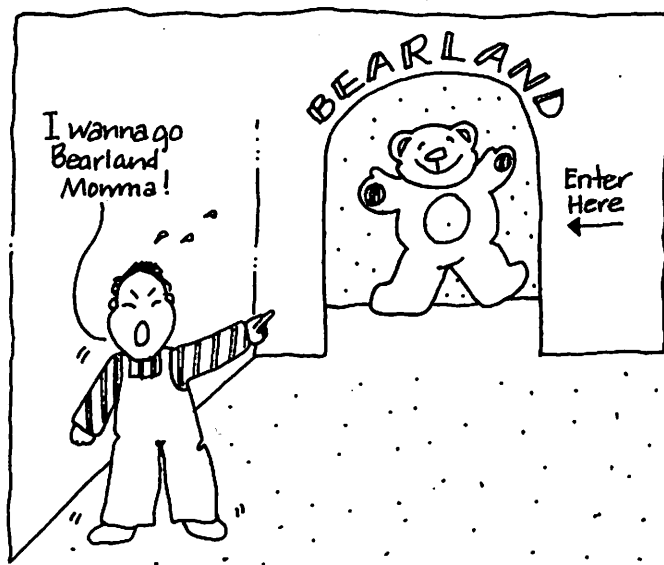




newsletter for nurturing support groups

**Issue 42, Vol. 7, No. 6
June 1987**



Response to Tantrums

While the ability to resist drugs and whatever else we need to say no to is essential, the misuse of resistance can be a destructive force in our lives. We practice the foundation for these skills starting at about eighteen months.

The way in which adults respond to two-year old temper displays gives children information about how to use their emotions and how to be powerful. Children who are taught that anger is an emotion that gives them information that they need to solve a problem are lucky. Children who observe adults using tantrums to get their way and children who live with adults who give in to tantrums are encouraged to use displays of temper (or violence) to vent feelings or to control others.

Angry feelings can be vented in a Fuss Box in a way that helps relieve tension, encourages clear thinking and constructive action, and does not offend others. (See WE vol. 4, No. 5).

The use of tantrums for social control beyond age two or three seems to be self-defeating. A fifty year study documents the problems that accompany the use of temper displays in school children and adults.

Berkeley Study Shows Child Temper Harmful

A 50-year follow-up study of 177 randomly selected Berkeley, California boys and girls found that 30% of both sexes had at least moderate problems with their tempers in 1928 at the age of eight. The children have been followed as they have grown up. The results show that such problems at the early age of eight are important predictors of later problems in life.

Dear Reader:

Welcome to the 42nd issue of WE, a newsletter for and about groups of people who get together for the purpose of giving each other personal support, examining attitudes, and learning new skills.

Nancy Reagan advises us to "Just say NO" to drugs, but some people find it difficult to say no to any number of things.

This issue focuses on the important ability to say NO, how to encourage it at age two, which is the natural time to learn to say no, and how to recapture the ability to say no at any later age. Some of you may already be using the audio cassette tape, "The Terrific Twos". Here you will find a transcript of that tape and suggestions for using it.

Jean Illsley Clarke
Jean Illsley Clarke

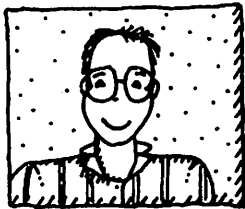
For the boys with temper problems it was found that they lost out on education for boys of both lower and middle class backgrounds. They received jobs of lower desirability and had lower occupational status at age 40 with children with temper problems from middle class backgrounds ending up in lower class positions in their own adult lives, i.e. a downward mobility. A problem with temper had as harmful an effect at hindering education as IQ had on helping education. 70% of all the boys served in the military during the Korean War. The explosive boys did poorly in the military with little upward mobility. They suffered more job switches and had more erratic work histories with more unemployment later in life. 50% had their marriages end in divorce while only 20% of the other boys had this outcome.

Women with tantrums married men with lower status jobs, i.e. the women were handicapped by their temper problems. 26% vs. 10% had their marriages end in divorce. Children and their husbands reported that these women as mothers were inadequate and ill-tempered. This finding persisted even after controlling for social-economic status, IQ and their husbands' backgrounds.

The research was completed by **Dr. Avshalom Caspi** of **Harvard University** who concluded that there are "far-reaching effects of childhood tantrums." (International Society for Research on Aggression biennial meeting, Chicago 7/27/86) (Dr. Caspi, Dept. of Psychology, William James Hall, Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA 02138).

This information on Dr. Caspi's study is quoted from Vol. 7, No. 7-8, August-September, 1986 of the **NATIONAL COALITION ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE**, New York Office: 144 East End Ave., New York, NY 10128.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY



To Use The Tape For Your Own Growth

Parenting Skills

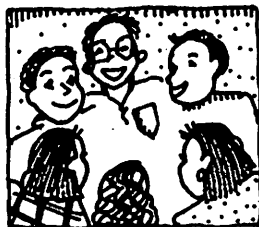
To improve your *parenting skills*, listen to the tape or read the article early in the morning. Identify with the care givers. Remember that the story includes a Mom, a Dad and a Day Care provider because those are the people who provide most of the child care. You can think of each of them as a loving adult and you can learn from each how to offer love and structure. Listen every morning for three weeks or until you are aware that you are providing love and structure that works, and that you are proud of. Don't worry about feeling comfortable or natural. If you were taught early that parents who allow children to say no or who ignore tantrums are poor parents, it may be a while before you feel comfortable with your new behavior. Refer back to the article or tape whenever you need a boost.

Personal growth

To improve your own ability to think independently and set your own boundaries and say no when you need to, listen to the tape or read the article just before you go to sleep. Identify with the child. In this way you program your natural dreaming-healing time to incorporate the loving, supportive messages for yourself.

Continue this activity for two or three weeks or until you feel yourself being more clear about when to say yes and when to say no, more willing to stand your ground if you tend to be a push over, or more willing to look for clear, rational solutions to problems if you tend to use anger or sulking to get your way. Return to the story for a boost whenever you need it.

Thanks to Gail Nordeman for these suggestions.



To Use The Tape In Groups

Read the article or listen to the tape and hand out copies of the *Dear Day Care Providers* letter. If you are working with a group that is not primarily day care providers, change the greeting to *Dear Mom* or *Dear Dad* or *Dear Foster Parent* or *Dear Babysitter* or whatever is appropriate for your group.

From the following list, choose activities that you think will be helpful to the group or duplicate the list and invite the group members to select activities.

Ask people to:

1. Mark each item on Jason's letter: "This I do well" or "This I could do better." Ask them, in pairs, to celebrate what they "do well" and give each other suggestions for the "how to do better" items.

2. List the rules in your house (or school or day care center) about anger, no saying, resistance and independence. Rewrite rules that you think need improvement.

3. Identify specific behaviors that Mrs. Loomis used in reference to each item in Jason's letter. For each item, identify an alternative behavior to the one Mrs. Loomis used that would also be helpful.

4. Identify common behaviors of two year olds. List each under "Ignore" or "Take Action." Under each "ignore" item, list specific behavior you use to ignore the behavior without ignoring the child. Under each "Take Action" item list specific behaviors you will use to take action.

5. Do a Suggestion Circle on how to ignore or take action on any item on the list. (For directions for running a Suggestion Circle see **WE** Vol. 5 or any of the *HELP for Parents Suggestion Circle Series* books, Jean Illsley, Clarke, et al.).

6. Match each item on Jason's list with an Affirmation from Stage One (Being), Two (Doing), or Three (Thinking) and tell what behavior on your part would offer that affirmation. (See **WE** Vol. 7 No. 2 for a list of Affirmations).

7. Chart Mrs. Loomis' interactions with Jason on a Three Balloon Sheet. (See **WE** Vol. 6 No. 3).

8. Record or remember your own actions with a two year old for a fifteen minute period and chart those on a Three Balloon Sheet.



To Use The Tape In Your Family

For Parents

Listen to the tape with the other adults or teenagers who care for your children.

- Share what you know or guess about how your parents responded to your own two-year-old thrusts for separation.
- Discuss each item in the letter. Ask, "How is our child doing this, how can we do our part better?" If one of you is better at one skill than another, teach and support each other.
- Discuss how well each of you says no appropriately now. Think about what you can learn to improve your own skills as you support your Terrific Two.

For Older Children

To Help Older Children Understand the Terrific Two.

Ask the older siblings and their playmates to listen to the tape to

- learn about the job of a two-year-old
- learn not to take the resistance personally
- remember that this stage will only last a short time if she gets good love and structure from the family.

To Help Older Children Strengthen Their Own Separation and Independence.

Make the tape available for older children to play whenever they want to.

One eight year old, who had not been allowed to say no when she was two, listened to the tape many times. Sometimes she sat alone in a room, played the tape, switched it off, said "NO" aloud several times, listened some more, hit the pause button, said "NO", and then listened again. She also shared the tape with her girl friends.

It is important to remember that if we don't complete a developmental task the first time around, we always have another chance.

THE TERRIFIC TWOS

By Jean Illsley Clarke

My name is Jason and I am two. I say *no* automatically. When Dad asks me how I am, I say, "No. Fine." When he asks, "What did you have for lunch?" I say, "No. Tuna." I am practicing saying *no*. I also say, "I won't!" and "I don't want to!" and "You can't make me!" When Mom asks me to do something because she really wants me to, I say, "I don't care!" even if I care a lot. You might say it is my job to practice saying *no*.

There will be lots of times in my life when I will be glad that I know how to say *no*. When I am eight and there is a chance to steal candy . . . When I am thirteen and the other kids ask me to use drugs . . . When I am sixteen and the kids dare me to drive too fast . . . When I am seventeen and the kid I like says, "Come on, all the others are doing it. You strange or something?" . . . When I am grown up and someone pressures me to do one more job and I am already too busy . . .

When do I learn this valuable art of *no* saying? The natural and easy time for me to start practicing is right now, when I am two. My folks help me say *no* a lot, and then there is Mrs. Loomis.

My mom says Mrs. Loomis is a terrific child care provider, but I just think she is terrific. She thinks I am terrific, too. That's where the name *the terrific twos* comes from.

Mrs. Loomis is terrific because she is glad to see me every morning when I come to her house. She likes that I am a boy. She always calls me by my right name, and never gets me mixed up with Jeffy.



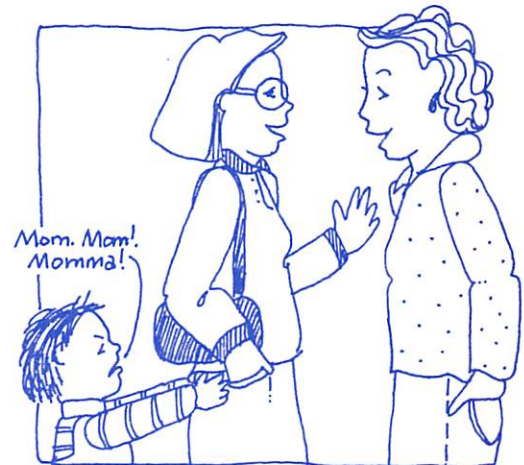
She always tells me where we are going and what we are going to do next. She says I need to practice thinking now that I'm two, so she lets me have time to think about what is going to happen next. She says my brain is mature enough for beginning to understand what happens when I do something — *cause and effect* thinking she calls it. I'm ready to do some of my own problem solving now, instead of having big people do it for me, so she lets me figure some things out for myself.

I said Mrs. Loomis was terrific earlier, but sometimes she just stands and gabs with Mom and I get so bored. I go knock somebody's toys over, or say "poopy poo" and "wee wee" and try to get somebody to laugh. Anyway, gabby Mrs. Loomis told Mom that **two year olds need to think, to get separate, and still have limits set and get nurturing.**

Whatever I need is okay with Mrs. Loomis, and she helps me get what I need. One day when I had a tummy ache and really needed Mom, Mrs. Loomis understood. She wasn't a bit mad because I didn't like her for a while. She knows I need touching and holding, so she hugs me and sometimes she rocks me.

But most of the time I'm off and running. My energy doesn't quit. Mrs. Loomis gets tired, but she doesn't get grumpy very often. She never threatens to go away when I am mad, and she says I am one of the best *no* sayers she has ever met. She says, "Jason, you are terrific!" She bragged about me to Mom. She said I can say *no* to more things than she ever thought of. Sometimes she bursts out laughing at all the things I say *no* to, but if I get mad at that she stops right away and takes me seriously.

Mrs. Loomis explained to Mom that two is a very serious time. As infants and toddlers, kids get constant care and lots of protection and attention. They come to think they are *King of the Mountain*. But sometime between 18 months and 3 years the *developmental time clock* in each child moves him on to the next stage — becoming an independent person separate from his mother or caregiver, and beginning *cause and effect*



thinking. Mrs. Loomis says sometimes two year olds have a lot of anger about giving up that old, safe position as the center of the universe.

Mrs. Loomis says she doesn't believe in power struggles. She says **you can't have a power struggle if adults aren't in competition with the kids. It is grownup's job to nurture, not to compete,** whatever that means.

I got plenty mad while Mrs. Loomis was saying all those big words to my Mom and ignoring me, so I tried a tantrum. Wouldn't you know, Mrs. Loomis just picked me up and put me



over in the *tantrum corner*. There I couldn't hurt the other kids or myself. Then Mrs. Loomis went right on talking to Mom. I watched them out of the corner of my eye, but neither of them flinched. That's why I don't use too many tantrums. If I could get them to act mad back at me or at least act scared or upset . . .

I went home with Scott the other day. Life at his house is a cinch. Any little thing he wants, his Mom rushes to give him. For instance, he asked for apple juice and she gave him some. He said, NO, he wanted grape juice. She said, "I'm sorry!" and got him the grape juice. Would you believe it? Boy, is he lucky. All he has to do is say *no* or whimper and she gives him the stuff. He does a lot of tantrums, too. You ought to see his mother jump. She gives him anything he wants. Then afterwards, she cries and says she guesses she isn't a good mother or he wouldn't have tantrums.



It looked so good I tried it when I got home. I remembered there was some candy in the cupboard, so I pointed and yelled and demanded and had a first rate tantrum. But my folks just looked bored. Mom told Dad that Scott's mom could learn a few things by watching Mrs. Loomis.

I have tried Scott's apple juice trick on Mrs. Loomis several times and she said, "Oh, Jason, you changed your mind." Sometimes she gives me the other juice, and sometimes she doesn't. But she is cheerful about it. I never did get her to say, "I'm sorry!" She says things like, "Jason, you can think what you want." Mrs. Loomis

doesn't get mad about me changing my mind.

But always Mrs. Loomis gets mad about things like forgetting to pick up toys or trying to leave the play yard or starting up the deck stairs if someone leaves the gate open. She told Mom that **when grownups get mad at two year olds it is important for the grownups to direct the anger toward insisting that children solve two year old problems.** I don't know what that means, but I do know that Mrs. Loomis has a few rules that I have tested two hundred and fourteen times and she never changed her mind.

She reminds me of the rule and sometimes I just say *okay* and sometimes I say *no* and sometimes I yell and scream to see what she will do. She never gets mad or sad if I say *no* or if I yell or scream. But she gets mad if I break those dumb rules of hers — especially if she is sure that I know the rule.

Take the other day. Mrs. Loomis has this rule that we can't walk in her flower garden. She even has a little white fence around it. It's not high enough to keep us out. She says it is there so we can see it and remember not to walk on the flowers. Well, I thought I'd test her one more time. I walked up to the fence and waited. Pretty soon she saw me and said, "No, Jason, do not walk in the flower bed." I waited a little longer, and then I took a couple of steps. Wouldn't you know that she was on her feet and starting toward me?

Like I told you, she is firm on those rules. But I thought I'd better test a little farther. So I jumped on the flowers. Not hard. I just stomped a little bit. I never thought that flowers would be so weak. One little stomp



squished them. I thought they should stand back up, but Mrs. Loomis didn't think it was the flowers' fault. She was mad. She was mad at ME.

She raised her voice pretty loud and said, "Jason, you stand in that corner until you are ready to think about what that white fence means and what you are supposed to do about it." Would you believe, I had to stand in that dumb corner until I told her I wouldn't walk on the flowers? I even tried yelling and feeling sick, but she just ignored me.

One day Mom asked Mrs. Loomis how she remembered so well what two year olds needed. Mrs. Loomis gave Mom a paper. She said it was a letter to Day Care Providers written by a two year old. I know that two year olds can't write, but then, two year olds can't say out loud the things I have been thinking to you. Here is the list. You can read it if you want. I can't spend any more time with you because I have to do some two year old business. I might test some of Mrs. Loomis' old rules. And I suppose she won't give in again. And she will still love me. She really is terrific.



Dear Day Care Provider:

Please **be glad that I'm growing up**, even though I am doing my separating by acting contrary and stubborn and by saying no thirty-seven hundred times.

Please **let me continue to be dependent** on you even though I act very independent and say, "I don't want you." **I still need to be held some and cuddled and protected.**

Please **let me feel that independence is safe by watching me and protecting me** even when I am insisting on doing things myself.

Please **have a few sensible rules and enforce them.** This will provide a nice, firm wall against which I can say no and "You can't make me!" Please enforce them anyway. That will help me feel secure and not be scared that when I say "I won't!" or start to think for myself, you might go away and leave me.

Please, **when you request that I pick up my toys, insist that I do that.** If you manipulate me into doing things, I won't need to learn to think. And if you force me, I won't have the chance to learn to think.

Please **remember that I seldom learn from just one or two experiences**, so I need to test you again and again to be sure.

Please **don't be afraid of my anger.** I have to experiment with my anger and try out different ways of expressing it. Then I find out how you respond. I especially don't want to end up afraid of my own anger. **You help me a lot when you watch and listen to my anger in a very matter of fact, accepting way, and don't let me hurt myself or others.**

Please **demand that I think about what I am feeling.** I will be crippled if I grow up believing that I can't think and feel at the same time. It won't help me if I believe that when I am mad or scared I can't think. Those are the times that I will need to think most clearly.

Please **expect me to start taking other people's feelings and wants into account.** Do this even though I say "I don't care!" when you tell me Jeffy feels bad 'cause I broke his truck. **And please don't ask me to take care of YOU.** If you want me not to run in the street, tell me not to do it for my safety — for ME. Don't tell me that I make YOU worry. I don't even know what worry means. If I am making you do that, I might get so scared that I won't have time to practice resisting and separating.

Sometimes I am not very sure about what I need or think or want, so please encourage me to know those things. I'm sure that I can if you push me a little and have faith in me.

Please **help me to learn how to think and to say NO and to handle my anger now, while I am still little enough for you to protect me.**

And please love me and hold me when I want to be held.

No and I love you,
A Terrific Two



Jason



Jennie

To order **The Terrific Twos** audio cassette tape, send \$5.95 per tape plus 50¢ handling to:

Daisy Tapes, 16535 9th Avenue N., Plymouth, MN 55447, or call during business hours (612) 473-1840. Minnesota residents please add 6% tax. The tape has a male voice, Jason, on one side and a female, Jennie, on the other.

Other tapes available from Jean Illsley Clarke, are **The Important Infants** (Birth to 6 months) and **The Wonderful Busy Ones** (6 months to 18 months).

WHAT ADULTS CAN DO ABOUT THEIR OWN ANGER

Sometimes adults get frustrated with children and feel like hitting or using verbal abuse. The following suggestions about *what to do instead of hitting with hands or voice* were contributed by parents who have used them successfully.

- Call a Parent Hot-Line.
 - Hold child firmly instead of hitting.
 - Take a few deep breaths before responding.
 - Take time to pull yourself together and talk about what's upsetting you and the child.
 - Leave room quickly.
 - Remind yourself that children learn by experimenting many times. Don't take it personally.
 - Go for a run if kids are old enough to be left alone.
 - Take better care of yourself so you won't feel so angry at someone else.
 - Sing loudly in the shower.
 - Go into another room, shut the door, beat on pillows.
 - Hug the kids, firmly but not too hard.
 - Change your activity.
 - Get therapy for yourself if you feel like abusing.
 - Vacuum.
 - Center yourself and breathe deeply to release the anger.
 - Tell them you are angry; pause, then tell them you love them but you are mad at what they did.
 - Count to ten, then think about what to do.
 - Ask yourself, "Is it really the kids I am angry about or am I mad about something else?"
 - Let them know you care about them.
 - Think and feel and respond with your thought.
 - Exercise to deal with anger.
 - Withhold expressing anger until you are in a less explosive situation.
- Look at your rules — maybe you need clearer rules or to enforce them more consistently.
 - Walk away from the situation for awhile, but do not leave young children unattended.
 - Talk instead of hitting; tell what they did and what you want them to do instead.
 - Ask for behavior change. Look them in the eyes.
 - Take time out for yourself.
 - Use words, make sure the child is safe.
 - Say, "We will discuss it later." Be sure to follow through.
 - Give yourself permission not to finish the argument.
 - Use a corner; put child in the corner instead of hitting him.
 - Throw a towel on the floor.
 - Find out if what you are expecting is appropriate for the child's age.

Thanks to Barbara Morgan and Carole Gesme for collecting these suggestions from parents.

REQUEST FOR HELP!

From Jean Illsley Clarke

Connie Dawson and I are currently (right now!) writing a book for people who grew up in families where the adults' problems took so much energy that there was not enough energy left to give the kids the nurture and structure that they needed. The working title of this book is **Growing Up Again, Parenting Yourself so You Can Parent Your Children**. Our publisher, Hazelden, is considering simultaneous publication of the developmental tapes. Yes!, a tape for each stage will be ready by the time the book is published. Possibly those tapes will include affirmation songs by Darrell Fairies. If you are willing to share your thoughts about this idea and/or ways you use the Terrific Twos tape, please, please send the information to me via WE. Thanks!

Suggestion Circles Requests

from Mary Paananen

Mary and Terry have adopted three children. Mary is collecting Suggestion Circles for a book for adoptive parents. Please send circles to Mary Paananen, 7024 - 33rd N E., Seattle, WA 98115.

from Sandy Keiser

Sandy is starting a book of Circles for step-families. Please send circles to Sandy Keiser, 3707 Boudinot, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211.

If you need a reminder of how to run a circle, see one of the **Help! for Parents** Suggestion Circle of books by Clarke, Paananen, et al or see WE, Vol. 5, No. 6.

♥ ♥ ♥ **Opening Activity** ♥ ♥ ♥
to strengthen the ability to say NO.

- Hand out Name Tags
- Ask each person to choose a partner, make a name tag for her and ask her to tell you one time she was glad she knew how to say "NO".
- Introduce your partner and tell the group about that time if she is willing for you to share that information.

Closing Activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to share what they learned about saying "NO"
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations
- Ask the group to stand in a circle and repeat together: I can decide when to say "yes" and when to say "no" and I can use my "yeses" and "nos" to take good care of myself and of other people.

Facilitator Training Workshops

July 13-17, 1987
Minneapolis, MN

A week-long workshop for people who want to . . .

- Improve group leadership skills for working with growth, education, or support groups.
- Facilitate the **Self-Esteem: A Family Affair** parenting model, or
- Receive advanced training in the use of Transactional Analysis in educational settings.
- Practice saying no appropriately.

Led by Jean Illsley Clarke.
Write to WE for details.

Suggested Format for Group Meetings

Place _____

Date _____

Time _____

Person in Charge _____

Program:

- Opening activity that offers everyone a positive personal message
- Ground rules
- Celebrating wins and sharing problems
- Asking for support
- Practice skills, new learnings, play
- Suggestion circle
- Plan the next meeting
- Resentments and Appreciations
- Closing activity that offers everyone a positive personal message

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\$15.00 per year (6 issues)

\$20.00 in Canada

• Suggested activities

WE

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Plymouth, MN 55447

• Thoughts on theory and
purpose of support groups

• News from other support groups

U.S. Postage
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newsletter for nurturing support groups