DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILDREN'S CENTERS

DBCC NEWS

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILD CARE, Inc.
Park Avenue Center, 806 Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21201-4807 • 410-669-1010
University Center, 237 Arch Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-1526 • 410-659-0515

Winter, 2005

"Why is everything such an effort?"

LIFE WITH A YOUNG CHILD

By Susan Sandstrom

Raising a young child is not easy--just ask any parent! Children can be unpredictable, difficult at the most inconvenient times and relentless with their demands. Part of the problem is that children are always in a state of transformation as they develop emotionally, socially, cognitively and physically. Then, to make matters worse, they get very fussy as they approach a new milestone. It is hard for adults (whose milestones are now very far apart!) to keep up! Now, it is not possible to avoid those hard times altogether but very often parents and teachers forget or aren't aware of some basic strategies that will make a difference. It is too easy to get caught up in strategies that may escalate a problem. Despite their precociousness, young children are very concrete thinkers with very little experience and need special guidance.

What follows are some common mistakes we all make and some helpful suggestions.

• "You are going to stay in your room until you finish cleaning it"

"We're not going anywhere until you go to the potty"

"You can't have that toy unless you say 'thank you"

"You're going to sit there until you eat a spoonful of peas. You don't have to finish but you have to try a little bit."

These are called power struggles and are to be avoided if at all possible. Power struggles will have your little one digging in his/her heels and extending the problem way beyond its importance. Try to avoid such a head to head confrontation.

Faith and Sofia

With power struggles there is a winner and a loser. With young children it is best to find a win/win situation. If your child says, "I'm not going to bed and you can't make me," ignore the confrontation. Do not engage. One might say, "A few more minutes and then it's story time." Children will try very hard to pull you into a power struggle but don't take the bait. Don't get angry, keep things light and don't let yourself engage in the power struggle. You'll be amazed at how quickly young children can be distracted. Keeping your sense of humor is highly effective, too. Remember, it is not always necessary to continue a discussion. One can say, "I'm not talking about it now," and that's it-no more discussion.

(Cont'd on page 2)

● ***University Center was recently accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a badge of excellence for child care centers! DBCC is very pleased to have both centers NAEYC accredited and MSDE approved!***

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"Why is everything such an effort?"

(Cont'd from page 1)

Now, it is easy to confuse setting limits with power struggles. Setting limits is, in a word, firmness. It is quick and non-negotiable. It doesn't involve long discussions or negotiations. "Okay, time to go to bed." If your child refuses, you take the child by the hand and say, "Should we read from the story book or should we read the new library book?" If your child tantrums or is defiant, you can say, "You sound really angry. " But don't stop the momentum. Don't stop to discuss. Your child is going to bed so you keep walking (or carrying if necessary)! There is no negotiation. Keep the child thinking forward. "Did you decide which story you want me to read?" Everything you say or do shows the child that s/he is going to bed. Don't wait for your child to say, "Okay." It is irrelevant. Your child is going to bed regardless of what s/he says.

• Change the rules for certain situations like parties, holidays or visiting a friend. At home you don't eat a lot of sweets but a party is special-even adults eat differently at parties. It's okay to ease up on some of your house rules now and then. Be flexible. You don't want to set your child up for bad behavior. You can still maintain some control but relax and have fun.

• Save your logic for someone older. No matter how sensible or clear your argument, you will have a hard time convincing the young child. You are in charge and sometimes young children need you to take charge-even if it means picking up the struggling child and carrying her out the door. Less talk, more action has much more meaning than a long discussion!

• "Tell him you're sorry!"
Never insist upon an apology. An insincere apology is worthless. It is better to suggest the child say, "Are you okay?" It is a caring response. If your child refuses, then you model a appropriate response. The incident can be briefly revisited at a time in the near future if necessary.

• Part of the frustration felt by parents (and teachers) occurs when we insist on something that is developmentally inappropriate. Your child is always growing and changing. Are you changing to meet his needs? Keep up with your child's developmental level-read books, articles, ask at the center. Are you expecting too much or too little from your child? Also, know your child's temperament. A feisty child will probably never be very flexible but will respond to consistency. Good manners are an issue for many adults but they are not something children will use without a lot of reminding and cajoling. It is important for children to learn to say "hello," "goodbye," "thank you" and "please" but to insist upon it or to get upset when children refuse is a waste of good energy. Manners are simply not important to your child. It may be important to you that your child greet adults in the morning but it is developmentally inappropriate. What is important is for them to hear you say "Good morning" because that is how they learn manners and other social skills-from your modeling. If a child says "please" but is asking for something with a harsh or demanding tone the words become inconsequential.

• Make sure your child isn't hungry or thirsty. Children do better with lots of small snacks instead of large meals. (Remember this during the holidays.) It is very easy to let children get hungry. They are on a different eating schedule than adults but the hungry child is usually fussy and uncooperative. Keep your refrigerator full of healthy snacks so you and your child can have an easier time between meals. Get in the habit of packing a small cooler when you go off in the car. Your child will be much more flexible if his/her tummy is full. It is also a very bad idea to use food as a bribe. You know the scene, "You will get no treat unless you . . ."

• A tired child is also fussy and uncooperative. As difficult as it may be, it is important to get your child to bed on time. Bedtime routines are vital. The child who is four or five sometimes has an easier time following the routine if it is written down in simple language and posted on the wall. Don't forget to periodically change the routine. If your child is three and is still following the same routines as when she was a toddler, you might try making a few additions. For example, you might allow the child to read in bed with a flashlight for ten minutes after lights out.

• "If you're not ready in 5 minutes I'm going to leave you!" Children are not in the same time warp as adults. They don't process things as fast as adults so we need to slow ourselves down. A hurried child can become stubborn and unbelievably slow. Slow down and give your child plenty of time. Try to avoid all those hollow threats.

• Let children know what to expect ahead of time. Children crave routines. Routines give children a feeling of being in control of their lives and a confidence in the world. If you have errands to do, tell your child, "First we're going to the bank, then we're going to the drug store, then we're going to the grocery store and then we're going home to eat lunch." Keep your child informed even if s/he doesn't seem interested. "Now we're going to the

grocery store and then home to eat lunch." Get in the habit of this even when your child is an infant. Transitions are very difficult for young children. Transitions are when children move from one activity to another. For example, from home to school or from playtime to dinnertime, etc. Children respond well to warnings about an upcoming transition. "We're going to eat in a few minutes." Routines and information about upcoming transitions helps your child through these transitions.

One of the advantages that teachers have over parents is that most teachers have a vast "bag of tricks" because they are used to working with a particular age range. It is more difficult for parents because strategies need to change as the child develops. Talk to teachers, directors and other parents for new ideas. Young children are delightful, interesting and fun but they also require a lot of patience, understanding and knowledge of child development. It is not enough to rely on common sense!

MILESTONE

Emmanuel Andre Harris was born on December 26, 2004 at 11:15 P.M. and weighed two pounds. Son of Tamika Williams and Andre Harris and grandson of Park Avenue Director Evelyn Owens Williams and Ronald Williams, Emmanuel died on December 27, 2004 from medical complications. DBCC shares in the family's grief during this difficult time.

True Story

by Alice Ball, age 4

My dad went on a trip and he went to Sweden and he bought me a Sweden doll from Sweden and he bought my brother a bus called Volvo bus. My brother made a big school that's tall and I made a playground. The top keeps falling off the school. The bus driver was a teenager and the bus driver was small.

Ask Aliceanna. . .

Dear Aliceanna,

My three-year-old can watch the same videos over and over again. Why, she will sit and watch Finding Nemo all evening every evening. She knows every song and is starting to memorize some of the dialogue. I know it probably isn't good for her to watch so many videos but at the end of the day I'm tired, she's tired and it is our routine. My question is, should I encourage her to watch other videos (and DVD's) or let her choose her own.

Signed: Glub, Glub. . .

Dear Glub,

Videos every day? Oh dear. Aliceanna has noticed on her infrequent forays to Blockbuster that some patrons will check out 6 or 8 DVDs at a time. She assumes that these people must spend all of their time sitting in front of a screen watching movies. This is not good for the adult brain and it certainly is not good for the developing brain.

From the adult's perspective, a movie will occupy a child for an extended period of time and much can be accomplished with the child engaged -- like making dinner. Aliceanna understands that sometimes this is necessary. However, passive activities do not help the child work on critical thinking, creativity, social, or motor skills.

How does a child develop all these important skills? By playing! Children need to play! They need to investigate, taste, hold, smell, toss, tear, combine, etc. until they know every aspect of the object. Over time the play will get more and more sophisticated and those important developing skills will grow -- as long as the child is given plenty of time to play. Play can be just as engaging as a video but is more "educational."

Aliceanna has noticed that many children prefer watching videos to playing. This is a very sad commentary on our society. It is an easy way out for children and I strongly recommend that videos be limited. Daily videos are too many. It is important work for children to find something to do on their own. It takes brainpower and effort which is too often lacking in a child's life. If your child complains, "There's nothing to do" smile inwardly and know your child has a wonderful opportunity to use his/her brain.

Aliceanna also wishes to point out that most videos are inappropriate for young children. They are violent or sexist and most often for older children. As far as watching the same video over and over again, Aliceanna thinks this is mind numbing. Children get in a loop (much like the errant computer) and this is not helpful to them. It is up to the adults to use their judgement and to set reasonable limits. Do your children a favor, turn off the videos and bring out the toys!

[If you have a question for Aliceanna you may email her at uc@dbcckids.org or pk@dbcckids.org or drop your question in the tuition box at either center. She loves to hear from you!]

THE FIVE YEAR CLUB

Every year we acknowledge those families who have stayed at DBCC for five years or more. These families made a long-term commitment to DBCC and we appreciate their trust and loyalty. This year we are missing some very wonderful friends.

❧ The **Kuos** started at University Center in 1994 when **Grace** was four months old. **Helen** also started as an infant but in 1998 and both children stayed through kindergarten. **Jean** and **Scot** have been staunch advocates of DBCC throughout their ten years. Jean was a Board member and also the chair of last year's very successful March Magic fundraiser. After ten years, it seems very funny not to have a Kuo at the center!

❧ **Kathy Graham** and **Carolyn Hayes** enrolled **Jamie Graham-Hayes** at University Center in the fall of 1996 and Robin began four years later. Kathy Graham and Carolyn Hayes were DBCC advocates throughout the eight years their children attended.

❧ **Anita Kassof** and **Josh Neiman** enrolled **Sophie** in September of 1997 and then her brother, **Daniel**, in the fall of 2000. Anita served as a DBCC Board member. The children attended a total of seven years! Sophie is best known for singing "Puff the Magic Dragon" with Peter Yarrow during one of DBCC's fundraisers!

❧ **Kendall** and **Deborah Kennison** enrolled **Charlotte** in the fall of 1997 and **Beatrice** started in September of 2001. The children attended a total of seven years and Kendall and Deborah were always very supportive of DBCC!

❧ **Tammy** and **Greg Miley** enrolled **Robbie** as an infant in September of 1999 and **Ellie** started in January of 2002 in the University Center infant room. The children were here for five years! Tammy stayed very involved and she was a wonderful communicator--helping with problems and pointing out positives.

❧ Thank you for sending us your very special children. What fun it has been watching them grow! Thank you for all of your support through donations, volunteer work and promoting DBCC. It's families like you that have helped DBCC to become such a special place. Please keep in touch!

ALUMNI NEWS

• University Center had a wonderful surprise when **Lisa Lipton** dropped by with her very grown daughters **Mollye** and **Noa**.

Mollye is 12 years old and in the 7th grade at Sudbrook Magnet Middle School. Her favorite subject is band and she plays the clarinet. She loves to play tennis, read, watch TV and hang out with her friends. Her favorite book is "Harry Potter."

"I remember the yellow slide. It used to be really, really big to me and now it's so small."

Noa is 8 years old and going into the 4th grade at Krieger Schecter School. Her favorite subject is math and her favorite book is *James and the Giant Peach*. She loves to hang out with her friends, play tennis and shop for shoes.

• Our little **Jenny Cooper** is all grown up! Jenny graduated from Park School and is attending the University of California at Berkeley. She will be playing Lacrosse at Berkeley. Our best wishes to Jenny and her parents!

• Margo received email from **Kathy Frey-Balter**: "**Dylan** is in second grade and learning words like *ignorant* and *enlightened* (2004 politics!) and asking me the difference between *instinct* and *extinct*. **Leah** gave us a lecture at dinner last night about WWII ("If Hitler took away all the tweezers and the Jews all had splinters, it would hurt them a lot and that would not be nice.") Leah is a challenge in parental giggle control. **Jake** attends City College, 6' tall and working hard."

• Susan ran into the parents of **Mary Elizabeth Murphy** the other day. Mary Elizabeth is 23 years old and in graduate school at Columbia University.

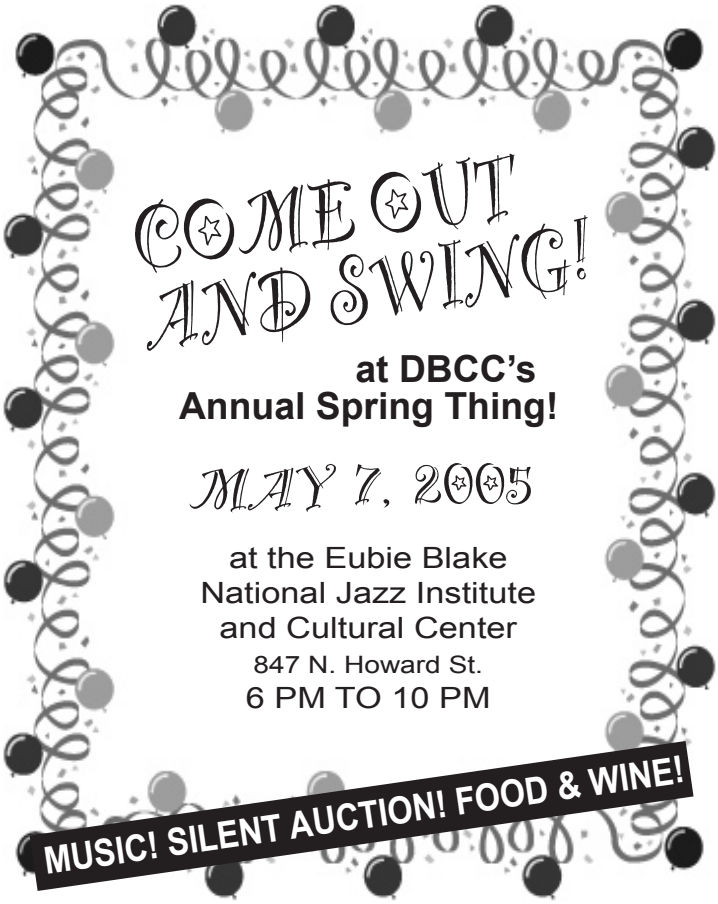
CHILDSPEAK

• **Collin Kane**, age 4, was listening to his mom talk about the cicadas. "They live 17 years under the dirt whereupon they crawl out and sing."
"That's not an exciting life," commented Collin.
• **Joelle Popa**, age 2, commented when asked to clean up before going outside: "Why didn't you say so!"
• **Hailey Blachly**, age 2, was asked when they could call her at home. "At 10:00," she said definitively.
• **Garrett Munger**, age 2, fell off the blocks. Maddy Swartz, age 2, witnessed the fall, slapped her thighs for emphasis and said, "I apologize, I apologize. Are you okay?"
The teacher asked, "Where are your boo boos?" Garrett pointed to his head and his cheek.
"Where do you want me to put the ice? asked the teacher. "In my mouth," said Garrett.
• **Zachary Lane**, age 5, was trying to organize a baseball game on the playground. The game was about to begin when he stood up and sang the entire "Star Spangled Banner."
• **Peter French**, age 4, was talking about his teacher. "My teacher, Mary, is a teacher's challenge."
• **Jules Ouwerkerk**, age 4, was playing with two of his friends. The play was getting a little rough so the teacher intervened. Jules said, "We're only playing Hi Yuk." He then started making karate chops in the air and exclaimed loudly, "Hi Yuk, Hi Yuk!"
• In the middle of dinner one night **Javier Love**, age 4, asked his family, "Do fish have a penis?" Surprised but keeping her cool, his mother replied, "Why do you ask?" "I just wondered how they pee."
• Kindergartners **Clark Stikeleather** and **Hayden Bessette** were talking. Clark said, "It's a good thing you have long hair because you look really cool like in a band."
Hayden said, "Yeah, like Johnny Ramone who is dead now." Then Hayden starting singing, "Johnny Ramone, yeah! Johnny Ramone, yeah! Yeah! Talking about eating the donut!"
• **Peter French**, age 4, was talking to his teacher. "Mrs. Virginia, I like your rings. Did you get married?" "Yes," replied Virginia.
Peter then asked, "You have two rings. Does that mean you have two husbands?"
• Kindergartner **Sage Okolo** announced to her teacher, "Ms Carolyn, I brought my imagination to school today!"
• **Liam MacDanolds**, age 4, decided that "cheese is slimy because it has no bones."

[*Do you have a Childspeak for the Newsletter? Email Childspeaks to susans@dbcckids.org*]

It's a Boy! It's a Girl!

Morgan is a big sister! **Samuel David Buszczak** was born on May 7, 2004 and weighed 6 pounds 11 oz. Congratulations to Cherie, Michael and Morgan!
Eva is a big sister! **Julia Nadine Mammen** was born on May 9, 2004 and weighed 6 lbs. 3 oz. Congratulations to Jenna, Andy and Eva!
Atlas is a big brother! **Ramona Lombardi Pyke** was born on June 15, 2004 and weighed 8 lbs. 11 oz. Congratulations to Joyce, Grantley and Atlas.
Sofia is a big sister! **Lukian Peter Wernyj** was born on June 27, 2004 and weighed 8 lbs. 8 oz. Congratulations to Andrea, Roman and Sofia!
P.J. is a big brother! **Gabriel Adam Fenchak** was born on June 29, 2004 and weighed 8 lbs. 4 oz. Congratulations to Nadine, Paul and P.J!
Alex is a big brother! **Meredith Nishiura** was born on July 30, 2004 and weighed 7 pounds 2 oz. Congratulations to Irene, Stephen and Alex!
Alums, Hannah and Allison are big sisters! **Caroline Maureen Yuxin O'Neill** was adopted by the family this summer. Caroline is four-years-old. Sharon and Hannah had the added pleasure of traveling to China to bring her home. Congratulations to Sharon, Hannah and Allison!
Mila is a big sister. **Singer Daniel Moon Ferraro** was born on August 27, 2004 and weighed 8.8 lbs. Congratulations to Isadora, David and Mila!
Natalie Daline Shin was born on September 14, 2004 and weighed 8 lbs. 7 oz. Natalie will be starting in University Center's infant room in January. Congratulations to Marcia and John!
Zeke is a big brother and Emma is a big sister! **Jackson Paine Texter** was born on September 24, 2004 and weighed 9 lbs, 13 oz. Congratulations to Lori, John, Zeke and Emma.
Riley is a big sister! **Eli Jacob Becker** was born on October 28, 2004 and weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. Congratulations to Catherine, Harvey and Riley!
Dee Dee is a big sister! Twins **Walter Wontae Chung Clemons** weighing 6 lbs. 11 oz. and **Nora Nayong Chung Clemons** weighing 5 lbs. 8 oz. were born on Nov. 8, 2004. Congratulations to Erin, Eric and Dee Dee.
Maya is a big sister! **Devin Nicholas Pal** was born on December 16, 2004 and weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. Congratulations to Gwen, Bappa and Maya!
Fiona is a big sister! **Paul James Pasqualini** was born on December 18, 2004 and weighed 7 lbs. 9 oz. Congratulations to Elizabeth, Paul and Dylan!



THE LIGHTING OF THE MONUMENT

Well, Daddy and me were at the fireworks and I got a cookie and candy cane. And I keeped saying, "Daddy, is the fireworks here yet?" And when we were in the building with only sculptures I was eating a big candy cane instead of the little one. And then the fireworks were here and we went out to the fireworks and the fireworks came out of the monument until I was shaking. And then I said, "Daddy, let's go!" I was scared....we looked around some more and we found mommy. And then I found Brooks where Mommy was and then Christine gave me a Santa that lighted up and played Christmas songs. Then we went home and I played some Christmas songs.

By Aaron Haettenschwiller, age 4

Birthday Books

Consider donating books to DBCC in honor of your child's birthday. DBCC will place a book plate in each book that recognizes your child's birthday and who donated it. It becomes a lasting gift from your family and a valuable addition to our library!

Thank you to Wendy and Andy Lane who donated books in honor of their son, Jacob's 2nd birthday!

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Childhood should be a journey, not a race.

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DBCC is grateful to all our FY 2003-2004 supporters! Your generosity enables us to continue the important work we do . . .advocating, facilitating and providing the highest quality child care and early education for young children and their families living and working in the Baltimore metropolitan area. (We have combined Annual Giving and United Way.)

Unless the investment in children is made, all of humanity's most fundamental long-term problems will remain fundamental long-term problems.

State of the World's Children, UNICEF

DBCC would not exist without the volunteer efforts of Board members, parents, grandparents and friends (past and present). Your priceless gifts of time, energy, ideas, skills and knowledge have greatly enriched DBCC's programs since our beginnings. We love all of you!

DBCC appreciates generous Scholarship Grants from:

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If your name is missing,
we apologize and ask that you
contact us at 410-669-1010 so that
we may correct our records.

. . . THANKS!

Note: DBCC has received United Way contributions from a number of anonymous donors, most from JHU and the State of Maryland. Please accept our gratitude-we wish we could have thanked each of you personally.

DBCC is grateful for generous donations from:
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- The Goldseker Foundation

Motorcycle by Peter French, age 4