

SPRING /SUMMER 2024

Parent Partner Corner

BTT Bits

Birds are chirping, flowers are blooming, grass is growing and its time for one of my favorite things; **SPRING CLEANING.**

How to Spring Clean for Home Safety

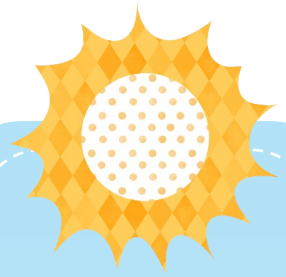
- **Deep clean your dryer.** Even if you clean the lint trap after every load, your dryer is accumulating flammable lint particles in other areas. Thoroughly clean your dryer by moving it away from the wall and wiping down every surface. Use a vacuum hose attachment or long, flexible brush to clean out the lint trap inlet and the vent pipe. If your lint filter appears clogged, clean it with a nylon brush and water.
- **Clean around your gas furnace.** While you're replacing your furnace filter, vacuum up dust and remove any combustible items like paper, paint or fuel. If you didn't get your furnace tuned up last year, don't skip it this year -- a professional inspection is your best defense against heat exchanger cracks that can release carbon monoxide into your home.
- **Maintain your emergency detectors.** Your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors should be dusted with a dry cloth and checked with the test button. Replace the batteries if they're more than six months old, and replace the entire unit if it's past its printed expiration date.
- **Check your fire extinguisher.** If you don't have at least a small kitchen fire extinguisher, it's time to get one. But if you do have one, check its label and inspection tag for an expiration date. If it hasn't expired, check the pressure gauge to ensure it's in the proper range. Any rechargeable fire extinguisher with no inspection tag or which hasn't been inspected for more than a year should be profes-



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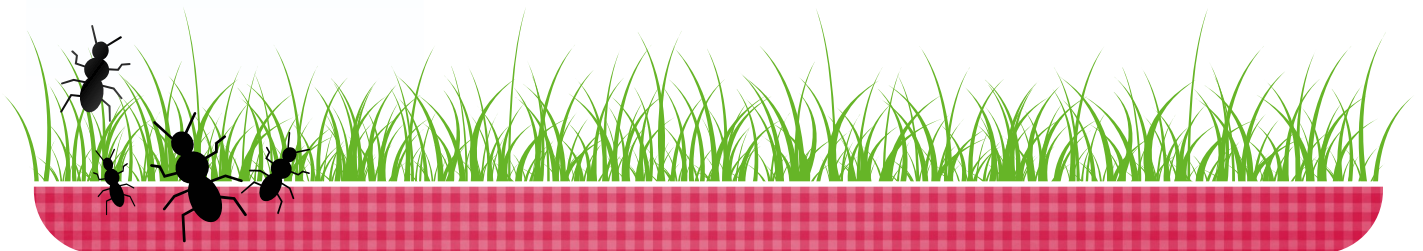
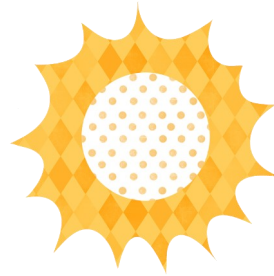


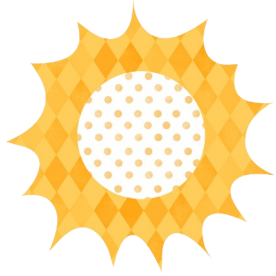
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- **Inspect for mold.** This is especially important in bathrooms, laundry rooms and wherever there is moisture. Mold has a distinct musty smell and appears as dark, fuzzy spots on surfaces. If left to spread, it can cause serious respiratory health problems. You should clean any mold you find with bleach, but it's also important to locate and address the underlying cause, which could be a leaky pipe, an air conditioning problem or a breach in your home's exterior.
- **Manage electrical cords.** As you clean each room, check to make sure power cords and extension cords don't present a tripping hazard. Inspect all cords for damage and immediately discontinue use if you find a punctured sheath. Ensure that cords aren't running under rugs or around door frames, as this can lead to damage.
- **Audit your emergency kit.** Some things in your emergency kit are built to stand the test of time. But others like batteries, canned goods and bottled water must be replaced every so often.
- **Schedule a chimney sweep.** If you have a fireplace, you should have your chimney inspected and swept annually to prevent fires, carbon monoxide accidents and structural problems. This maintenance is best performed in the fall, but chimney sweeps can book up early, so schedule it now while you're in a spring cleaning state of mind.

Spring cleaning is a big job, but when done right, it leaves your home smelling fresh, feeling comfortable and safer than it was before. Roll up your sleeves and incorporate these tasks into your spring cleaning list!





Why Does My Toddler Try to Hit Me When She Doesn't Get Her Way

Q: How do I respond to my 17-month-old who has started to swing at me with her hands when she doesn't get her way? —Concerned Parent

A: It ain't easy being 17 months. You have really strong feelings but lack the ability to use words to clearly let others know what's on your mind. How frustrating is that? The fact is that learning to express thoughts and feelings begins in the early years by using actions. Some are totally appropriate, like the 12-month-old who raises her arms up to show mom or dad that she wants to be picked up. Others can be distressing, like hitting, kicking, and biting. But they are all efforts on the part of the child to communicate. In this case, we can guess that your child is mad that she is not getting something she wants. She cannot say, Mom, I am so mad that you won't let me have that fourth cookie!

The fact is that learning to express oneself begins in the early years by using actions.

The best way to respond to her swinging is to firmly—not roughly—hold on to her arm and say something like, No hitting. Hitting hurts. I know you are mad that (fill in the blank). You don't like it when... But you cannot hit. Hitting hurts. It is important to be clear and firm in your tone but not angry. Your child is not purposefully misbehaving. This is about teaching rules and limits, not about punishment. These moments are also important opportunities to teach your child about feelings. You need to show her that angry feelings are not the problem, it's what she does with these feelings that can be problematic. Your job is to let your child know what is and isn't acceptable and then to teach her what she can do with

her feelings. Putting her feelings into words is important. It shows empathy and provides a good model for how to cope with feelings as she grows.

After you have stopped her behavior and validated her feelings, you can show your daughter other ways of

expressing herself. While most parents agree that hitting is not an acceptable way to express anger, they vary

in their beliefs about what is acceptable. Some suggest children shout in the air as loud as they can or make

growling noises to get their feelings out. Others suggest stomping feet, scribbling with a crayon, ripping

newspaper, or hitting an object that is safe and can't be hurt—such as a pillow. It is up to you to decide what is

okay. The bottom line is that you acknowledge your child's feelings and help her learn healthy, non-destructive

ways to express them.

After you have stopped her behavior and validated her feelings, you can show your daughter alternative ways of expressing herself.

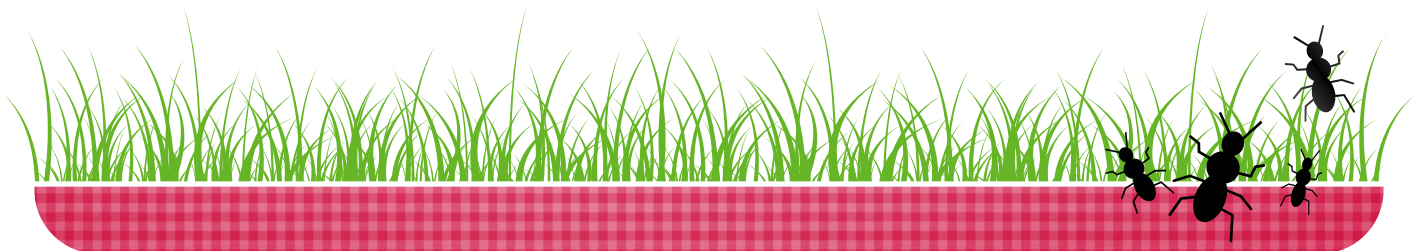
Keep in mind that learning self-control is a process. Your toddler will not be able to stop her impulses and understand the consequences of her actions until she gets closer to 3. In fact, she'll keep working on these

skills through the teen years. So, your daughter will need your consistent, patient support for a while yet. Being able to manage and cope with strong feelings is a critical skill for lifelong success, so don't fear these

moments. Instead, see them as great opportunities for teaching your child an essential life skill.

Edited from Parlakian, R., (2022). My 17 month old has started swatting at me when she doesn't get her way. Retrieved from

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/good-question/my-17-month-old-has-started-to-swing-at-me-when-she-doesnt-get-her-way/>.



The Alderman Family

This being my first newsletter, I wanted to highlight my family a bit and share with you all my WV Birth to Three story. When my son Benjamin (or Benny) was about 18months old, I noticed that he wasn't walking and talking like other kids his age. He would try to communicate with me and grunt and point and eventually go into a screaming fit. I decided to bring him doctor to discuss my concerns. She mentioned a program that was available to all WV Kids regardless of income called Birth to Three, she said they come into your home, do an assessment and see how they can help. I'll admit that the thought of having a stranger in my home didn't do a thing for me. I had this pre-conceived notion that of them going through my cabinets and placing judgements on how clean my home was, or how I was raising my home.

Within the first 10 minutes of the visit with my Interim Service Provider coming over, all of my fears were put to rest. She was totally friendly, and so good with Benny.

She agreed that Benny may have a speech delay, and he did appear to have a delay in walking. I don't remember the exact details, but within a couple of weeks I had my team and evaluations.

Mary Quick (who I believe has since retired, but let me tell you is a godsend to children) would drive all the way out to our house to work with Benny. She pulled the words out of Benny's mouth almost like magic. She taught me how to work with him on the days that she didn't see him, and she even helped set me up with a Speech Pathologist at a nearby hospital, Julie Morgan.



"I have never once regretted my decision to call WV Birth to Three, Only that I didn't make the call sooner, so I could have the services longer."

I have never once regretted my decision to call WV Birth to Three, only that I didn't call sooner, so I couldn't have the services longer.

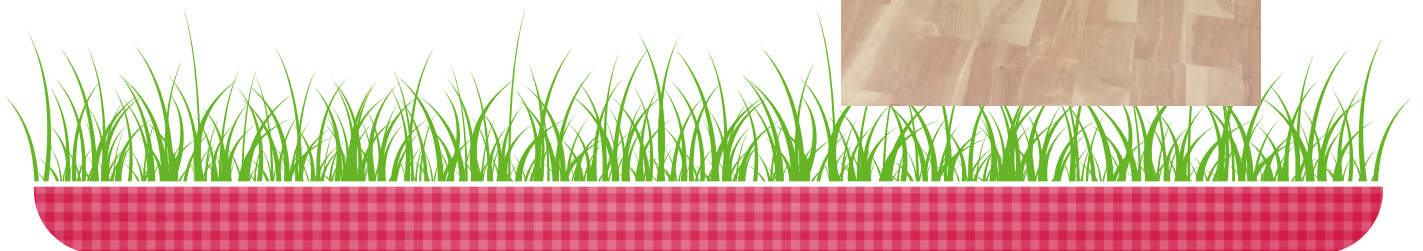
Today, Benny is 10 years old. He is a 5th grade student and has never brought home anything less than a A report card.

He was recently tested and has a vocabulary on par with that of a 8th grader. I

He loves to play Xbox and VR Headset , and make whatever little do-dads on his 3-D printer.

Nowadays, I don't worry that Benny isn't talking enough, sometimes, I do wonder if he is ever going to stop.

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of WV Birth to Three and and I am so grateful for helping him find his voice.



Beating the working mom blues

Not going to beat around the bush on this one, being a working mom is hard, and stressful. You have to wear so many hats, employee, cook, wife, maid, mom, taxi driver. Half the time you are trying to beat the clock, the other half the time you are trying to balance a checkbook. It's a wonder half of us aren't medicated or going crazy. You know why we aren't? Because moms are strong. We were raised by moms that were strong, and we have the belief that we have to be strong, going on day in and day out, never giving a second thought to ourselves.

Ladies (and gentleman because I know there are some of you strong dad's out there) I am here to tell you, you NEED a break, you deserve a break, and SELFCARE is caring for your family. You need to relax and care for yourself in order to take care of your family. Let me say that again. YOU NEED TO CARE FOR YOURSELF.

I have scoured the earth (ok, so maybe the internet) for some cheap selfcare you can do at home no babysitter required.

1. After the kiddos are asleep, watch a movie, just you. Pick something out for yourself. NO ANIMATION ALLOWED
2. File and paint your nails and toes.
3. LONG HOT SHOWER.
4. Get a bag of cookies, hide them from your kids. When everyone goes to bed, EAT THEM. That's right. All you. Chocolate chip mint that no one likes? Go on with your bad self. I won't tell.
5. Put your headphones in, find some good tunes, and tune out the world.
6. Breathe. Something I do when the world gets to be a little much. I find a quiet spot, even if it's the bathroom, close my eyes and breathe in count (1,2) breathe out (1,2,3) and somehow, this little activity makes me so peaceful.
7. Color. Coloring is good for the soul. Adult coloring books, kids coloring books, doesn't matter, it makes people happy.
8. Journaling. Write down all the things that you want to say but can't. Bonus points if you stash this somewhere the kids can't find it.
9. Exercise. You tube free yoga, free cardio, whatever makes your heart sing.
10. Don't forget to HAVE FUN, your kiddos are only young once, and having fun and laughing at the broken lamp, or the crazy things they say is part of the journey.

If you really feel overwhelmed, a therapist is a totally valid route to go. Most insurances will pay for these services. It is totally normal to have anxiety and stress, and someone who is trained to deal with this can give you tips and tricks to help.





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Holidays and Observances: 17-St. Patrick's Day, 31-Easter Sunday

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