



December 2011 Newsletter

Topic of the Month

I recently read an article in Scientific American Mind. (just a little light reading), titled Why Johnny Can't Name His Colors by Melody Dye. It was a fascinating article discussing on how we, (adults), phrase common sayings and create miscommunication and misunderstanding within our children, and in turn, how our children learn. Let me explain further by first discussing the theory proposed by the article.

The article starts by discussing a study of toddlers and naming their colors. Michael Ramscar, a cognitive scientist at Stanford University says that his research shows that most toddlers cannot accurately point out colored swatches, and further states that the possible reason for a toddler's inability to select the proper color when asked was due to how we, (adults), teach colors to children. When I first started reading the article, I thought it was a bunch of garbage. I thought of all the kids I worked with over the years, and told myself, "of course they knew their colors!" However, after reading almost the same quote from a parent in the article and seeing the research data, I opened my mind a little wider.

The article discusses that when children learn colors they are two disadvantage. First, there are numerous different hues to a color, (anyone who has had to pick a paint color can attest to that), so when we are teaching our children the color blue, it is hard for them to understand light sky blue is the same as dark indigo blue. The second disadvantage a child has when learning their colors is how we teach colors.

When we teach colors to children, we normally point out an object and describe its color, but the way the English language operates may pose a hurdle in children really understanding our message. The article states, "...English color words may be especially difficult to learn, because we throw in a curveball: we tend to use color words "preminally" meaning before nouns. For instance, we will often say things like "the red balloon," instead of the postnominal construction, "the balloon is red." (Dye, 2011)

According to Michael Ramscar's research, when using the prenominal wording, as in when you say "the red balloon" a child, (who is a visual learner), is looking for the RED and not for the BALLOON. The theory is if we switched our wording to postnominal, and say, "the balloon is red," children would have an easier time associating the color RED to the object BALLOON.

After reading the article, I was less skeptical and more open to the theory. For years, I have worked with the idea that most of the reasons children misbehave can be attributed to miscommunication. I believe that when a child misbehaves it is more often than not, due to a true misunderstanding of the expectation, rules, or proper behavior for that situation than a child trying to be naughty. We often talk to children as if they understand adult phrases, wording or speech patterns, but often times our children feel they are in a room of trigonometry majors with basic algebra level understanding!!!

The key I would like you to take from this article is that even though we are speaking clearly, and we THINK we are providing good examples through our communication, often we are still misunderstood. Our children's brains receive and process information in a completely different way than our brain does. Because of this different processing method, it is unrealistic to expect your child to understand you all the time just because you're making sense to yourself.

During the month of December, we'll be talking about miscommunication and better ways to communicate our needs to be understood; not only understood by our children, but everyone we interact with. Maybe this year you'll be able to clearly communicate the fact you hate orange to your Aunt Martha. How about trying, "I prefer a sweater that is blue" instead of "I like the blue sweater."

I look forward to engaging you in this discussion on Everything Baby's Facebook page!

Note: To ready the article in full, Scientific American Mind May/June 2011



Providing parent coaching and supportive services to parent, families and parenting partners.

Ask The Nanny

Rebecca-

My 4yr old is very rough with my baby(6m), some people say she is jealous, I give her time outs but doesn't really work, sometimes she seems so excited about her new sister, but sometimes when I am not looking she will do something and my 6m old will cry, what can I do?

Hi Mama,

First, you're absolutely right, time outs do not work. I've found over the years that time outs are ineffective, and I stopped using them all together, (we talk about a different form in my class Behavior Modification without Punishment).

Based on the information you gave me, I'd say that the key here is your 4 year old doesn't know how to deal with the new family dynamic now. For the last 3.5 years, she's been the only child in the home, and now there is this new child. Your 4 year old may want to play with your 6 month old, and is playing too rough or making your 6 month old mad by taking toys in the attempt to play. Your 4 year old is also trying to figure out her role in her sister's life too, this is a huge change for her, and may not know where she fits into the new family dynamic. For some children, a new baby sister can be scary. Is Mom & Dad replacing me? Did they not like me and want something different? Why does the baby get all the attention, (even if special time is given to the child), so many thought that adults may think as irrational go through a child's mind when a baby comes into the home.

I'd say help your 4 year old learn games to play with your 6 month old, like peek a boo, or roll the ball, this will give your 4 year old tools so she can appropriately play with her baby sister. If you see your 4 year old being mean to the baby, firmly, but kindly stop the poor behavior and educate on appropriate behaviors.

If your 4 year old is being mean to the baby, it's probably out of fear & jealousy, so punishing that behavior will only add to your 4 year old's anxiety. Instead, think education, how do I teach my 4 year old to be kind to the baby, gentle with the baby and so forth. Once your 6 month old starts to walk and is more mobile, you'll see a difference in the dynamic. The baby will be more fun and your 4 year old will feel more secure about her place.

I wish you the best!

Click Here to submit your questions.

What Parents Need to Know

Did You Know

What a fun idea, when you put your Christmas ornaments away this year, put the unbreakable ornaments in a special box, so next year you know which box of ornaments your child can have control over.

This was a fun idea taken from Parent's Magazine It worked for me section.

Everything Baby and other local events

Become a fan of Everything Baby's Facebook page Click Here

ADD/ADHD Corner

Many families struggle with proper and effective treatments for their ADD/ADHD children. I'm hoping the ADD/ADHD Corner will help everyone understand ADD/ADHD better and learn effective treatments to help children.

Children with ADD/ADHD often are misunderstood. Many believe that children with ADD/ADHD are misbehaving, immature or just naughty kids.

The reality is, children with ADD/ADHD simply receive, interpret and process information in a different way than others. This different processing method is not an indication of a lacking in the child, but simply a difference.

What does your family do to help your ADD/ADHD child? Click Here to share.

Upcoming Events

Everything Baby Events:

- Beyond Stranger Danger: A must take class for every parent. During this class Rebecca will teach you what child predators don't want you to know. Understand the lures predators use so they won't use them against your child!

Special Offer:

After hearing about the reported cases of horrible child abuse, I felt the desperate need to do something, so I will be offering my class, Beyond Stranger Danger as a teleconference for free. Space is limited, please RSVP by clicking here.

- Behavior Modification without Punishment: After 18 years working with children and families, Rebecca understand what works and what doesn't. During this 2 hour class, she will share with you her favorite punishment free techniques that will help reduce the fighting and enhance the parent child bonding!

Please visit our website for updates regarding the 2012 schedule.

Other Local Events:

- Acts Oregon will hold child car safety seat check up clinics often in December. Click here to find the time and location that works best for you.
- Our friends at World of Smiles Pediatric Dentistry were very busy in the month of November. They collected over 112 POUNDS of candy, which they will ship to our troops. They also spent a very long and rewarding day at Mission of Mercy, providing free dental care to those in need.
- Have you seen the updated website from Tiny Talkers? They are now offering more services than just infant sign language, they also have KinderMusik. I cannot tell you how much the kids I worked with LOVED their music classes, and I know that Shira is a SUPER!!! teacher. What fun.

If your interested in more information about our upcoming events, please click here

For more information about our services, please visit our web site www.everythingbabylc.com

We encourage you to forward this newsletter to friends and family.

We will not share the information your provide us with anyone.

Questions or comments, please e-mail us at rebecca@everythingbabylc.com or call our office at 503-617-4685.

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