The lowdown on bringing up a toddler

By Harvey Karp, M.D.

W here did your baby go? One day you’re cradling a tiny newborn in your arms and then, before you know it, you’re living with an all-new creature: cuter than ever, but suddenly opinionated, stubborn and lightning fast. There’s nothing like a one, two or three year old to help you see the world in wonderful new ways—the bugs in the grass, the shapes in the clouds.

Toddlers brim with curiosity, excitement and irresistible charm. But, as every parent knows, it’s not all fun. Around the first birthday, many parents experience a mini “clash of civilizations,” as toddlers’ actions and opinions put them on a collision course with the family’s rules and expectations.

One reason they act the way they do is because, during their early years, toddlers experience a rush of brain development that frequently knocks them off balance. Compared to older kids, toddlers have immature brains, and when they get upset, the brain center that controls language, logic and patience literally shuts down.

Anyone living with a toddler knows how quickly the emotional climate can shift. One minute, all is bliss. Then bam, he or she may cry, scream and erupt into a tantrum. And despite your best intentions, the only words that come to you are “No!” “Stop!” and “Don’t touch!”

The dilemma for parents

Parents of toddlers want to know how to get their children to behave, to be kind and cooperative, and to grow up emotionally happy and healthy. But they’re bombarded with contradictory advice: Be giving! Be strict! Be a friend! Be the boss!

Trying to be a buddy and repeatedly giving in to kids’ demands may end up teaching them that whining works and can turn them into spoiled brats. On the other hand, trying to be “the boss” relies too much on threats and often ends up inflaming rather than reducing confrontations.

To build good relationships with young children, parents need some key skills, among which is the ability to communicate with respect—and to speak the language a

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Communicating with respect

This simple rule works with toddlers (and everyone else). Whenever you talk to someone who is upset, repeat the person’s feelings first—before offering your own comments or advice: “I know you wanted ice cream…”

When we’re upset, we want our friends to hear us lovingly and attentively. The feeling of being heard, respected and understood makes us more open to offers of advice, reassurance or distraction.

The same goes for toddlers. When they get upset, acknowledge their dismay. Then, once your child calms down a bit, you can try to distract her, reassure him, or solve the problem. Here are some other things you might do and say.

**Be physical.** Offer a hug, tousle his hair, put a hand on her shoulder or just sit quietly together.

**Whisper.** It’s a fun way to change the subject and reconnect.

**Give options.** “We can’t have soda. How about some juice?”

**Briefly explain your point of view.** Save important lessons for a calmer time, later on, when your child can pay better attention.

**Grant a wish in fantasy.** “I wish I could room up all the rain and we could go outside and play now.”

**Give “you-I” messages.** Share your feelings in a brief “you-I” sentence to help a toddler understand how others feel: “When you kick me, I feel angry” or “When you call me stupid, I feel sad.”

**Help a toddler express feelings.** “Show me your happy face…sad face…mad face.” While you’re reading, ask: “Look at that sad baby. How do you look when you feel sad? How do you think that boy feels?”

**Some things to avoid**

I’m always amazed to hear parents call their children names like “idiot” or “whiner”—words they would never allow a stranger to say to their child.

Angry words can slip out of all of us. Just keep in mind that name calling is particularly hurtful to kids around two—because they’re very focused on words and they also care a lot what others think.

Sweeping statements like “You’re the worst…” or “You never try” or “You always whine” are exaggerations and, as such, they are usually unfair and always untrue. I recommend tossing the words “always,” “never,” “best” and “worst” out of your vocabulary.

At the same time, replace those mean labels that can tear toddlers down with descriptions that will build them up. For example, instead of bossy, hyper and nosy, use “a leader,” “energetic, spirited” and “curious.”

**When things start to change**

At around 15 months, your toddler will develop some new traits that will make life easier.

**Between 18 and 36 months,** a child’s reasonable, sentence-speaking, impulse-controlling left brain kicks into gear. He or she will want to watch and imitate everything you do, from sweeping the floor to showing kindness—and, yes, even swearing.

At this time, kids start to enjoy putting all the cars in one pile and the horses in another. This love of order can become quite rigid. Toddlers may get upset if you change a routine or give them a cracker with a broken corner.

**How you give praise matters**

**“Time-ins” work better** than a steady stream of time-outs in raising a happy, cooperative child. A wink, a smile and a high five are the simplest form of time-ins.

Praise is the time-in that’s most used by parents. But be careful: it can backfire. Here’s how to make your praise really count.

**Give kids a “balanced diet” of praise.** Parents who always hype their comments (“You’re the best...in the world”) may end up with a toddler who either mistrusts praise or needs constant applause to feel a sense of self-worth.

**Praise the action you want to encourage.** When your child helps you set the table, instead of saying, “You’re my best helper ever,” say “Thanks for setting the table. That was really helpful.”

**Praise good tries.** Cheer toddlers on when they try, even if they don’t succeed. “Good try pouring the milk.” You’ll see steady progress, and your child will feel like a success every step of the way.

**Don’t give praise, then yank it back.** “Good, you picked up your toys. Why do I always have to nag you to do it?” It’s like getting a gift and having it taken back. It teaches kids to not trust a compliment.

**Let your praise style change as your child grows.** For early toddlers (12-18 months), be generous. Give lots of smiles, a little applause and a few happy words. For middle toddlers (18-36 months), scale back your over-the-top praise. Give occasional applause, lots of smiles and comment on specifics: “Wow, you built a really tall tower.” Older kids (36-48 months) love being compared to something smart or powerful. “Thanks for getting the keys. You did it fast as a tiger!”

**The special role of patience**

**Teaching patience** will help your child become more reasonable, less impulsive and less whiny. Later it helps both in and out of school.

**What I call** “patience stretching” helps kids learn to be patient by expecting them to wait a tiny bit, then a bit more, then even more.

**A common approach** to teaching patience is for a parent to tell a two year old who’s tugging on your jacket, “Just a second, sweetheart.” But that doesn’t do the trick.

**What works better** is to have something your toddler wants, such as food or a toy. First, you almost give your child the juice he or she asked for, but then you say, “Wait, just one second,” as if you remembered something and turned away for a few seconds. Turn back, give your toddler the juice and say, “Good waiting.” An added plus: your child will also see that you keep your word.

**Timers can help** older toddlers practice patience. Initially set the timer for 20 seconds and then gradually increase the waiting period to a minute or two.

**Learning how to breathe** deeply helps develop patience and is also a self-soothing skill kids can use anytime when they’re frustrated, scared, hurt or angry.

Is my 5th grader too young for a cellphone?

I enjoyed your article about raising media-savvy kids (June issue). The question I’m struggling with is when to give my child a cellphone. She’s in the 5th grade and I think she’s too young, but I’m getting a lot of pressure!

—S.H., Milwaukee, WI

Many parents would agree but the trend is hard to resist these days, when 58 percent of 12-year-olds now have cellphones, up from just 18 percent in 2004.

Parents generally say that they buy their kids a phone for safety reasons—so they can reach them at any time. But for children, it’s all about their social lives and wanting to impress their friends. By the 6th grade, when most kids are 11, the pressure to text becomes intense.

This doesn’t mean, of course, that there’s an easy answer to the question of when to give my child a cellphone. Ability to be responsible for it and, of course, if the family can afford it.

Common Sense Media CEO James P. Steyer encourages parents to forgo any high-end technology features on a child’s cellphone. He and others advise not giving a child younger than 13 a cellphone with a camera and Internet access. A phone with Web access allows a child’s unsupervised use of social networking and video sites.

Make any cellphone purchase carefully. With so many parents in your situation, some carriers are offering plans that set limits on minutes, time-of-day use, texting and Internet access.

A reader writes

Work & Family Life is such a valuable source of information. I can feel and see the love that is poured into it. One amazing thing is the timeliness of the articles. I couldn’t order the topics better if I had a personal choice each month!

—Bessie Steward, Detroit, MI

Healthy kids need more time for free play

The much-publicized battle against childhood obesity has a missing link, according to the Alliance for Childhood, a nonprofit partnership of health professionals and educators.

“The missing ingredient is good old-fashioned child-initiated play, the kind that used to keep children moving and active for hours each day,” said Joan Almon, executive director of the Alliance.

“We’re delighted that Michelle Obama has taken up this issue as First Lady,” Almon added. But a focus almost entirely on improved nutrition and physical activity isn’t enough.

Many pediatricians agree. In a report for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Dr. Kenneth Ginsberg of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia described unstructured play as “an exceptional way to increase physical activity levels in children, which is one important strategy in the resolution of the obesity epidemic.” The AAP has called for “unorganized outdoor free play” as an important strategy for fighting obesity.

In his studies, Lou Bowers, professor emeritus of physical education at the University of South Florida, has found that free play, unlike organized activities, gives kids the health benefits of exercise—but with little or no prompting.

He said: “It is an activity that children of all ages, sizes and abilities can benefit from equally, with no team pressures, physical preferences or singling out, as is sometimes the case with other activities.”

However, many parents see outdoor play as too risky these days, and even the less fearful don’t want to be labeled as “uncaring.” Lenore Skenazy wrote about this phenomenon in her book Free Range Kids (adapted for Work & Family Life, July-August 2010). The outdoor play issue has sparked a movement of parents and advocacy groups such as: playborhood.com Tips on organizing free play times for kids in your neighborhood.

ipausa.org and wild-zone.net Help organizing outdoor play days in parks.

playworksusa.org Working with schools to change no-recess practices.

allianceforchildhood.org Materials and workshops on the art of play and how to support it.

usplaycoalition.clemson.edu and nycplay.org Good information on the importance of play.

kaboom.org Helping communities build new playgrounds.

Study suggests why happiness comes with age

After a large Gallup survey found that people get happier as they get older, researchers asked: Why?

A new study, reported in the “Proceedings of the National Academy of Science,” offers several suggestions.

“It could be that there are environmental changes, or psychological changes about the way we view the world,” said psychologist Arthur Stone, Ph.D., of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, lead author of the study. “Or it could even be biological—for example, brain chemistry or endocrine changes.”

The nationwide Gallup survey asked more than 340,000 people from ages 18 to 85 questions about age, sex, current events, personal finances, health and their general satisfaction and enjoyment of life.

At 18, it seems, people feel pretty good about themselves. Then, as life throws its predictable curve balls, they feel worse—and worse. But around the age 50, there’s a sharp reversal and people keep getting happier as they age.
Protecting older people from financial abuse

Elder abuse comes in many forms: verbal, physical, emotional and, more often than you might imagine, financial.

Many older people, especially those who are unable to handle their own affairs, are vulnerable to scams, frauds and stealing. Sadly, most of the theft is by someone they trusted: a family member, friend, hired caregiver or visitor.

Financial abuse happens across all socioeconomic groups, cultures and races. It occurs in hospitals, professional care facilities and the person’s own home.

How big is the problem?
No one knows exactly how much older Americans are losing due to financial abuse. But a 2009 report from the MetLife Mature Market Institute estimated $2.6 billion a year.

Elder financial abuse often goes unreported because it typically happens behind closed doors and many older people feel ashamed or embarrassed, especially if the exploiter was a relative or friend. The National Center on Elder Abuse (www.ncea.aoa.gov) points out too that some people may be in denial or afraid to report the problem. Others may be unaware of what’s happening or unable to speak out because of dementia or other impairments.

To complicate matters, each state has its own requirements. So, while many professionals who work with older people are, by law, “mandatory reporters,” they may not have the practical training to identify suspicious activity. And where there’s a doubt, employees may not want to rock the boat—and lose their job in the process.

Why it’s so important now
The number of older Americans will dramatically increase between 2010 and 2030, as the baby boom generation reaches 65. By 2020, the 85+ population is projected to increase to 6.6 million.

Seniors in the U.S. are living longer, but not always better. And people who suffer abuse of any kind are likely to die sooner than those who have been well treated. The sad truth is that elder abuse can happen to anyone: our loved ones, friends, neighbors and, sooner or later, even to us.

How to help
Here are some ways to help an older person from being financially exploited.

Keep in touch. Keep the lines of communication open. And when your parent complains about something, listen—and don’t be judgmental.

Be observant. Look for physical or behavioral changes (crying, trembling, not eating well, feeling anxious, communication patterns, worry over money or things that may be missing from the house).

Choose caregivers carefully. Use a licensed, bonded agency or get a personal recommendation from someone you know and trust. Don’t pick a caregiver through an ad. For additional guidance, visit www.eldercare.gov or call the ElderCare Locator at 800-677-1116.

Be smart about home repairs. Check with the Better Business Bureau or state licensing agencies before hiring a handyman or contractor whom the older person does not know personally. Get three estimates, a written contract, and never pay more than 10 percent or $1,000 up front, whichever is less.

Keep a photo inventory of jewelry and small valuables in a locked box. If your older relative has not taken photos of these items, offer to do it for him or her.

Shred documents and other financial paperwork that could make your older relative or friend more vulnerable to theft.

Use a P.O. box as a preventive measure if your relative’s mail has been or could possibly be stolen.

Get credit reports. Americans are entitled to free credit reports every year from each of the three major credit bureaus. Encourage a mid-year report if your older relative seems particularly vulnerable.

Talk about phone scams. Point out that friendly-sounding scam artists use the phone as a weapon. Urge your relative to use caller ID and to not answer “unknown” or “out of area” calls. And never give personal information over the phone—just hang up instead. Remind folks that they’ll never win a foreign lottery—or whatever scam is flying around at the moment.

Have a duplicate of your older relative’s bank statements sent to a trusted family member.

Stay organized and alert. Help an older relative keep his or her belongings neat. Direct deposit of Social Security and other checks can make life easier. Remind the person to never leave items of value out in the open or to sign an important document unless someone he or she trusts has reviewed it.

Stay informed. Remind older relatives and friends to consult with an attorney about their will, future plans, power of attorney, and caregiving arrangements. If they suspect financial abuse, they should go to a bank officer, adult protective services, or the police.

Keep an eye out for...

Overpayment for goods and services, unnecessary services or household repairs, out-of-order check numbers, increased ATM activity, unusual cash withdrawals from a financial account, excessive time spent on the Internet, and a signature that seems forged, unusual, or suspicious.

An unexplained reduction in bank accounts, increase in the number and amount of credit card accounts, an unexplained change in the power of attorney, will, or other legal or financial documents, and the sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family.
Getting a handle on today’s homework

Homework is a stressful issue for many parents: Is there too much? Not enough? Is it getting done right and on time? How much should I help? Is that really homework my child is doing on the computer?

There are no quick and easy answers to these questions. Homework assignments vary widely in quantity and quality from teacher to teacher and school to school. Finding the proper balance between helping children and getting them to work on their own is an ongoing challenge.

What parents can do to help

It’s a good idea to remind yourself of what homework is meant to accomplish. It’s supposed to reinforce lessons taught at school, develop note-taking skills and good study habits, and give kids the confidence to work on their own. More and more these days, homework is also meant to build kids’ skills in finding and using online resources.

Children through 3rd grade tend to like a parent around while they do homework and to step in as needed. Some older children like to work alone while others prefer the quiet presence of a parent, caregiver or sibling. High school students tend to work out their own strategies.

Here are some ideas for ways you can help:

Use positive feedback. Make it specific to your child’s skills and effort: “You’re only 9 and you taught me to how use Advanced Search to get more information.” Or “I’ve never heard you use that word before. It’s a great word and you used it correctly.” Be aware that a child may ask for your help, then resist your suggestion. Keep your comments neutral. You don’t want kids to associate homework with fights at home.

Help with homework only when it’s needed and productive. For example: call out spelling words, check a math problem that won’t prove, or go over the directions to a difficult assignment together. If kids can handle homework on their own and learn from the process, step away and let them do it.

Build good study habits.

The difference between studying and doing homework is unclear to many children. But knowing how to study becomes more and more important in high school, college and throughout life. Encourage kids to take notes when they read a chapter, summarize what they’ve read in their own words, and learn how to use tables and charts.

Use the dictionary. Kids these days want to look up everything online. Keep a family dictionary in an accessible place and encourage its use. Use it yourself when you hear or read a word you’re not sure of. Good dictionary, encyclopedia and organizational skills depend on the ability to alphabetize. Model for your child an interest in reading, words, meanings and proper use of the English language.

Watch for signs of frustration.

It’s hard for kids to learn if they’re angry or upset over an assignment that seems too long and too difficult. You may need to step in and say, “OK, take a break.” Or “Work on something else for awhile.” If this happens a lot, you might want to talk to another parent from the same class for a reality check.

Make connections between what kids are learning in school and their daily lives. For example: math (IM charges, 40% off ticketed price), history (countries and issues in the news), English (writing thank-you notes for gifts—and yes, it’s OK to correct the bad grammar you hear on TV).

Model research skills.

Involve children in planning a family vacation. Have them find your destination on a map or atlas. Check out a travel guide at the library. Use a traditional encyclopedia or online sources to find information about the sites you might want to visit.

Talk about report cards.

To avoid upsets and shocks, gently discuss with your child how things are going at school. Be casual: “How did that math test go?” “Did you finish your history report? Need any help?” Just don’t make it a “third degree.” Be alert for comments like “She’s an awful teacher” or “he goes too fast.” But don’t go behind your child’s back to talk to the teacher. Help your child see that homework and report cards for them are what work and work evaluations are for you.
What role do our expectations play?

When people treat us with respect and value us as capable and hardworking, most of us try to live up to that image. As George Bernard Shaw’s heroine Eliza Doolittle summed it up: “The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves but how she is treated.”

The transforming power of high expectations has been documented again and again. For example, in his famous “Pygmalion study,” psychologist Robert Rosenthal looked at the impact of teachers’ expectations on student performance. He compared two groups of students of equal ability—but told one set of teachers that their pupils were bright and the other that their students were slow. Over the course of the study, the teachers’ expectations became self-fulfilling prophecies. Those who believed their students would do well, or not, got what they expected.

Researchers found that the teachers with higher expectations were more innovative in their methods. They tended to praise students more, paid closer attention to them and even gave them more time to answer questions. On the other hand, teachers with lower expectations tended to be more critical. Neither they nor their pupils put in as much effort as the other group.

This applies to workers too

Expectations are a great motivator. As workers, we’re more likely to thrive when our bosses and coworkers trust us and have confidence in us. And bosses with high expectations are more likely to treat workers better and encourage their growth.

Just as in the Pygmalion study, people who are treated with respect at the workplace will try to live up to that image. And studies have shown that employees of whom less is expected often receive negative messages that are subtle as well as overt. For example:

- They get less attention at meetings and are interrupted more.
- They get less small talk and eye contact and fewer smiles.
- They’re given less time to express their opinions and are criticized more for their mistakes, both publicly and privately.
- They receive less accurate feedback and may be overpraised for marginally acceptable work.
- Less effort is expected from them and they get less help and support in righting “wrong” situations.
- They receive less information about what else is happening at the workplace.

The natural response for many low-expectation workers is to avoid taking risks. They may be thinking: Why put myself into a situation that will lead to failure? It’s no wonder that some employees have trouble improving their work, and we all lose the benefits of their potential contributions.

Try to avoid stereotypes

It’s normal to form expectations of the people with whom we work, but sometimes those expectations are built on stereotypes of people who differ from us in age, gender, culture, style, language, economics, education, physical attributes and even religious beliefs. As a member of a work team, for example, we may find ourselves relating more positively to coworkers who talk and act the way we do and seem to share our values and work ethic.

In a diverse workplace, good communication takes effort, and coworkers will never think alike on every single issue. But we can agree to disagree in a civil way. We can try to understand other points of view, be respectful and, ideally, get to a place where we value and appreciate the added richness of our diversity.

When we expect more of our coworkers and employees, we’re more likely to put them in situations where they can thrive, grow and perform well, which is in everyone’s best interest.

It also helps to communicate high expectations for ourselves, especially if we think our supervisor has misjudged us. Avoid confrontational responses. Use “I” statements such as: “I really want to do well on this project.”

Meeting Gen Y’s high expectations

By 2014, Generation Y will account for almost half of the U.S. workforce. As a group, the “millennials” already have high expectations for career advancement and how they’ll be treated at the workplace. They look for mentors. They want feedback and access to programs that will enhance their skills and abilities.

To hire promising Gen Yers and help them grow, Joyce Russell, director of the Executive Coaching and Leadership Development Program at the University of Maryland, advises potential employers to:

- Use knowledgeable recruiters who can give specifics about opportunities in your company. Add a personal touch to online applications. Invite parents to recruiting events. Use other Gen Yers to answer questions.
- Say why your company is important, and how they can be on a winning team that makes a difference in people’s lives.
- Show Gen Yers how they can advance and give them a realistic preview of career progression. Show them opportunities for movement in or outside the U.S. Show them that you really do value diversity.
- Give them new projects and challenges. Allow them to multi-task and don’t micromanage. Establish goals and timelines.
- Show them the successful leaders in your company who have achieved work-life balance. The millennials want that too!
- Cultivate a happy work environment. Gen Yers want to feel connected to their bosses and coworkers. They want to be part of a team—and to like being at work and have fun there.
5 good reasons to spend more time outside

Most of us live the vast majority of our lives indoors (a government estimate says 90 percent of our time). And the older we get, the more inclined we are to stay inside. But a growing body of research suggests the error of our ways. Spending time outdoors seems to have at least five benefits for both physical and mental health.

1. It boosts vitamin D levels. Most of us don’t get enough of the sunshine vitamin. To make all the vitamin D you need requires only 10-15 minutes of exposure on your arms and legs a few times a week—when it’s sunny outside.

2. You exercise more. Lots of people exercise in gyms and at home, of course, but U.S. surveys have found that indoor life is more sedentary on average. And children were twice as active when they were outside, according to a British study using GPS devices that sense movement (see Research Review on the benefits of outdoor play).

3. You feel happier. Light has been found to lift people’s moods, and physical activity tends to cheer us up. Researchers at the University of Essex in England also suggest that exercising in nature has an added benefit. It’s called “green exercise,” and it builds on earlier research showing the benefits of living near green open spaces.

4. You may even think better. Researchers have found that children with ADHD seem to focus better after being outside. In his book Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv coined the term “nature-deficit disorder.” So that may well apply to adults too.

5. It promotes healing. Spinal surgery patients needed fewer pain medications if they were exposed to natural light during their recovery. Other studies have found that looking at trees rather than a brick wall had a positive impact on recovery.

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Test your short-term memory

Read each word on the shopping list below. Cover or turn the page and write down as many words as you can remember.

| MELON | EGGS | CATSUP |
| CRACKERS | LETTUCE | MILK |
| PEARS | HAMBURGER | GREEN BEANS |
| RICE | SOUP | SODA |
| LEMON | PASTA | CHEESE |

How did you do? If you remembered five to nine words, your short-term memory is in the average range, according to studies by Harvard psychologist George A. Miller.

—Adapted from Mind, Mood & Memory Newsletter

What if you ate only the foods you saw advertised on TV?

You can imagine what might happen. To begin with, you’d get more than 25 times the recommended daily allowance of sugar and about 20 times the RDA of fat. You would also get considerably less than half of your body’s need for fiber, fruits, vegetables and dairy.

For a new study published in The Journal of the American Dietetic Association, health science researchers at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Georgia taped a month of prime-time and Saturday-morning TV shows on the four major broadcast networks. They identified 800 foods that were promoted in 3,000 commercials.

Using a nutritional software program, they analyzed the foods in TV commercials and compared nutritional content with official RDA intake values. Among other findings, the study reported that a 2,000-calorie diet of foods from TV ads also provided too much cholesterol and salt and too little iron, calcium and vitamins A, D and E.

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How the right diet can help fight fatigue

Why do so many people complain about feeling tired? Perhaps we’re eating the wrong foods.

“Food is our fuel,” says dietitian Kathy Isoldi of New York’s Weill Cornell Medical College. “It has the power to improve how we feel on a daily basis.”

To increase your energy level, Isoldi says, you should start by avoiding foods that quickly convert to sugar in the bloodstream such as candies or orange juice. You might also try these fatigue-fighting, healthy-eating strategies:

Eat breakfast. It will boost your metabolism and keep fatigue at bay. The American Dietetic Association recommends a carbs and protein combo such as whole-wheat toast with an egg or cheese, a bowl of cereal with milk or some plain, low-fat yogurt.

Go for complex carbs. That means whole-wheat bread and pasta, brown rice and starchy vegetables like carrots, squash and potatoes. Complex carbs are high in fiber, which slows their rate of absorption and provides a steady release of energy.

Pick the right fats. The healthy ones will improve the taste of food and benefit your heart as well. Go for avocados, nuts, seeds and olive oil.

Don’t forget lean protein. Among protein’s many key roles within the body, it helps with the regular release of energy. Go for lean sources such as turkey, chicken and fish.

Drink water. There’s a connection between the loss of energy and dehydration. And fatigue often leads to overeating. Drink plenty of water, especially after you exercise.

—Adapted from the newsletter Food & Fitness Advisor
Meet the happiest toddler on the block

Why do toddlers behave the way they do? What is it about their normal development that often puts them on a collision course with their parents? And why is it important to identify your child’s temperament?

California pediatrician Harvey Karp answers those questions and offers helpful strategies for parents in *The Happiest Toddler on the Block*, a wonderful sequel to his bestseller *The Happiest Baby on the Block*.

Parents also have the option of watching Dr. Karp as he teaches his innovative approach on a DVD based on the *Toddler* book.

As he explains in the book and on the DVD, respect is essential to a good relationship with young kids—but it doesn’t mean letting a toddler run wild. When you are firm and respectful with your child, he says, you’re modeling the behavior you want to nurture.

Dr. Karp shows parents how to give “you-I” messages—and why. He offers key insights, for example: It’s natural to want to comfort an upset child, but saying over and over again, “It’s okay, it’s okay” may give kids the message that you want them to stuff their feelings deep down inside and act happy even if they aren’t. And that’s *not* okay!

Dr. Karp’s tips for boosting a toddler’s good actions and manners are very specific. He shows that “time-ins” work better than “time-outs” and tells parents how to stop most tantrums before they start.

He tackles all the tough issues such as how to set limits, curb annoying behaviors and put the breaks on dangerous or disrespectful behavior. He explains why mushy limits often backfire and make kids defy us even more. Dr. Karp’s approach to raising toddlers is, in the words of the eminent Dr. Kyle Pruett, “one of the smartest parenting ideas of the past decade.”

*The Happiest Toddler on the Block: How to Eliminate Tantrums and Raise a Patient, Respectful, and Cooperative One- to Four-Year-Old* is available in bookstores and online (www.happiestbaby.com, Bantam paperback $15 and DVD $26.95).