identity and belonging is present in the child. The child's wish to know where he or she comes from means that the child has grown up normally inquisitive. The parent does well to realize that this is healthy development.

The child will likely struggle about the biological parents. If you have been electively adopted away then you must deal with the fact that your parents got pregnant and could not care for you or perhaps did not want you - or worse, one of your parents was a rapist or abuser. A child may idealize the biological parents as a way to protect a good idea of him/herself - if my genes are good then so am I. Understanding that this idealization of biological parents is the child struggling to find value in himself may help adopted parents feel less threatened. This realization can let the adoptive parents empathize and therefore help with the grieving child's sense of abandonment.

This brings us to the fine line adoptive parents walk. They are not the biological parents and must allow the child to have yearnings and questions about the child's roots. However, this child IS THEIR child whom they have pledged to raise - for better or worse, for richer or poorer, no matter how difficult the terrible two's and teens are! This is not a temporary relationship but a pledged life long relationship. The sense of belonging requires the security of the fact of belonging.

Helping children feel safe as they settle for naps

by Maria Kaiser
of The Grandmothers

"The Grandmothers" are Early Childhood Consultants, and an energetic, experienced group of professionals linked with The Hanna Perkins Center in Cleveland, Ohio. Collectively, they have decades of experience and have helped several thousand children lead happier lives. "The Grandmothers" are Maria Kaiser M. Ed.; Lyn Kirst B.S.; Georgianna Roberts M. Ed.; Nancy Sabath, M. Ed., Kathleen Smith, M. Ed., Virginia Steininger M. Ed. "The Grandmothers" are co-ordinated by Barbara Streeter M.S. (Bank Street) L.P.C.C. Child Psychoanalyst, Associate Director, Hanna Perkins Center, Extension Division

Puzzling and worrying about many of the behaviours with which children challenge us has taken up an extraordinary amount of my time. When I was a new day care director, (and many times since then) I can remember hoping that one certain child might not come, just today, or at least, that he or she would quickly drop off to sleep at naptime. It didn't happen! What did happen was that I began to learn, through classes and consultation groups that naptime is a most

difficult time for children. I learned that three and four year olds miss home when it's quiet and they are on their cots.

Children worry that newly learned impulse controls might be lost during sleep or that they might not be safe. I was advised that acknowledging that they were probably missing mommy and reassuring them that a known adult would be there all the time they were asleep might help. I tried it. "Perhaps you miss Mommy now," I said once as I tucked a little girl into her blanket on her cot. "I bet she's thinking of you too!" Imagine the way I felt when I looked out into the room filled with cots and sleeping children to see this little girl's face, raised from her cot, looking my way, waving at me with her fingers before eventually going to sleep. Children settle at different rates we were told and so, books were provided, were read one at a time and could be kept until sleep came. It worked! The children settled much better.

How simple, yet how complex. Recognizing their "missing home and mommy" feelings and assuring them that I would be there while they slept, plus giving them books to help them master their "homesick" feelings made all the difference. Naptime went more smoothly once I understood.



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About Barbara Burrows

Barbara 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.

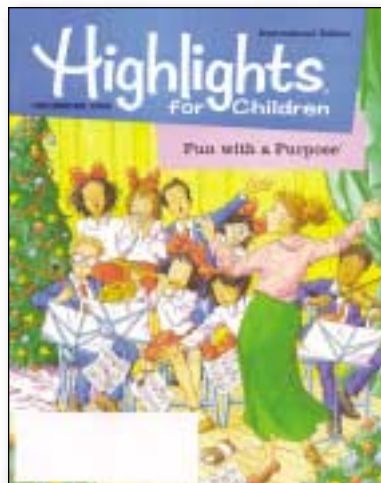
Barbara helps parents raise emotionally healthy children and experience joy in parenting. After graduating from McMaster University in sociology and psychology, she worked to help parents with children's behaviour in Hamilton at Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals before developing her own parent education program.

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

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

Highlights

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Highlights for Children was founded in 1946 and has been publishing books for children filled with wholesome fun activities, stories, jokes and cartoons ever since. Designed for use in the classroom or at home, Highlights is dedicated to helping children grow in basic skills and knowledge, in creativeness, in ability to think and reason, in sensitivity to others, in high ideals and worthy ways of living. This publication offers children fun with a purpose. It targets children from 2 - 12 years and contains no advertising. Children from all over the world subscribe and contribute jokes, submit questions and sometimes even write stories. b



Thoughts for December

Many people will celebrate important religious holidays during December. Among these are the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah (the Festival of Lights) from November 29 to December 6, the Christian celebration of Christmas, which always falls on December 25th; and the Muslim celebration of Eid ul-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, which falls this year on December 5th or 6th.



A Muslim Prayer

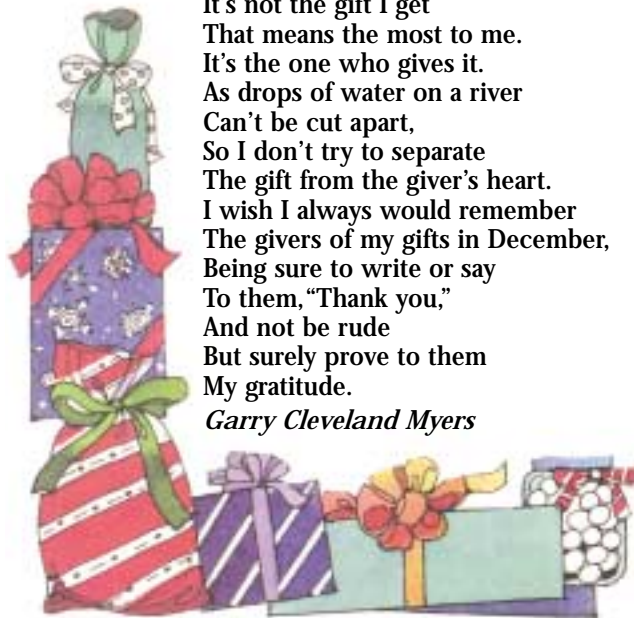
In the name of God the Beneficent,
The Merciful.
Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful.
Owner of the Day of Judgment,
Thee we worship; Thee we ask for help.
Show us the straight path,
The path of those whom Thou has
favoured;
nor of those who go astray.

Translated by Ali R. Amir-Moez

A Wish

It's not the gift I get
That means the most to me.
It's the one who gives it.
As drops of water on a river
Can't be cut apart,
So I don't try to separate
The gift from the giver's heart.
I wish I always would remember
The givers of my gifts in December,
Being sure to write or say
To them, "Thank you,"
And not be rude
But surely prove to them
My gratitude.

Garry Cleveland Myers



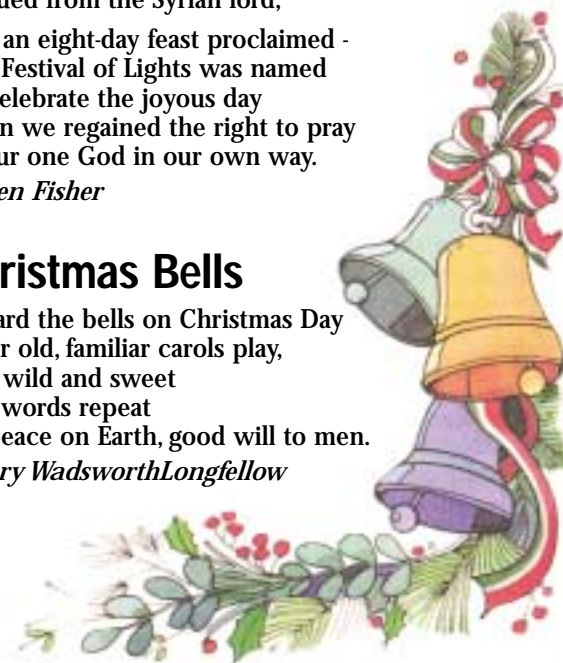
Light the Festive Candles

Light the first of eight tonight -
the furthest candle to the right.
Light the first and second, too,
when tomorrow's day is through.
Then light three and then light four -
every dusk one candle more
Till all eight burn bright and high,
honouring a day gone by
When the Temple was restored,
rescued from the Syrian lord,
And an eight-day feast proclaimed -
The Festival of Lights was named
To celebrate the joyous day
when we regained the right to pray
to our one God in our own way.
Aileen Fisher



Christmas Bells

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on Earth, good will to men.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



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