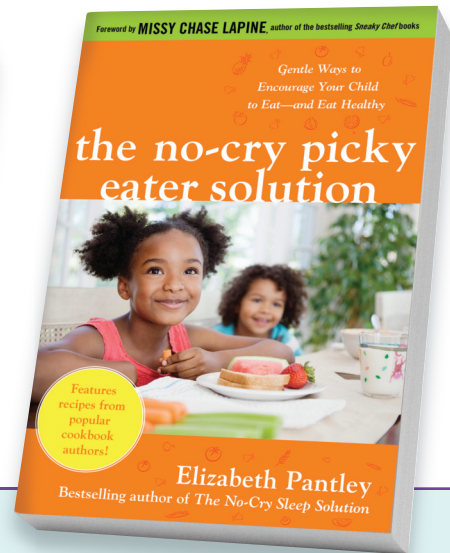
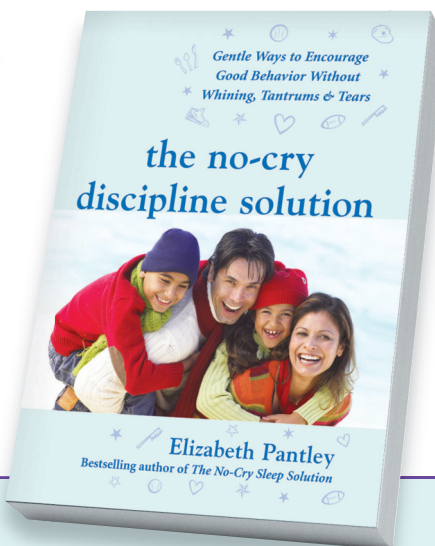
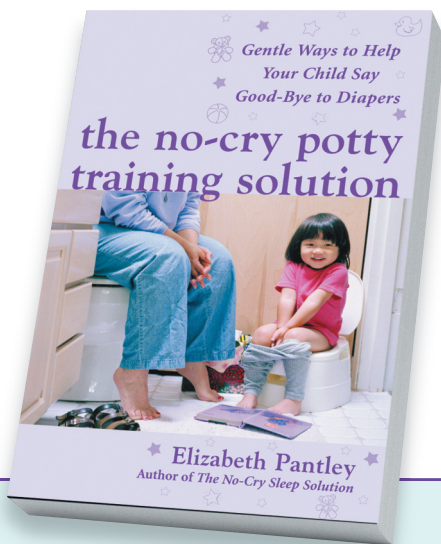
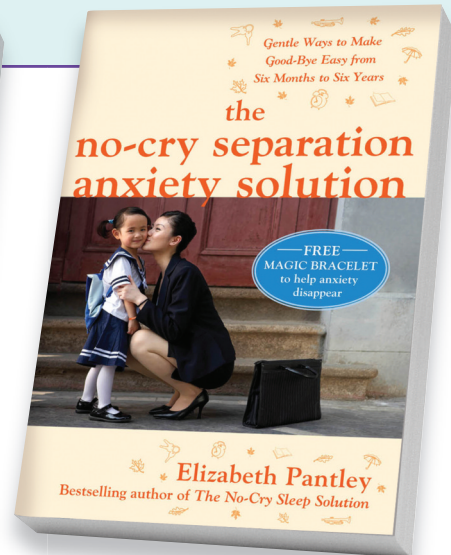
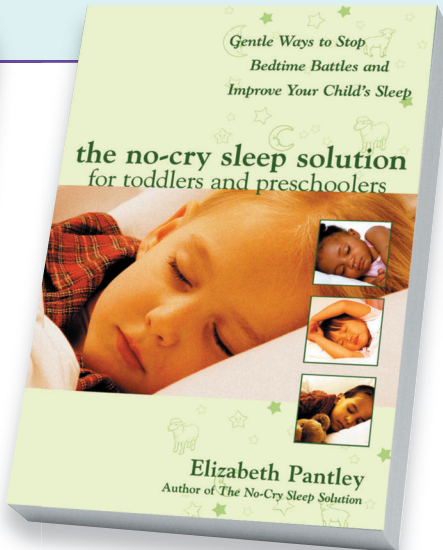
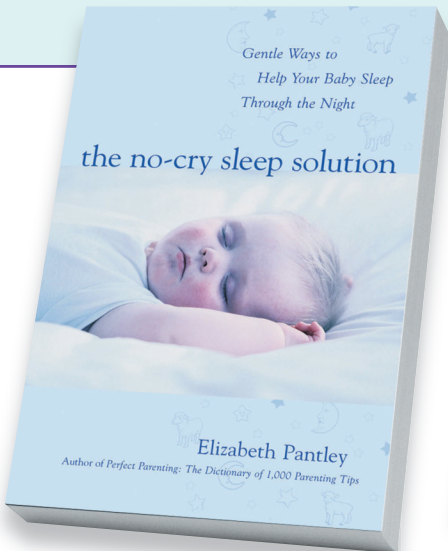




The No-Cry Parenting Guide

by bestselling parenting author
Elizabeth Pantley



REPRODUCIBLE PARENT EDUCATION NEWSLETTERS

Parents ask many questions about common topics. That's why I'm pleased to provide this free set of reproducible newsletters you can hand out to help answer some of the most frequently asked questions about sleep, potty training, discipline, separation anxiety, and picky eating, such as:

When will my newborn sleep through the night?

How do I get my toddler to nap?

When should I move my child from the crib to a bed?

How do I know when my child is ready for potty training?

How can I make potty training a positive, tear-free experience?

What can I do about temper tantrums and whining?

How can I instill healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime?

What are the best methods for helping my child explore new places happily and confidently?

Based on six of my books—*The No-Cry Discipline Solution*, *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*, *The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Toddlers and Preschoolers*, *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*, *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution*, and *The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution*—these newsletters offer tips to help parents find their best solutions to these questions.

As the president of Better Beginnings, a parent education company, I have the opportunity to work with families on a regular basis. I am the author of eleven parenting books created with the input of hundreds of parents. Here is what the professionals say:

"Elizabeth Pantley provides wise insights into what causes children to have sleep problems. Even more, she offers a rich collection of practical and loving solutions."

—Harvey Karp, M.D., Pediatrician and Author of *The Happiest Baby on the Block* and *The Happiest Toddler on the Block*

"The No-Cry Discipline Solution is a definite must-have for all parents and caregivers of young children. If you are looking for understandable, effective and nurturing tools to raise good human beings, let this book be your guide."

—Tim Seldin, President of The Montessori Foundation and Chair of The International Montessori Council

"Pantley offers concrete, easy-to-follow tips for riding out everyday speed bumps. This feature is what makes the No-Cry books a godsend for frazzled parents."

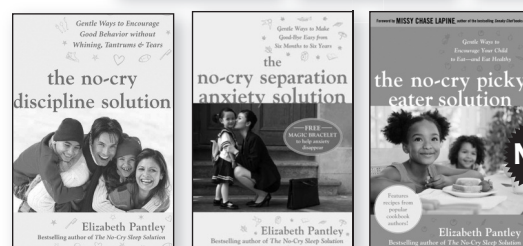
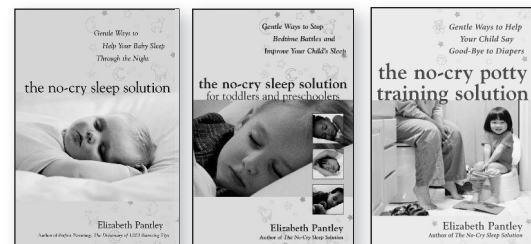
—Lisa Poisso, Editor in Chief, Natural Family Online

Please feel free to reproduce and distribute these newsletters as you wish. If you would like email text versions of the articles or if you would like to receive future issues, please send a note to me at elizabeth@pantley.com or to the address below.

Thank you for all the work you do.

Elizabeth Pantley

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Newborn Babies and Sleep

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby.

This is a glorious time in your life—and a sleepless time too. Newborns have different sleep needs than older babies. This article will help you understand your baby's developing sleep patterns and will help you create reasonable expectations for sleep.



Newborn Sleep

Your newborn sleeps when he is tired — it's that simple. You can do little to force a new baby to sleep when he doesn't want to sleep, and you can do little to wake him up when he is sleeping soundly.

Newborn babies have tiny tummies. They grow rapidly, and their liquid diet digests quickly. While it would be nice to lay your little bundle down at bedtime and not hear from him until morning, this is not a realistic goal for a new baby. Newborns wake to be fed every two to four hours — and sometimes more.

"Through the night"

You may believe that babies should start "sleeping through the night" soon after birth. For a new baby, a *five-hour stretch* is a full night. This may be a far cry from what you thought "sleeping through the night" meant! It's often a full year or more until your baby will settle into an all-night, every night sleep pattern.

Sleep Associations

It is natural for a newborn to fall asleep while sucking at the breast, a bottle, or a pacifier. When a baby *always* falls asleep this way, he learns to associate sucking with falling asleep. This is the most natural sleep association a baby can have. However, many parents who are struggling with older babies who cannot fall asleep, or stay asleep, are fighting this powerful association.

Therefore, if you want your baby to be able to fall asleep without your help, it is essential that you often let your newborn baby suck until he is sleepy, but not totally asleep. When you can, remove the breast, bottle, or pacifier from his mouth, and let him finish falling asleep without it. If you do this often enough, he will learn how to fall asleep without sucking.

Night Feedings

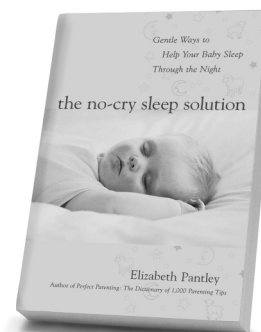
Professionals recommend that a newborn shouldn't sleep longer than four hours without feeding, and most babies wake more frequently than that. The key is to learn when you should pick her up for a feeding and when you can let her go back to sleep on her own.

Here's a tip: Babies make many sleeping sounds, from grunts to whimpers to cries, and these noises don't always signal awakening. These are *sleeping noises*, and your baby is not awake during these episodes. Listen closely. If she is awake and hungry, you'll want to feed her so she'll go back to sleep easily. But if she's asleep — let her sleep!

Telling Day from Night

A newborn sleeps 16 to 18 hours per day, distributed into six to seven sleep periods. You can help your baby distinguish between night sleep and day sleep, and thus help him sleep longer periods at night.

Have your baby take naps in a lit room where he can hear the noises of the day. Make night sleep dark and quiet, except for white noise (a background hum). Use a bath, a massage, and pajamas to signal nighttime sleep.



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Gentle Sounds Improve Baby's Sleep

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

The environment that your baby enjoyed in the womb was not absolutely quiet. There was a constant symphony of sound. (Remember the whooshing sounds you heard with the Doppler stethoscope?) Due to this prenatal history, white noise or soft music can help babies relax and fall asleep. This is because these sounds create an environment more familiar to your baby than a quiet room. The level and type of noise that disrupts sleep is different for each child. Some children can sleep through an alarm siren, others are awakened by the slightest noise. No matter what kind of sleeper your child is, white noise or soft music can be helpful in three ways. First, the gentle sound can be effective at soothing a child to sleep. Second, it can filter out noises that jar her awake – sounds from siblings, dishes clinking, television, or a dog barking. Third, it creates a consistent cue for sleep.



Choosing Bedtime Music

Many people use music as their baby's sleeptime sound. If you do, choose bedtime music carefully.

Some music (including jazz and much classical music) is too complex and stimulating for sleep. For music to be soothing to your baby, pick simple, repetitive, predictable music, like traditional lullabies. Compositions created especially for putting babies to sleep are great choices. Pick something that you will enjoy listening to night after night, too.

Sounds and White Noise

There are widely available, and very lovely, nature sounds recordings that work nicely for baby-soothing, as well as small sound-generating or white-noise devices and clocks. The sounds on these—raindrops, a bubbling brook or running water—often are similar to those sounds your baby heard before birth. A ticking clock and a bubbling fish tank also make wonderful white-noise options.

You can find some suitable recordings made especially for babies, or those made for adults to listen to when they want to

relax. Whatever you choose, listen to it first and ask yourself: Does this relax me? Would it make me feel sleepy if I listened to it in bed?

If you must put your baby to sleep in a noisy, active house full of people, keeping the sound or music running will help mask baby-waking noises. White noise can also help transition your sleepy baby from a noisy daytime house to which he's become accustomed subconsciously to one of absolute nighttime quiet.

Midnight Awakenings

Once your baby is familiar with his calming noise or lullaby music, you can use these to help your baby fall back to sleep when he wakes up in the middle of the night. Simply soothe him by playing the music (very quietly) during the calming and falling-asleep routine. If he wakes in the night, turn the music on again.

Traveling Sounds

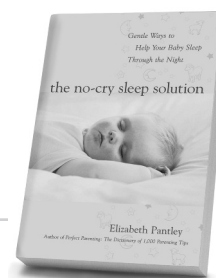
If your baby gets used to his sleep time sounds you can take advantage of this and take the music or sounds with you if you will be away

from home for naptime or bedtime. The familiarity of these sounds will help your baby sleep in an unfamiliar environment.

Changing Routines

Eventually your baby will rely on this technique less and less to fall and stay asleep. Don't feel you must rush the process; there is no harm in your child falling asleep to these gentle sounds— even adults can use this idea to successfully solve their own sleep problems. When you are ready to wean your child of sleep-sounds you can help this process along by reducing the volume by a small amount every night until you finally don't turn the music or sounds on at all.

Babies enjoy these peaceful sounds, and they are just one more piece in the puzzle that helps you to help your baby sleep—gently, without any crying at all.



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Solving Naptime Problems

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Naps are important for your child's health and growth. A nap refreshes a child so that she can maintain her energy for the rest of the day. Studies show that children who nap are more adaptable, have longer attention spans, and are less fussy than those who don't nap. Does your child need a nap?



Average hours of day and night sleep

Age	Number of naps	Naptime hours	Night sleep hours*	Total night and nap sleep
Newborn	Newborns sleep 16 - 18 hours daily, spread over 6 - 7 sleep periods.			
3 months	3	5 - 6	10 - 11	15
6 months	2	3 - 4	10 - 11	14 - 15
9 months	2	2.5 - 4	11 - 12	14
12 months	1 - 2	2 - 3	11.5 - 12	13.5 - 14
18 months	1 - 2	2 - 3	11.25 - 12	13 - 14
2 years	1	1 - 2.5	11 - 12	13 - 13.5
3-4 years	0 - 1	0 - 1.5	11 - 11.5	11 - 13
5-7 years	0 - 1	0 - 1	11	11 - 12

*These averages don't signify unbroken stretches of sleep since night waking is normal.
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Timing and length of naps

Timing of naps is important. A late nap will prevent your child from being tired at bedtime. Generally, the best nap times are:

- *Two naps:* midmorning (9:00 - 11:00) and early afternoon (12:00 - 2:30)
- *One nap:* early afternoon (12:00 - 2:30); after lunch

If your child tends towards short naps, don't assume it's all she needs. Try these tips for better naps:

- Provide a healthy lunch or snack before nap.
- Keep the room dark.
- Play lullabies or white noise during the nap.
- Dress her in comfortable clothes.

- Be sure that discomfort (teething, allergies, etc.) isn't preventing sleep.

Watch for signs of tiredness

Tired children fall asleep easily. If you miss the signals they become *overtired* and are unable to sleep. Your child may show one or more of these signs that tell you he is tired and ready to nap:

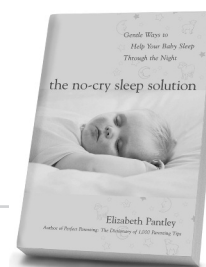
- losing interest in playtime
- becoming whiny or fussy
- losing patience
- having tantrums
- rubbing eyes or yawning
- caressing a lovey or blanket
- asking for a pacifier, bottle or to nurse
- looking glazed or unfocused
- becoming hyperactive

The nap routine

Once you've created a schedule that works with your child's periods of tiredness, follow a simple but specific nap routine. Your child will be comfortable with a pattern to his day. He may predict when naptime approaches and willingly cooperate with you.

Nap routines change

Children's sleep needs change over time. The routine that you set up today won't be the same one you're using a year from now. Be adaptable!



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Nightmares, Night Terrors and Fears

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

The lack of adequate, restful sleep can affect your child's mood, behavior, health, memory, and growth. If there is anything standing in the way of a good night's sleep it's important to address the issue and solve the problem. Following is a list of typical sleep disrupters and possible solutions.



Nightmares

Children spend more time dreaming than adults do, so they have more dreams—both good and bad. After a nightmare saying “*It was just a dream*” doesn’t explain what they experienced; after all, most kids believe that the tooth fairy and Big Bird are real, too.

After a nightmare, offer comfort just as you would for a tangible fear. If your child wakes with a nightmare:

- Stay with your child until she feels relaxed and ready to sleep.
- Be calm and convey that what’s happening is normal and that all is well.
- Reassure your child that he’s safe and that it’s OK to go back to sleep.

Night Terrors

During a night terror your child will wake suddenly and may scream or cry. Her eyes will be open, but she won’t be seeing. She may hyperventilate, thrash around, or talk incoherently. She may be sweating and flushed. She may seem scared, but your child is not really frightened, not awake, and not dreaming. She’s asleep, and in a zone between sleep cycles. A child having a night terror is unaware of what’s happening, and won’t remember the episode in the morning.

During a night terror you may try to hold your child, but often this will result in his pushing you away or fighting you off. The best response is a gentle pat, along with comforting words or *Shhh Shhh* sounds. If your child gets out of bed, lead him back. If he’s sitting up, guide him to lie back down. Keep an eye on him until he settles back to sleep.

Nighttime Fears

It’s normal for a child to imagine monsters that generate a fear of the dark. Even if you explain, and even if you assure him that he’s safe, he may still be scared. You can reduce his fears when you:

- Teach your child the difference between real and fantasy through discussion and book-reading.
- Find ways to help your child confront and overcome his fears. If dark shadows create suspicious shapes, provide a flashlight to keep at his bedside.
- Leave soothing lullabies playing, or white noises running to fill the quiet.
- Give your child one, two, or a zoo of stuffed animals to sleep with.
- Put a small pet, like a turtle or fish, in your child’s room for company.

- Take a stargazing walk, build a campfire, or have a candlelight dinner to make the dark more friendly.

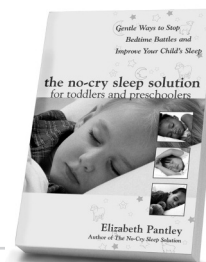
Preventing Sleep Disrupters

Some things have been found to reduce the number or severity of sleep-disturbing episodes. They are all based on good sleep practices and worth a try:

- Follow a calm, peaceful routine the hour before bedtime.
- Maintain the same bed time seven days a week.
- Avoid books and movies that frighten your child.
- Have your child take a daily nap.
- Provide your child with a light snack an hour before bedtime, avoiding spicy food, sugar, soda, or caffeine.
- Have your child use the potty just before she gets in to bed.

Is there a time to call a professional?

Always call a professional if you have concerns about your child’s sleep.



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Eight Sleep Tips for Every Child

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

The following ideas are of value to almost any sleeper, of any age. These tips can bring improvement not only in your child's sleep, but also in her daytime mood and last, but not least—improvements in your own sleep and outlook as well.



1 Maintain a consistent bedtime and awaking time.

Your child's biological clock has a strong influence on her wakefulness and sleepiness. When you establish a set time for bedtime and wake up time you "set" your child's clock so that it functions smoothly.

Aim for an early bedtime. Young children respond best with a bedtime between 6:30 and 7:30 P.M. Most children will sleep *better* and *longer* when they go to bed early.

2 Encourage regular daily naps.

Daily naps are important. An energetic child can find it difficult to go through the day without a rest break. A nap-less child will often wake up cheerful and become progressively fussier or hyper-alert as the day goes on. Also, the length and quality of naps affects night sleep—good naps equal better night sleep.

3 Set your child's biological clock.

Take advantage of your child's biology so that he's actually *tired* when bedtime arrives. Darkness causes an increase in the release of the body's sleep hormone—the biological "stop" button. You can align your child's sleepiness with bedtime by dimming the lights during the hour before bedtime. Exposing your child to morning light is pushing the "go" button in her brain—one that says,



"Time to wake up and be active."
So keep your mornings bright!

4 Develop a consistent bedtime routine.

Routines create security. A consistent, peaceful bedtime routine allows your child to transition from the motion of the day to the tranquil state of sleep.

An organized routine helps you coordinate the specifics: bath, pajamas, tooth-brushing. It helps you to function on auto-pilot at the time when you are most tired and least creative.

5 Create a cozy sleep environment.

Where your child sleeps can be a key to quality sleep. Make certain the mattress is comfortable, the blankets are warm, the room temperature is right, pajamas are comfy, and the bedroom is welcoming.

6 Provide the right nutrition.

Foods can affect energy level and sleepiness. Carbohydrates can have a calming effect on the body, while foods high in protein or sugar generate alertness, particularly when eaten alone. A few ideas for pre-bed snacks are: whole wheat toast and cheese, bagel and peanut butter, oatmeal with bananas, or yogurt and low-sugar granola.

Vitamin deficiencies due to unhealthy food choices can affect a

child's sleep.

Provide your child with a daily assortment of healthy foods.

7 Help your child to be healthy and fit.

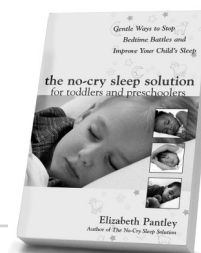
Many children don't get enough daily physical activity. Too much TV watching and a lack of activity prevents good sleep. Children who get ample daily exercise fall asleep more quickly, sleep better, stay asleep longer, and wake up feeling refreshed.

Avoid activity in the hour before bedtime though, since exercise is stimulating—they'll be jumping on the bed instead of sleeping in it!

8 Teach your child how to relax.

Many children get in bed but aren't sure what to do when they get there! It can help to follow a soothing pre-bed routine that creates sleepiness. A good pre-bed ritual is story time. A child who is listening to a parent read a book or tell a tale will tend to lie still and listen. This quiet stillness allows him to become sleepy.

Work with these eight ideas and you'll see improvements in your child's sleep, and yours too.



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Moving from Crib to Bed

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

When your child moves from crib to bed it's a milestone in his life as well as yours. *There is no precise time for making this move, though typically it's between the first and third birthday. The key to success is to be patient and allow your child time to adjust to the change.*



Why move a child from crib to bed?

If a child sleeps well in his crib, don't rush the change. Switching to a bed gives a child freedom and brings new issues for parents, such as the yo-yo syndrome or early morning wanderings. The most common reasons to switch:

- *Your child learns how to climb.*
Move your child out of the crib when the rail is up to the level of his nipples, since climbing out is more possible.
- *Your child outgrows the crib.*
Don't assume it's time! You may think that he's uncomfortable, but he may be content in his little nest.
- *Your child asks for a bed.*
If she's old enough, then go ahead and take the leap.
- *Your child is learning how to use the toilet during the night.*
Even if your child uses the toilet during the day, it's often a long while before bedtime dryness happens.
- *A new sibling is on the way.*
If your little one loves his crib, then ousting him to make room for the newcomer may add stress. If you feel that the time is right then make the change two months or more before your newborn arrives.

What kind of bed should my child move to?

There are a number of options for a child's first bed:

- *Toddler bed*
These are small, low, and child-sized. They have guard rails on all sides, and come in playful designs.
- *Regular bed*
A common choice is a mattress, box springs, and bed frame (with all sides protected from fall-outs). Consider a double or bigger size to accommodate the night-reading ritual.
- *Mattress on the floor*
A popular choice is a mattress or futon on the floor. This provides your little one with a big-kid bed, but one that prevents any painful falls.
- *Bunk bed*
Hold off on a bunk bed until your child is 6 years old, when it is considered safe.

How do we make the change?

Which approach is best for you will depend on your reasons for making the change, your child's personality, and the size of his room. Here are a few options:

- *Big-kid bed hoopla*
Some children enjoy having an official Big Kid Day party. Set up the bed, decorate the room, and add a few sleep-related gifts like books and stuffed animals.

• One-step-at-a-time

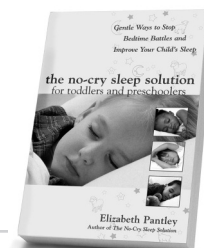
Take the mattress out of the crib and place it on the floor in the same place as the crib was. This gives your child the same sleeping surface and view of the room as he's accustomed to. Place guard rails around the sides to create a crib-like enclosure. Keep the same bedding and crib toys. This is a mid-step between the crib and a real bed.

• The gradual introduction

Set up the new bed in the same room with the crib. Allow your child to play on the bed and nap there. Do your bedtime reading in the new bed. This will help your child get used to the bed gradually.

Patience and encouragement

No matter which path you choose—be patient. Big steps toward growth often happen in spurts, and your child may be excited to welcome the change one day, but wary of it the next. Maintain your nightly bedtime routine and help your child develop a positive association with his new bed, since he'll be sleeping there for many years to come.



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Quick Facts About Potty Training

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*

***Potty training can be natural, easy, and peaceful.
The first step is to know the facts.***



- The perfect age to begin potty training is different for every child. Your child's best starting age could be anywhere from eighteen to thirty-two months. Pre-potty training preparation can begin when a child is as young as ten months.

- You can begin training at any age, but your child's biology, skills, and readiness will determine when he can take over his own toileting.

- Teaching your child how to use the toilet can, and should, be as natural as teaching him to build a block tower or use a spoon.

- No matter the age that toilet training begins, most children become physically capable of independent toileting between ages two and a half and four.

- It takes three to twelve months from the start of training to daytime toilet independence. The more readiness skills that a child possesses, the quicker the process will be.

- The age that a child masters toileting has absolutely no correlation to future abilities or intelligence.

- There isn't only one right way to potty train—any approach you use can work—if you are pleasant, positive and patient.

- Nighttime dryness is achieved only when a child's physiology supports this—you can't rush it.

- A parent's readiness to train is just as important as a child's readiness to learn.

- Potty training need not be expensive. A potty chair, a dozen pairs of training pants and a relaxed and pleasant attitude are all that you really need. Anything else is truly optional.

- A child's diet will affect his toileting patterns. Adequate daily liquids, plus a healthy diet containing fruit, vegetables and whole grains, will make elimination easier – which in turn makes potty training easier.

- Ample daily exercise ensures that your child's stool is moved through her system easily. Lack of movement can cause constipation and potty training problems.

- Most toddlers urinate four to eight times each day, usually about every two hours or so.

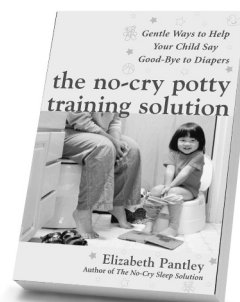
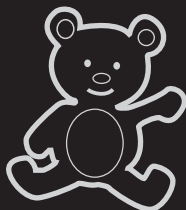
- Most toddlers have one or two bowel movements each day, some have three, and others skip a day or two in between movements. In general, each child has a regular pattern.

- Accidents are expected during training—it's a normal part of the learning process. These will decrease over time.

- More than 80 percent of children experience setbacks in toilet training. This means that what we call "setbacks" are really just the usual path to mastery of toileting.

- Ninety-eight percent of children are completely daytime independent by age four.

- Parents set the pace for toilet training. A positive attitude and kind patience can make potty training easy and fun!



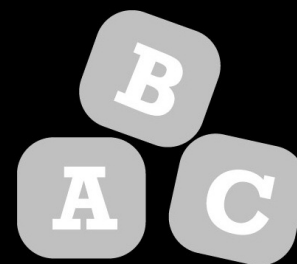
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The Potty Training Readiness Quiz

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*

Potty training is easier and happens faster if your child is truly ready in all three areas: physical, cognitive and social. But the big question is: how do you know when your child is ready? If you have never traveled this road before, you likely don't even know what signs to look for. Take this quiz to find out where your child is on the readiness spectrum.



1. I can tell by watching that my child is wetting or filling his diaper:

- a. Never.
- b. Sometimes.
- c. Usually.

2. My toddler's diaper needs to be changed:

- a. Frequently, every hour or two.
- b. It varies.
- c. Every two to three hours—sometimes less frequently.

3. My child understands the meaning of wet, dry, clean, wash, sit, and go:

- a. No.
- b. Some of them.
- c. Yes.

4. When my child communicates her needs, she:

- a. Says or signs a few basic words and I guess the rest.
- b. Gets her essential points across to me.
- c. Has a good vocabulary and talks to me in sentences.

5. If I give my child a simple direction, such as, "put this in the toy box," she:

- a. Doesn't understand or doesn't follow directions.
- b. Will do it if I coach or help her.
- c. Understands me and does it.

6. My child can take his pants off and put them on:

- a. No.
- b. With help he can.
- c. Yes.

7. When I read a book to my child, he:

- a. Ignores me.
- b. Sometimes listens, sometimes wanders off.
- c. Sits, listens and enjoys the story.

8. My toddler wants to do things "all by myself":

- a. Never.
- b. Sometimes.
- c. All the time!

9. I think that it's the right time to begin potty training:

- a. No.
- b. I'm undecided.
- c. Yes.

Total the number of responses for each letter:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Most answers are a: Wait.

Your little one doesn't seem to be ready just yet. Test again in a month or two.

Most answers are b: Time for pre-potty training—get ready!

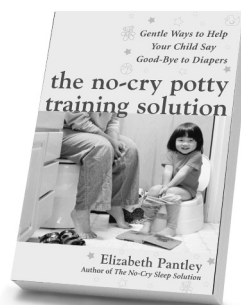
Your child is not quite ready for active training, but you can take many steps to prepare your toddler for the future. Gradual introduction of terms and ideas will make potty training easier when the time comes.

Most answers are c: Your toddler is ready to use the potty!

It's time to start your potty training adventure. Good luck, and have fun!

Are you between two scores?

Just like any parenting situation, there are choices to make. If your child is hovering between two categories, it's time to put your intuition to good use. Your knowledge of your own child can direct you toward the right plan of action.



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Potty Training—Get Ready, Get Set, Go!

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Potty Training Solution*

Get Ready

If your child is near or has passed his first birthday, you can begin incorporating pre-potty training ideas into his life. They are simple things that will lay the groundwork for potty training and will make the process much easier when you're ready to begin.

- During diaper changes, narrate the process to teach your toddler the words and meanings for bathroom-related functions, such as pee-pee and poo-poo. Include descriptive words that you'll use during the process, such as wet, dry, wipe, and wash.
- If you're comfortable with it, bring your child with you when you use the toilet. Explain what you're doing. Tell him that when he gets bigger, he'll put his pee-pee and poo-poo in the toilet instead of in his diaper. Let him flush the toilet if he wants to.
- Help your toddler identify what's happening when she wets or fills her diaper. Tell her, "You're going poo-poo in your diaper." Have her watch you dump and flush.
- Start giving your child simple directions and help him to follow them. For example, ask him to get a toy from another room or to put the spoon in the dishwasher.
- Encourage your child to do things on her own: put on her socks, pull up her pants, carry a cup to the sink, or fetch a book.

- Have a daily sit-and-read time together.

- Take the readiness quiz again every month or two to see if you're ready to move on to active potty learning.

Get Set

- Buy a potty chair, a dozen pairs of training pants, four or more elastic-waist pants or shorts, and a supply of pull-up diapers or disposables with a feel-the-wetness sensation liner.
- Put the potty in the bathroom, and tell your child what it's for.
- Read books about going potty to your child.
- Let your child practice just sitting on the potty without expecting a deposit.

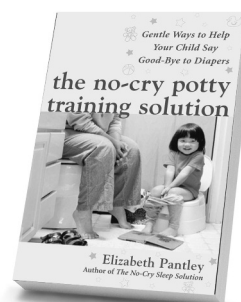
Go

- Begin dressing your child in training pants or pull-up diapers.
- Create a potty routine—have your child sit on the potty when she first wakes up, after meals, before getting in the car, and before bed.
- If your child looks like she needs to go—tell, don't ask! Say, "Let's go to the potty."
- Boys and girls both can learn sitting down. Teach your son to hold his penis down. He can learn to stand when he's tall enough to reach.
- Your child must relax to go: read a book, tell a story, sing, or talk about the day.

- Make hand washing a fun part of the routine. Keep a step stool by the sink, and have colorful, child-friendly soap available.
- Praise her when she goes!
- Expect accidents, and clean them up calmly.
- Matter-of-factly use diapers or pull-ups for naps and bedtime.
- Either cover the car seat or use pull-ups or diapers for car trips.
- Visit new bathrooms frequently when away from home.
- Be patient! It will take three to twelve months for your child to be an independent toileter.

Stop

- If your child has temper tantrums or sheds tears over potty training, or if you find yourself getting angry, then stop training. Review your training plan and then try again, using a slightly different approach if necessary, in a month or two.



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Tantrums, Fussing, and Whining

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Discipline Solution*

If you ask parents to list the most frustrating discipline problems during early childhood, you would find that these three items appear on every list. All children master their own version of these behaviors – every parent has to deal with them!

Controlling their emotions

Most often these behaviors are caused by a child's inability to express or control his emotions. Tiredness, hunger, boredom, frustration, and other causes that ignite The Big Three can frequently be avoided or modified. When your child begins a meltdown, try to determine if you can tell what underlying issue is causing the problem. Solve that problem and you'll likely have your sweet child back again.

Handling tantrums, fussing, and whining

No matter how diligent you are in recognizing trigger causes, your child will still have meltdown moments. Or even meltdown days. The following tips can help you handle those inevitable bumps in the road. Be flexible and practice those solutions that seem to bring the best results.

Offer choices

You may be able to avoid problems by giving your child more of a say in his life. You can do this by offering choices. Instead of saying, "*Get ready for bed right now,*" which may provoke a tantrum, offer a choice, "*What would you like to do first, put on your pajamas or brush your teeth?*" Children who are busy deciding things are often happy.

Tell him what you DO want

Instead of focusing on misbehavior and what you don't want him to do,

explain exactly what you'd like your child to do or say instead. Give him simple instructions to follow.

Validate her feelings

Help your child identify and understand her emotions. Give words to her feelings, "You're sad. You want to stay here and play. I know." This doesn't mean you must give in to her request, but letting her know that you understand her problem may be enough to help her calm down.

Teach the Quiet Bunny

When children get worked up, their physiological symptoms keep them in an agitated state. You can teach your child how to relax and then use this approach when fussing begins.

You can start each morning or end each day with a brief relaxation session. Have your child sit or lie comfortably with eyes closed. Tell a story that he's a Quiet Bunny. Name body parts (feet, legs, tummy, etc.) and have your child wiggle it, and then relax it.

Once your child is familiar with this process you can call upon it at times when he is agitated. Crouch down to your child's level, put your hands on his shoulders, look him in the eye and say, let's do our Quiet Bunny. And then talk him through the process. Over time, just mentioning it and asking him to close his eyes will bring relaxation.

Distract and involve

Children can easily be distracted when a new activity is suggested. If your child is whining or fussing try viewing it as an "activity" that your child is engaged in. Since children aren't very good multi-taskers you might be able to end the unpleasant activity with the recommendation of something different to do.

Invoke his imagination

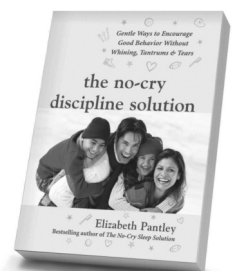
If a child is upset about something, it can help to vocalize his fantasy of what he wishes would happen: "I bet you wish we could buy every single toy in this store." This can become a fun game.

Use the preventive approach

Review desired behavior prior to leaving home, when entering a public building, or before you begin a playdate. This might prevent the whining or tantrum from even beginning. Put your comments in the positive (tell what you want, not what you don't want) and be specific.

When it's over, it's over

After an episode of misbehavior is finished you can let it go and move on. Don't feel you must teach a lesson by withholding your approval, love or company. Children bounce right back, and it is okay for you to bounce right back, too.



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What Triggers Your Anger?

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Discipline Solution*

Family life is complicated and unpredictable. Day-to-day expectations and responsibilities can create angry emotions in both parents and children. No matter how skilled you are at parenting, no matter how wonderful your children are, you cannot eliminate or avoid the unpleasant situations that occur in all families. However, once you understand where the anger comes from you can modify the situation and learn ways to control your reactions, so that anger can occupy a smaller place in your home.

Our children bring us incredible joy. Yet, there are times that they can bring out the anger in us. It is helpful to identify the things that provoke your anger so you can make positive changes in your household.

What sets you off?

Most parents get angry over issues that are insignificant in the grand scheme of life, yet happen on such a regular basis that they become blown out of proportion. Some of the most common parenting issues that trigger anger are whining, temper tantrums, sibling bickering, and non-cooperation. Determine which behaviors most bother you and set about making a plan to correct each problem that sets off your anger.

Notice your hot spots

In addition to triggers, there are “hot spots” in the day when anger more easily rises to the surface. These are typically times when family members are tired, hungry or stressed. These emotions leave us more vulnerable to anger. This can happen in the early morning, before naptime, before meals, or at bedtime. You may also encounter situations when misbehavior increases, and so does your anger: grocery shopping, playdates, or family visits, for example.

Set a plan

Determine if there are things you can do differently to ward off some of the issues that spark your anger.

For example, if the morning rush brings stress, you can prepare things the night before: set out clothing, pack lunches, collect shoes. Then create a “morning poster” that outlines the daily routine step-by-step.

If you find that tempers are shorter in the hour before dinner, set out healthy appetizers, enlist the kids’ help in preparing dinner, get the kids involved in a craft activity, or plan an earlier meal time.

Take positive action

Doing things the way you’ve always done them and expecting different results only leaves you frustrated and angry. Instead, identify your anger triggers and take action to change things for the better.

Learn something new

Once you’ve identified a problem, consider several options for solving it. Jot down possible alternatives on paper, or talk it over with another adult. Read through a few parenting books and check the indexes for your topic. Visit an online parenting chat group or posting board. There’s no reason for you to make decisions in a vacuum – I guarantee that the prob-

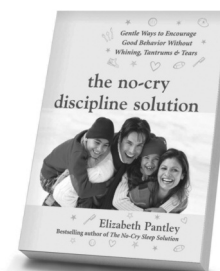
lems you are dealing with are common and there are lots of sources for solutions.

Be flexible

Anger is not something that can be dealt with once and then will go away. Your children grow and change, and new issues appear. From time to time take a fresh look at the issues that create negative emotions in your family and take action to change things for the better.

Let love help

And, finally, at times of anger, hold on to the feeling of love that is the foundation of your relationship with your child. Take time every day to bask in the joy of being a parent. Take time to play, talk and listen. Hug, kiss and cuddle your child often. When you build up this foundation of positive love and emotions you will find yourself less likely to experience intense anger.



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Hitting, Kicking, Biting and Hair Pulling

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Discipline Solution*

Children resort to aggressive behaviors because of a lack of wisdom and self-control. It is not a sign that a child is hateful or mean. Kids are human beings and human beings will get angry, we can't prevent that. What we can do is teach our children how to handle their frustration and anger in appropriate ways. If your child uses physical acts to express her feelings, use some of the following tips to change her behavior.

Intercede before it happens

Watch your child during playtime. When you see her becoming frustrated or angry—intervene. Coach her through the issue. Teach her what to do, or model what to say to her friend. Or if she seems too upset to learn, redirect her attention to another activity until her emotions level out.

Teach and explain

It's one thing to tell a child what not to do or to step into an argument and solve it yourself. It's another thing entirely to teach her what to do in advance of the next problem. This can be done through role-play, discussion, and reading a few children's books about angry emotions.

Examine hidden causes

Is your child hungry, tired, sick, jealous, frustrated, bored or scared? If you can identify any feelings driving your child's actions you can address those along with the aggressive behavior.

Give more attention to the injured party.

Often the child who hits gets so much attention that the action becomes a way of gaining the spotlight. Instead, give more attention to the child who was hurt. After a brief statement, "*No hitting!*" turn and give attention to the child who

was wronged, "*Come here and Mommy will give you a hug and read you a book.*"

Teach positive physical touches.

Show your child how to hold hands during a walk or how to give a back rub or foot massage. Teach a few physical games, like tag or cat's cradle. Under direct supervision, children who are more physical can gain a positive outlet for their physical energy.

Teach the clapping method

Tell a child to clap his hands whenever he feels an urge to hit. This gives him an immediate outlet for his emotions and helps him learn to keep his hands to himself. An alternate is to teach him to put his hands in his pockets when he feels like hitting. Reward with praise anytime you see he's successful.

Give your child a time out

To use Time Out when a child acts out aggressively, immediately and gently take the child by the shoulders, look him in the eye and say, "*No hurting others, time out.*" Guide the child to a chair and tell him, "*You may get up when you can play without hitting.*" By telling him that he can get up when he's ready, you let him know that he is responsible for controlling his own behavior. If the child gets up and hits

again, say, "*You are not ready to get up yet,*" and direct him back to time out.

Avoid play hitting and wrestling

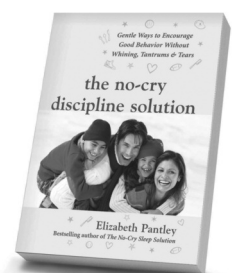
Young children who roughhouse with a parent or sibling during play time might then use these same actions during non-wrestling times. It can be hard for them to draw the line between the two. If you have a child who has trouble controlling his physical acts then avoid this kind of play.

Don't lose control

When you see your child hurting another child it's easy to get angry. This won't teach your child what she needs to learn: how to control her emotions when others are making her mad. You are mad at her, so she'll be watching how you handle your anger.

Don't let your child watch violent TV or video games

Children can become immune to the impact of violence, and they may copy what they see depicted on the screen. Avoid viewing shows that portray aggression as an appropriate way of handling anger.



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Interrupting

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Discipline Solution*

Whether you're on the phone, busy on your computer, or talking to another adult, it can be frustrating when your children constantly interrupt you. What's surprising to learn is that they do it because they always get a response from you when they do! They've learned that you are willing to stop what you're doing to answer them.

Keep in mind that children are so focused on their own needs that they don't realize that you have needs, too. They can learn how to pay more attention to other people's needs as well as their own, which will help control these endless interruptions.

Give lessons and examples

Teach your children how to determine if something warrants an interruption, as they may have a hard time deciphering when interruptions are justified. Discuss examples of when it's okay to interrupt, such as when someone is at the door, or if a sibling is hurt.

Coach proper manners

Teach your child how to wait for a pause in the conversation and to say, "Excuse me." When she remembers to do this, respond positively. If the interruption is about something that should wait, politely inform your child of this.

Don't answer the question.

Many parents admonish kids for interrupting, but in the same breath respond to the child's interrupted request, which just reinforces the habit.

Watch your manners

Parents sometimes jump in so quickly to correct their child's bad manners that they don't realize that

the way in which their correction is delivered is itself rude. Use your own good manners to model appropriate communication skills. Pause, look at your child, and say, "I'll be with you in a minute."

"The Squeeze"

Tell your child that if she wants something when you are talking to another adult, she should gently squeeze your arm. You will then squeeze her hand to indicate that you know she is there and will be with her in a minute. At first, respond quickly so your child can see the success of this method. Over time you can wait longer, just give a squeeze every few minutes to remind your child that you remember the request.

Create a busy-box

Put together a box of activities or games that can only be used when you are on the telephone, working at your desk, or talking with an adult. Occasionally refill it with new things or rotate the contents. Be firm about putting them away when you are done. Your child will be looking forward to your next conver-

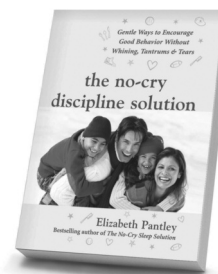
sation, which will be interruption free!

Plan ahead

Before you make a phone call or have a visitor, let your child know what to expect. *"I'm going to make a phone call. I'll be a while, so let's get your busy-box ready to use while I'm on the phone."*

Give praise when deserved

Catching your child doing the right thing can be the best lesson of all. Praise your child for using good manners, for remembering to say "excuse me," and for interrupting only for a valid reason.



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All About Separation Anxiety

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution*

It's a common scene at any daycare, playground or birthday party: *a crying child clinging to a parent who is desperately trying to convince the child to let go and join the fun. Almost all children have some aspect of separation anxiety during the first six years of life. Separation anxiety should not be feared or even wished away, as it is the most obvious and identifiable sign of your child's love and trust in you. It is the demonstration of the wonderful job you are doing as you raise your child. It is the grand indicator that your child believes that you represent the ultimate in safety and security, above anyone or anything else in this world.*



What causes Separation Anxiety?

Separation anxiety is a perfectly normal and important developmental adaptation of a child's emotional and mental growth. It does not have a particular "cause." Nothing you have done has "made" your child develop separation anxiety.

Even though separation anxiety has not been caused by any particular action or event, there are caregiver actions that can either heighten or reduce a child's anxiety. There are many things that can help build a child's trust and confidence in his relationship with you so that he can transfer these feelings to other trusted adults who will help him feel safe away from his home base.

How common is it?

It makes perfect sense that children experience separation anxiety when pulled apart from their main caregiver. Nearly all children experience some aspect of separation anxiety. For some children the stage begins earlier, even at a few months of age. For some, the effects begin later, and some children have anxiety that lasts for longer spells than others. Some children have very visible, obvious

indicators of their feelings, but there are also children who have less apparent reactions. There is no exact pattern or set of symptoms, but almost all children have it to some degree.

Does my child have separation anxiety?

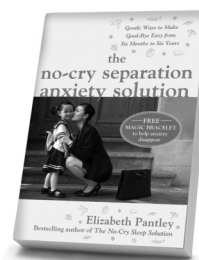
Separation anxiety has many different symptoms, but it is often easy for parents to spot in their own child. It helps if you know exactly what to look for. The following are behaviors are most typically used to define normal separation anxiety:

- Clinginess
- Crying when a parent is out of sight
- Strong preference for only one parent over all other human beings
- Fear of strangers, or of family and friends who are not frequently seen
- Resistance to separation at bedtime or naptime
- Waking at night crying for a parent
- Regression to an earlier stage of development, such as thumb-sucking or babytalk
- Anxiety that is easily eliminated upon a parent's appearance

This too shall pass

Separation anxiety doesn't have a specific beginning nor does it have an exact end. It shows itself in peaks and valleys – good days and bad days, good weeks and bad, and even good years followed by bad weeks. It can be bewildering to parents when their child shifts from confidence to anxiety and back again many times during the first six to eight years of life, but this unpredictable behavior is very normal. Gaining the maturity and skills to handle separation with confidence is a process, not a single event.

This stage, like so many others in childhood, will pass. In time, your child will learn that she can separate from you, that you will return, and that everything will be okay between those two points in time. Much of this learning is based on trust and experience, which, just as for every human being young or old, takes time to build.



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From *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution* by Elizabeth Pantley (McGraw-Hill). Here is the link for information and more excerpts: <http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth/>

Daycare or Preschool - Peaceful Good-Byes

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution*

Heading off to daycare or preschool, and leaving Mommy or Daddy behind for the first time is a colossal milestone in a child's life. *There is no exact method for figuring out which child will happily wave and run off to play and which one will take one look at the new surroundings and superglue himself to a parent's leg. If yours is one of those superglue kids, here are some ideas to help him loosen his grip and enjoy his new experience.*



Take small steps to your separation goal

Some children have an attack of anxiety if they go from a comfortable daycare setting, or a part-time school day to a brand new situation or a longer schedule. It can help to slowly move to the new routine. If your child is struggling, see if you can arrange to build up to the full day's schedule. Begin with a one hour segment for a day or two, moving to a two hour segment, and eventually to the full schedule. Regression can happen after a weekend, particularly after having three or four days off at home. In this case it can be helpful to shorten the first day back by a few hours to allow your child to readjust to where she was before the long weekend. After a month of two of the new schedule your child should settle in to his new routine.

Encourage friendships with playdates

Ask the teacher or caregiver if there are a few friends your child has connected with. Set up a few playdates with these children at your home. Make each visit relatively short, as too long of an event can be tiring or stressful for a child who is new to playdates. Plan ahead to have a snack and game ready, as some children will find a full session of free-play difficult to navigate. Once you've had a couple of successful sessions at your home, branch out to a playdate at a friend's home.

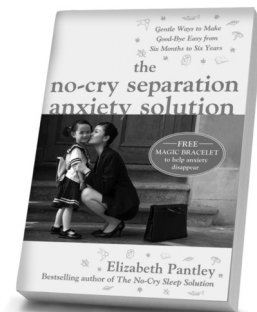
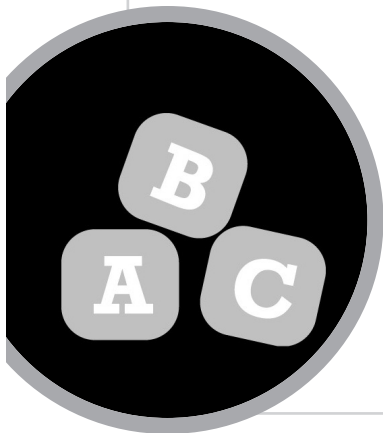
The play sessions that occur away from school allow children to develop a more personal friendship. Having a deeper friendship with another child or two at the daycare center or classroom can create more security for your child when he's away from home during the day.

Coordinate arrival with other families

If you can, coordinate your daily walk or ride to school with another family. Set up a carpool and offer to drive the kids together. Having a friend to walk into the center with can change the dynamics of the drop off routine dramatically.

Remain calm when your child is anxious

When other adults are waving goodbye to their confident children, and your little one is crying and clinging to you for dear life, it's easy to become flustered. It's that time, however, when your child desperately needs you to present him with your calm and loving reassurance. Put on blinders and tune out the other parents and children so that you can focus on your child only. You can be most helpful when you convey your confident, peaceful demeanor to your child.



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When Your Baby Has Separation Anxiety

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution*

From the time that babies become aware of the world around them they begin to form important relationships with the people in their lives.

They quickly learn that certain people are vital to their happiness and their survival. Babies don't have the ability to understand how the world works, so they don't know what makes these people appear or disappear, and when they are out of sight they have no way of knowing if their beloved people are gone forever. So to protect themselves from potential loss, babies crave the nearness of those they love.

Try to embrace separation anxiety as a positive sign. It's perfectly okay — even wonderful — for your child to be so attached to you and for her to desire your constant companionship. Congratulations: It's evidence that the bond you've worked so hard to create is holding.

Over time, your little one will learn that when the two of you are separated everything is just fine, and that other people are capable of meeting his needs. He'll also learn through experience that you do always eventually return. It will take time, however, for your child to mature enough to reach this point. Until then, to help your child learn to understand, accept and deal with separation, try some of the following ideas.

PLAY THE “BYE-BYE” GAME

Most parents play “Peek-A-Boo” games with their babies. That's a great way to show Baby that even when he can't see you - you still exist. You can take this game to the next level — here's how: Say “Bye-Bye” to your baby and duck behind a corner or a piece of furniture. A few seconds later pop out and say, “Hi Baby!” Play this game every day, and then use the same actions when you leave the room or when you leave the house.

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT PLAYTIME

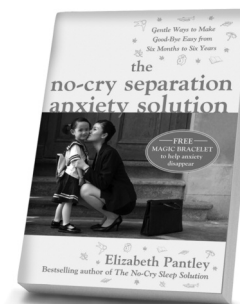
Many children wake up after a nap, or in the morning, and are content to look around, play with a toy or daydream. Without thinking it through, we act as if baby can never be awake and alone. It's helpful to know that a baby or toddler can enjoy alone time and can learn to be his own best company. This is a lovely gift that you give your child. I suggest that next time . . . walk a little slower! Listen carefully— is she calling to you or fussing for attention? Or is she just waking up to her world and taking a few quiet minutes for herself? If Baby's content then keep an ear on her, but allow her this independent play time.

AVOID THE IN-ARMS TRANSFER

It's common to hand the baby over to the sitter on your way out the door. But this physical act can produce a lot of anxiety for your baby. To avoid this, make your exit when your baby is playing on the floor, or sitting in a swing or highchair. Have the sitter engage your child's attention. Say a quick, happy good-bye. When you're gone — that's the time for the caregiver to pick your baby up. Then she'll be the rescuer - this can help them bond while you are gone.

AVOID SEPARATING WHEN POSSIBLE

It's perfectly okay to avoid separation when your child is in the midst of an anxiety stage. Some people will try to convince you that it's important to force your child to deal with separations. But the truth is that no study proves that a child who is forced to face his fear head on will overcome it easier or quicker than one who is allowed to adjust on his own time frame. It makes sense to be respectful - and work with your child's needs - to gently and lovingly nudge him towards the goal of independence.



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From *The No-Cry Separation Anxiety Solution* by Elizabeth Pantley (McGraw-Hill). Here is the link for information and more excerpts: <http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth/>

Get Your Picky Eater to Try Something New

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution*

Is your child unwilling to taste a new food? *A picky eater often has to be exposed to something new as many as ten to fifteen times before even tasting it! Children trust familiar things in their lives and are often suspicious of something new and different—this applies to food too. A food that has an unusual appearance, color, smell, or texture can be off-putting to a young child. That's why repeated exposure helps. Eventually the unusual food becomes familiar, and at that point, the child becomes open to the idea of tasting it and giving it a fair evaluation. Knowing these facts gives us insight into how to introduce new foods and what to expect when we do.*

Here are a few tips:

- Begin by putting a tiny bit of the new food—such as two chick-peas or one Brussels sprout—on your child's plate along with regular favorites. Don't expect him to eat it, and don't make a comment if he pulls it apart, smells it, or smashes it. Allow the experimentation to occur—it's the first step to acceptance. If you've displayed the new food on your child's plate eight to ten times and he still hasn't eaten any, then gently encourage him to take "just one bite."
- Pick one or two new foods at a time and put one on your child's plate three or four times per week for several months. When he sees it enough times he'll eventually give it a taste.
- Let your child observe you eating the new food. Mention to your spouse or a friend that you enjoy the food so that your child hears your comment. Studies tell us that when children are certain their parents or other important people in their lives really like a food (not just eat it out of duty, but actually enjoy it) they decide it's a good thing to try for themselves.

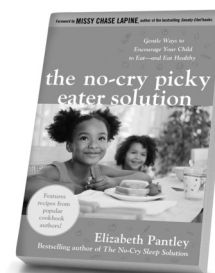
Melissa, mother of five-year-old Brenna, four-year-old Gianni, two-year-old Giulio, and nine-month-old Brydie shares her idea:

"To introduce my kids to some new foods, I create a food treasure hunt. I have the kids play in their room so I can put out the food and make a map to each place with clues to the next food spot. They don't get the next clue unless they try the food at each spot. I try to have only two new or not-so-keen-on foods along with about three things they do like along the way. The treasure at the end is dessert!"

- If you are eating with another adult, offer that person a taste of the new food. Ask her in advance to try it willingly and declare it tasty. When a child sees someone else being adventurous, he may be more willing to do so himself.
- After your child has tried the food and found it at least minimally acceptable (meaning he doesn't spit it out or gag on it!), try putting it out as an appetizer before dinner is served. If your child is hungry, and it's the first thing offered, he may actually eat a bite or two.

Catherine, mother to eight-year-old Ben and four-year-old Birdy tells her tale:

"I put kale on his plate and put kale on his plate. My son tried it and grimaced, and we praised him for trying it. Pages flew off the calendar, and his beard grew down to the floor, and then one day he ate it without comment. And then one day he ate it and said, 'This is actually not as bad as I thought.' After which a pair of bluebirds draped the banner of joy around my shoulders!"



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*This article is an excerpt from **The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution** by Elizabeth Pantley. (McGraw-Hill, 2011)*

Your Picky Eater - Make Small Changes to Reap Big Results

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution*



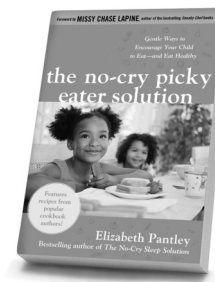
It can be hard—almost impossible, sometimes—to change your child’s rigidly held eating habits.

Instead of trying to overhaul every meal and snack, begin by making a few small changes, one at a time, toward a more nutritious diet. Pick just a few items to start with. Once these become routine, then change another couple of items. If you follow this process, you’ll find that within a year you will have improved your child’s overall diet significantly.



Here are some ideas for some small changes you can make; experiment with them until you find substitutes that your child will accept willingly and watch your child’s diet gradually transform and improve:

- Replace soda with homemade lemonade or a flavored water drink, and then, over time, begin to substitute plain water as the main beverage.
- Substitute high-fat beef or pork sausages, hot dogs, or lunch meats with similar versions made of turkey, chicken, or soy.
- Instead of non-nutritious snacks, chips, or crackers, try pita and hummus, whole-grain pretzels with peanut butter, or veggie sticks with dip.
- Add a healthy side dish to a typical meal. Raw veggies, applesauce, mixed fruit, or a serving of yogurt can share the plate with everyday favorites.
- Add sliced fruit, berries, or chopped nuts to a favorite cereal or oatmeal.
- Serve the same foods as usual, but modify the portion sizes to increase the healthy foods and decrease the less nutritious ones. Slightly increase the amount of lean proteins, vegetables, and whole grains, and slightly decrease the servings of less healthy foods and desserts.
- Slowly reduce the amount of salt, sugar, butter, cheese, and oil that you use in preparing food. Your child won’t notice small changes, and you can gradually move toward using much less of these ingredients.
- Examine your child’s favorite foods and make subtle changes to create healthier versions. By making small adjustments over time, your child’s taste buds will adjust until you can finally replace the old version with a healthier alternative. For example, in a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, replace one slice of white bread with whole wheat, mix one-half sugar-based jelly and one-half fruit-only spread, and replace a portion of the processed peanut butter with a low-sugar, non-trans fat version. Over time, increase the amount of the healthier ingredients.



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Make Mealtime Fun for Your Picky Eater

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Picky Eater Solution*

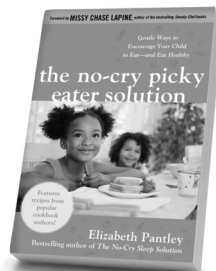


Kids just want to have fun, so use these ideas to entice them to the table.

Lightening up the mood and getting creative is a great way to take the stress out of mealtime and bring more joy to your table, while getting your little one to eat. Try a few of these suggestions.

- Give food a crazy name. You can come up with a name for just about any food. Funny names get the best results, such as calling melon balls Pixie Basketballs or kidney beans Dinosaur Eggs. Adding your child's name to any food or meal gives him a reason to try it and love it. Experiment with names like: Sloppy Joans, Ben's Belly-icious Beans or Lillian-burgers. Or name food after a favorite cartoon character.
- Make it talk! A great way to get younger children engaged is to have the food actually "talk" to him. The spaghetti can call your child to the table. The beans can "ask" to climb into his mouth and visit his tummy.
- Use cookie cutters or a knife to make fun shapes out of sandwiches, pancakes, and cheese. Triangles, strips, circles, or funny shaped bits can be more fun than a plain old square.
- Use anything other than a kitchen plate. It's easy to use containers, toy dishes, an ice cube tray, or a muffin tin as dishes.
- Get artistic! Instead of neat piles on the plate make designs or separate the peas all over the place. Kids find a fun disarray more appealing.
- Use food coloring to create pink mashed potatoes or purple mashed cauliflower, or add color to water when boiling pasta. Your child can participate by choosing the colors or adding the drops. Foods create color, too – add blueberries to oatmeal or strawberries to yogurt for more color.
- Get out the craft supplies and help your kids design and make their own placements, a table centerpiece, or napkin holders. Make it a monthly routine, perhaps decorating the table for each holiday.
- Purchase a dinner plate set decorated with your child's current favorite TV or movie character. Or take them to the store and let them choose their own dishes, even if they don't match your set.
- Get creative with presentation. Your child's plate doesn't always have to look the same – with a pile of each different type of food neatly arranged. You can string beans or noodles around the edge of the plate. Try alternating veggies, meat and grain in mini-piles or stripes all over the plate, or combine them to make a design. Get creative when you're dishing out the next meal and see what happens!
- Combine fun names and interesting presentations to make a meal irresistible. Stand up broccoli pieces in a bed of mashed potatoes and sprinkle on bits of meat to make an edible treat: "Dinner Forestville."
- Try an unusual configuration of a usual food. Instead of spaghetti with meatballs serve one mega-meatball or lots of mini-meatballs. Cut a carrot in a very long, skinny strip from one end of the carrot to the other, and instead of apple pieces make long spirals using a potato peeler.
- Kids love foods they can pick up by hand and dip – so anything that comes with a sauce can be served separately with the sauce in a bowl. Fruit in mashed cottage cheese or yogurt, apples in peanut butter, veggies in ranch dressing, or chicken pieces or beef cubes in marinara sauce are all fun to eat.

When you make mealtime more fun your picky eater just might become a lot less picky!



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