

CHILDREN

DECEMBER 1988

THE GUIDE FOR PARENTS

\$2.00 USA
\$2.50 Canada

● YOUR NEW BABY

Ecstasies and Agonies
the Books Don't Mention

50 GREAT TOYS

New & Kid-Tested

27 Best
Kid-Books of '88

Earn \$20 to \$200
for Your Advice
See Page 24

**KIDS
DRIVING YOU
NUTS? Call
the Discipline
Helpline!**

**Why
You're
Right to
Have
an Only
Child**



that what she's feeling is anger; she can't put a label on that feeling."

Balter suggests that parents try to minimize some of the child's frustration. For instance, your daughter wants to go to the zoo—but it's beginning to drizzle. Instead of telling her that a trip to the zoo "is out of the question," you might substitute another appealing activity, such as finger painting or baking or playing a game together.

"It's also essential to really educate your child about anger," says Balter. "Let her know it's okay to verbalize her feelings. Say, 'I know you're probably mad at Mom because...' This helps your child recognize that she's feeling anger and that there's a name for it. Not only are you legitimizing her feelings, you're also providing her with a whole new vocabulary she can use to express herself. In time she'll begin to respond with 'I'm angry with you, Mommy!'" Taking this tack should help diffuse your child's anger and quell her whining.

It's also possible—and a good idea—to teach children to listen to how they sound when they are whining and then rehearse with them a better way to get the message across. One mother, whose toddler's early-morning whining drove her nuts, taught her daughter to say, "Mama, I'm awake," just loudly enough to be heard. Now mornings at that house are a mutual delight.

Saying No!

It seems that one of the first words our kids learn—after "Mommy" and "Daddy"—is "no." And little wonder! They hear it so often early in life, as they start to climb on a chair or threaten to overturn a glass of soda on the coffee table. One father reports that he heard himself shouting, "Nancy, no!" at his daughter so often he feared she might begin to think that the word was actually part of her given name.

Although we may blame ourselves for instilling this negative into our child's vocabulary, the *N* word represents a perfectly normal stage of toddler development. Usually between 18 and 30 months, saying no is the child's way of distinguishing herself from her parents and others. "In the child's logic," says Balter, "to agree with a parent or another child might

7 Super Books To Get You Through

When all else fails, these books can help restore your sanity.

Who's In Control? Dr. Balter's Guide to Discipline Without Combat, by Lawrence Balter, Ph.D., with Anita Shreve (Poseidon Press). In this helpful and informative guide, Balter discusses aggressive behavior, dawdling, willfulness, and other problems your preschooler may currently be experiencing.

Toddlers and Parents, by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. (Delacorte Press). This warm, anecdotal book deals with children's quests for independence. Brazelton, well-known for his easygoing approach, offers advice on how to cope as your child challenges the world around him. Chapters of particular interest include "Declaration of Independence" and "No! No! No!"

Good Behavior, by Stephen W. Garber, Ph.D., Marianne Daniels Garber, Ph.D., and Robyn Freedman Spizman (Villard Books). This book approaches general issues ("Day-After-Day Problems," "Tantrums and Other Negative Behaviors") as well as addressing the specifics ("The Child Who Can't Sit Still," "Name-Calling and Cursing").

Your Growing Child, by Penelope Leach (Knopf). An encyclopedia of child care, this wonderful book offers simple but thorough advice on various areas of interest. For particular behavior problems, see "Tantrums," "Discipline," and "Self-Discipline and How to Behave."

Parents Book for the Toddler Years, by Adrienne Popper (Ballantine). Here's a how-to book, neatly divided by age into five sections, that deals with your growing toddler. Popper explains the personality development of children from one to three.

Loving Your Child Is Not Enough, by Nancy Samalin, with Martha Moraghan Jablow (Penguin). This clear, concise book demonstrates how to use discipline in a positive, loving way. Chapters such as "Dealing With Anger" and "Avoiding Daily Battles" offer practical solutions to daily challenges.

The Woman Who Works, the Parent Who Cares, by Sirgay Sanger, M.D., and John Kelly (Harper & Row). Working mothers will find this book of special interest. It addresses specific behavioral situations that arise when a mother is out of the house during the day. Sanger and Kelly focus on how to help your child through the adjustment of saying goodbye to Mommy, how to avoid confrontations, and how to make the most of your time together.

—Anne Klavans

make her indistinguishable from that person at a time when she's trying hard to be separate." When your child batters you with a string of nos, you probably feel your authority is being challenged. "Although it may be difficult, try not to get caught up in a power struggle with the child," cautions Balter.

You might just as well accept that between the ages of two and three "she'll disagree just to disagree. Even though she might love ice cream, she may stubbornly refuse your offer of chocolate chip because the satisfaction of refusing is more powerful than the pleasure of the ice cream."

There are ways to minimize your child's annoying naysaying, though. Even before a child reaches the no stage, a parent should learn to avoid barking out monosyllabic commands and make a habit of speaking in complete sentences. "If your eight-month-old is crawling toward a floor lamp," says Balter, "get up and say, 'Sara, that's very dangerous.'" Even though she won't understand what you've said, she will react to the commanding tone in your voice and pause long enough for you to scoop her up, thus preventing a potentially serious mishap.

Another way to defuse the nos effectively is to pose requests in a way that won't ensure a no answer. For instance, instead of "Do you want to take your bath now?" try "Let's read your favorite story, and then it will be bath time."

Postscript

Now, at age five, my daughter Brooke has gone through most of the stages described, though her "whining" was really only a muted grumble. She's also learned how to verbalize her feelings (so there's little pushing and shoving and grabbing now), and she says the most dramatic things, like "My heart is broken—Daddy made me cry," voicing displeasure over a scolding by her father! All in all, we've survived. And these days I'm happy to report that when Brooke bares her teeth nobody runs for cover. We know she's merely getting ready to give us a big, contented grin. ☺

Phyllis Schneider is a writer who lives with her husband and daughter, Brooke, in Westchester, New York.