

How does TCS work with babies?

Submitted by a TCS reader (not verified) on 5 January, 2005 - 10:53

I have a girl 1 1/2 year old who gets into extreme temper tantrums. I am trying desperately to find a way to communicate with her, but she doesn't talk yet, and I don't think she's old enough to understand a 'common preference'. If she doesn't get her way RIGHT NOW, she is instantly transformed into a red-faced raging scream machine. She hits me too. I don't know what to do, I'm trying to follow the TCS, but it just seems impossible. All the advice here involves talking with the child, no one mentions how to 'talk' to a baby. A friend today told me that my baby is a spoiled brat who needs to have some discipline. That's like a slap in the face to me.

I'm trying to help my girl find solutions that we can both agree on, and have both of our needs met, but a baby just doesn't understand that mama has needs too, that aren't always the same as baby's needs.

I'm going crazy here, What can I do?

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TCS and babies

Submitted by [emma \(not verified\)](http://childrenarepeople.blogspot.com) on 10 March, 2005 - 17:44

Babies don't speak words, but they speak volumes with their body language.

A baby who does not want a spoon of food will turn their head away (at the very least!). A baby who does not want to be held will squirm and arch their back.

TCS with a pre-verbal child is hard because often it requires the parent to guess what the child might be after and try that. Nurse?... nope... Crawl around?... nope... Nappy change?... nope... bread and butter?... and into all of this, you also are trying not to self-sacrifice.

If we attend carefully we can learn some of our babies' cries - the tired cry is very different from the pained cry or the hungry one or the constipated one

Slings - even with an 18-month old - are a great way of entertaining a child while getting on with active tasks.

Also, remembering that there WILL be a naptime, and the child will probably sleep longer than you at night might make it easier to store up your needs until the child is sleeping.

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How to TCS with baby?

Submitted by *kriss (not verified)* on 11 June, 2006 - 00:23

Emma, that only answers half of the question.

I, too, want to know how to problem solve with my 1 yr old. I see what HIS side is, the problem is getting him to understand any alternate solution! He is very close to tantrums when he doesn't get his way, and with a 3y/o sister, that is frequent.

Here's 2 specific incidences: 1. A young child is EXTREMELY jealous of mom's attention (parent is alone 5 days a week, child has stranger anxiety), and mom can't figure out how to give her other young child enough attention (like holding hir sometimes w/o other child on them)too. Just giving 'alone time' during nap is not enough and distraction does not work. Sure, kids will grow out of it...but how does TCS work in this type of situation?

2. Baby doesn't want to sit still long enough to put on a new diaper/nappy once the dirty one is off. Distraction and putting it on while he is moving sometimes works, though he usually has to be held down for those seconds 'kicking and screaming'. This goes for all clothing, but mainly it's a concern about the diaper put on well enough not to dirty someone else's carpet in a rented home. how to problem solve this with baby??

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TCS Baby

Submitted by *Willow* on 12 April, 2007 - 13:29

I've been able to apply this theory to some of the things I do, but not all.

Say, a child was refusing to be fed from a spoon, so we just have fingers only fortnight, and have made huge progress in initiating giving baby the same food as us. Then try the gloop on a spoon again this and it seems perfectly palatable. Perhaps he just wanted a change.

Distraction works quite well when changing. Try making the change station be on the floor, so there is nowhere to fall, then follow the child around until he is napped and dressed. It works quite well when the child is cruising but not walking, so he stands with his hands busy holding on.

I have no mutually agreeable solution for tooth brushing at the moment. Currently holding down and brushing, while horrid, seems better than pulling teeth.

to post comments

The most important thing:

Submitted by *emma (not verified)* (<http://www.childrenarepeople.blogspot.com>) on 13 April, 2007 - 16:44

The most important thing: there ARE solutions in the universe, where baby gets enough of your attention, older child does too, and you manage to look after your own needs as well. It's just a question of throwing crazy ideas around till some of them fit.

Tie the baby on your back in a mei tei or similar back carrier, and then you can play with the older child and little one is probably happy to hang out and watch?

Get outside to the playground whenever the weather permits. Somehow, everything in life seems more mellow in a sandpit ;-)

Lots of playdates with one-child-only families where your older child enjoys the company of their child. The other parent can do fun stuff with the two older children and the baby gets your full attention, then you and older child can talk all the way home while baby is in buggy/sling.

engage both children as much as possible in physical doing stuff with you? e.g. three chopping boards, two blunt knives, one slightly sharper one for you, a little heap of vegetables each. All on floor level. When everyone is purposefully working on something together, then the question of who has got more of mum's lap becomes kinda irrelevant. Baths with both children. Finding a way to give yourself breathing space - a grandparent or trusted teen to come and just be with you and play with either or both children while you can provide a lap for whoever needs it. Well, maybe not providing a lap for Granny to sit on.

Diapers: spread a large cotton bed sheet on the floor. Place baby in middle. Many fun covering over baby and finding again games, including older sister. Slip dirty nappy off in the giggles, and do some wiping.

Mobile nappy changes could be easier than lying down ones. If baby is crawling away, then it's really easy to wipe away poop. If baby is standing up by an activity on a low table, then the whole deal is dead easy. Towels, sheets, cotton table cloths can all be used to cover the carpet. Ask a friend who has recently recarpeted if you can have an offcut or the old worn out carpet and shove that down on the floor over the landlord's pristine one, then there's no need to worry about messes on the floor. [this is my exact solution at present. It cost about £5 in a taxi to get the carpet from the friend's house...]

tooth brushing - hand baby a tooth brush every time you do your own. They soon start copying. Don't sweat it too much. Make sure baby's mouth is rinsed well after tooth rotting foods (e.g. raisins, which are given to lab rats to rot their teeth ready for experiments...). I think cheese is a good tooth cleaning food - there are others as well. Play with tooth brush in the bath. Just wipe teeth with a wet washcloth. There are all sorts of possibilities. Make sure child has water regularly to swill out bacteria. Elaborate gurgling and swooshing games could help that one. There are lots of ways of making dental hygiene non coercive :-)

to post comments

tooth brushing

Submitted by noodle on 13 April, 2007 - 17:12

I think a broader view of the situation is called for. Perhaps learning about tooth brushing, getting comfortable with toothbrushing, will take a bit longer for the child than the parent. But I don't think it will take so long as will make it necessary to pull the teeth. My child loved to play with toothbrushes, always chewed on them and such. I figured it was a good start to the practice of brushing.

Consider, too, the potential damage to the relationship with the child by holding them down and brushing. Is it such an emergency that the teeth are going to need to be pulled out that the parent can't go a bit more at the child's pace in learning about this? There are times I've thought my child will never ever like a, b or c, upon their first reaction to it, but if I back off and the child has a chance to go at her own pace, it's often a completely different story in a several more weeks or maybe months.

As an aside, I read something recently that said that people who get a sufficient amount of Omega-3 fats in their diet have much less tooth decay. There is much more to tooth decay than simply brushing.

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As far as diapering and

Submitted by jamie on 10 November, 2007 - 17:58

As far as diapering and clothing issues, how about raising your child diaper-free? And not forcing kids to wear clothes if they don't want to. Also I remember when I was a child I hated the frankly sexually invasive feeling of being wiped, as well as the cold air and cold temperature of wipes and so forth, that makes it an unpleasant experience. Diaper free reduces the need for major wiping, and you can make a room/area extra warm and use warm towellettes, or even if your baby likes baths (with warm towels! and a secure feeling) you could let the warm water do most of the cleaning for you.

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My current thinking on

Submitted by Willow on 21 March, 2008 - 12:09

My current thinking on tantrums is to address the cause or source of the tantrums. A tantrum is a symptom of something which often is not apparent or immediate.

For instance we have had tantrums about not getting dinner this second, which were caused by suffering a course of eyedrops for conjunctivitis.

And our current solution for toothbrushing is an electric toothbrush and a song. No cry, no fight, just clean teeth.

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teeth

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 26 April, 2008 - 22:58

they are baby teeth... so what if they DID actually end up having a few teeth go rotten or get cavities? They're just baby teeth, not permanent teeth. and by the time a child is big enough to be getting a mouth full of permanent teeth, she is old enough to decide for herself about how often to brush.

to post comments

TCS with babies/toddlers

Submitted by K Bode (not verified) on 26 August, 2008 - 01:14

I too have questions re : working with babies/toddlers to help empower them but at the same time meet their basic needs. I have always given my children freedom and choices that to my friends and family seem unreasonable and are often met with the usual comments such as 'you're the parent they should just do what you say' or 'they are only x months/years old they should not be telling you what to do' and so on. However I have to admit that until recently I have used certain coercive tactics to try to make sure life goes 'my way' at the expense of the children's wishes. So being fairly new to the whole philosophy of TCS I have encountered a few stumbling blocks that I hope someone here can give some insight on how to deal with. My youngest DD is 23 months old and since allowing the children to decide what and when they will eat she just asks for crisps/potato snacks or sweets from breakfast onwards. This morning the first words from her mouth when she woke in bed next to me was 'crisps' over and over until I could get to the kitchen to give her a pack. Throughout the day I do offer other foods and this evening put a meal out on the coffee table for her whilst she sat watching TV (watching TV is another request I get constantly from her at present) but the majority of the time she only eats the crisps. Given her age, how long do you think I should be trusting her to choose what to eat, I am finding it difficult not to tell her after 3 packets or 3 chocolate bars that she has had enough although obviously I don't want her to be sick. Another thing is she only wants to wear pyjamas or just a nappy at the moment which is fine until it is time to go out of the house - not to play in the garden as at the moment it is not too cold - but say to the shops or park etc. Also she has decided she doesn't want a bath any longer so I have offered to wash her hands and face with a flannel & a couple of times she has got in the bath but she does not want to have her hair washed. Do you think given her age she will change her mind in the near future? My older DD given the same choice will not go long refusing a bath or hair wash as she is 8 & I think feels discomfort after a few days when her head/body starts to feel grubby & itchy but the baby and my DS who is 4 I don't think will be bothered at all. Also the youngest does not like her nappy changed so I do try to leave her as long as possible but there comes a point when she soaks through (she is in cloth nappies) or starts to get sore, I can use coercive methods (offering to change on of the older nappy free children) but this seems to go against working with her for a solution and as far as I can see will encourage her to feel jealously & territorial towards her siblings and feels like I am involving them in a sort of plot against her - a sort of 'if you won't do it x will' mentality (iykwim). She also only previously drank water or milk but now wants cordial for every drink, I do make it weak but again I'm concerned how long she will keep this up for. Lastly the 2 younger ones have decided their favourite game is running up and down the sofa & jumping on it or jumping all over my bed, there have been a couple of head bags and I have offered for them to play racing/jumping/dancing games elsewhere with me or if there is a safer game they would like to play, apparently there isn't lol! This week they have progressed to leaping from the coffee table to the sofa, I'm not sure what is going to break first, the kids the table or the sofa. I explain I think its dangerous and that someone is likely to get hurt or the furniture will get broken but it doesn't interest them one bit. Sorry I have quite a long list of queries, I am just interested in any opinions on these situations.

to post comments

no need to dress

Submitted by Willow on 2 September, 2008 - 19:14

With the not getting dressed issue. If you think it's too cold to go out without clothes, then just take them with you so you can offer them once the child gets cold. We usually get dressed on the front path.

The route I chose with regard to diet is not very (at all) TCS in that we have never introduced our 2 year old to sweets or crisps. So long as there are bananas and fish fingers he's happy.

We had a recent bath strike. It lasted a fortnight. I found out I could make really good bubbles with the shower head on the high pressure setting. I think you need to convince yourself and your child that a bath can happen without hair washing or flannel interference. That might make it fun again.

to post comments

"unfooding" - giving children

Submitted by [emmaagain \(not verified\)](http://www.childrenarepeople.blogspot.com) (<http://www.childrenarepeople.blogspot.com>) on 4 September, 2008 - 16:18

"Unfooding" - giving children complete freedom about what to eat. I'd say if a child is asking for something which is in the house, you give it to them. You slip into the diet at less fraught moments the things which you are wanting them to eat. I think there are some foods which it might be worth storing at the shop - i.e. we can always go and get them, but it's an expedition, if agreeable to all concerned (well, that's how I personally manage my intake of icecream :-). Also, various home-made goodies (cakes very good), which can be made with not a huge amount of sugar, and maybe vitamin pills ground in, or a fish oil capsule squeezed in, and of course you have butter and eggs in cakes which are great nutritionally - then parent can get out of "agh it's junk" mode into "yay! (s)he's eating cake!" mode. IMO, it takes a finite time for a child to have sated themselves with a particular kind of food and be ready for something else. Maybe a whole day or a whole week they'll eat crisps, and then feel like an apple. Might they eat oven chips (= french fries but thick cut)? Just potatoes and oil in those - pretty good nutrition, and maybe you can make home made ones with the potato skins on and ^everything^

Clothes: what is the difference between pyjamas and a matching tracksuit trousers/sweatshirt combo? erm... I've never seen any problem in children wearing pjs through the day! Alternatively, have loose fitting comfy but not matching clothes and put them on at bedtime the night before :-). Willow's getting changed outside plan is also a good one. For a determined anti-clothing phase, you might try snuggling child in a sling or wrap, snuggling child in a blanket in a buggy, wearing a poncho...

Baths: why wash hair? Waste of time. It'll take a couple of weeks for the oils to rebalance themselves and then it is totally unnecessary. Just a rinse is fine, and that can be done by playing swimming games and floating games in the bath. Or can be done at the swimming pool. Some children like sitting near a warm shower and putting bits of their bodies in. Amazing how wet hair always gets during that game :-)

Nappies: there are some good threads about that at the TCS community Yuku board IIRC. And there was stuff earlier on this thread, I think! If someone is engrossed enough standing up and doing playdo games, someone changing their nappy is going to be neither here nor there!

Cordial - well, if sugared water is available, it's likely to be preferred to water. Not sure what you do with that - make it very very weak? Try water or milk with thrilling food colouring in? Milkshakes?

As for jumping on furniture: ah! I'm firmly in the that's-what-furniture-is-for camp! But I ahve never had any smart furniture. :-). Bouncing on a mattress on the floor? Or on sofa cushions? Jumping from coffee table onto sofa cushions on floor? Making obstacle courses with suitcases and boxes? Getting outside to climb trees?

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