

Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Make It Easy for Your Child to Behave Well

- **Make your child's surroundings safe and interesting.** Children are active so make your home a safe place to play. It is better to make your home safe for learning and exploring than it is to keep saying "No." If your child gets bored, change the surroundings to keep things interesting. When you go out, take a snack and a toy or book for your child.
- **Create family routines.** Children feel more secure when the same things happen in the same order every day. It is easier for children to follow rules when an activity becomes a habit, for example rules about picking up toys. Set up a daily routine so your child gets regular meals and snacks and enough sleep. Include lots of physical activities indoors and outdoors. Your child will fall asleep more easily if you follow the same bedtime routine every night.
- **Praise and encourage your child.** Let your child know you notice when he behaves well. Praise and encouragement work best when you tell your child very clearly what you like about what he has done. This will help your child understand what you expect of him.
- **Be a good example.** Your child learns almost everything by watching what other people do. Behave in a positive way yourself so your child will know what you expect. If you want your child to be polite, make sure she hears you saying "please" and "thank you."

i When you and your child have a strong attachment, she will be more likely to follow your directions.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

My Day in Pictures

- Picture charts will help your child learn your family routines. You can make them with your child. For young children, use pictures that show each step. For older ones, you can write the words too. For example, you can put together pictures for the routine of getting dressed in winter.
- First, list everything your child must wear when it is cold and snowy outside. You will need a picture of each of these items. You can draw those, cut pictures out of newspaper ads or take photos of your own child's clothes. If your child is older she can draw them or cut them out herself.
- Lay out all the pictures. Then help your child organize them in the right order. Let your child help you glue or tape your pictures onto a big piece of paper. You can put this chart on the wall near where she gets dressed to go out.
- She can have fun looking at the picture list to find out what to put on next. You can make a chart like this for any routine in your day. It will remind your child of what you expect her to do.

Follow the Leader

- Young children learn almost everything by watching the people around them and imitating what they do. They will love a game of follow-the-leader. There are many ways to play. You can make an active game by playing outdoors or in a hallway.
- Your child imitates your actions while you move in different ways. For example, you can march around a tree in the park and swing your arms. Then let your child lead you around the tree. He can move however he likes, while you follow him.
- You can play the same game more quietly too. Try this when you are on a bus or sitting in a waiting room. You move your hands in a pattern that he imitates. Then he makes up a pattern that you must copy.
- The game can be very simple with a young child. With a 5 year old, you can make longer patterns. Having fun together is a sure way to build the connections of attachment between you.



Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Ways to Guide Your Child's Behaviour

- **Remember your child's age.** It is hard for very young children to control themselves, even when they know the rules. As children grow, they understand rules and can remember them better. When you choose how to guide your child's behaviour, think about what he is able to do at his age.
- **Direct attention to another activity.** When your baby wants something dangerous, try showing her another toy. Take her attention away from the dangerous object. Does your toddler want to do something that is against the rules? You can get her busy with another activity. Take her hand and say, "I want to show you something over here."
- **Offer choices.** If your child is 1½ to 2½ years old, he probably likes to say "no" a lot. Try not to ask questions that require a "yes" or "no" answer. For example, if you have to go to the store, do not say, "Do you want to go to the store now?" Instead, try, "We're going to the store now." Then right away offer a choice between two things that you can accept. "Would you like to wear your jacket or your sweater?"
- **Follow up with consequences.** Children age 3 years and older can understand the link between what they do and the results that follow. You can set consequences for their behaviour to help them learn from their mistakes. For example, if your child throws food on the floor, she must help clean it up. Be sure that any consequences are fair, realistic, safe, and right for

your child's age. Be kind and firm when your child does something she is not supposed to do. You need to follow through with the consequences you said would happen.

i No matter how well you teach your child, no child can behave the way you want all the time.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

What would happen if...

- Play a game of “What would happen if...” with your preschooler. For example, you could ask, “What would happen if we forgot your backpack?” Together, think of all the consequences of forgetting the backpack. When it is your child’s turn, he may ask, “What would happen if we met a dinosaur on the next street?!” Let your imagination run loose and have fun. Silly answers are okay.
- This game gives your preschooler practice thinking about the consequences of his actions.

A Puppet for your Pocket

- Children’s behaviour often gets worse when they are bored. They need something interesting to do. Try using a puppet to distract your child. When you change the mood, their behaviour may improve.
- You can make a simple puppet out of a sock that fits on your hand. Open your hand so your fingers are facing your thumb. Now slide your hand into the sock. To make the puppet’s mouth, bring your thumb up to meet your fingers. To make a nose, push your middle finger forward. Ask your child where to put the puppet’s eyes. You can draw the eyes with a marker pen. If your child is old enough, let her do it.
- Your puppet can be very simple. Children have a good imagination. If you want, you can sew on coloured wool for the eyes and add more wool for hair.
- Begin moving the puppet’s mouth and talking in a different voice. How long does it take for your child to start talking to the puppet instead of to you? You can carry your puppet in your pocket and bring him out at the right moment. Is your child bored waiting in line at the grocery store? When your puppet starts telling funny stories, it could turn into a fun time.



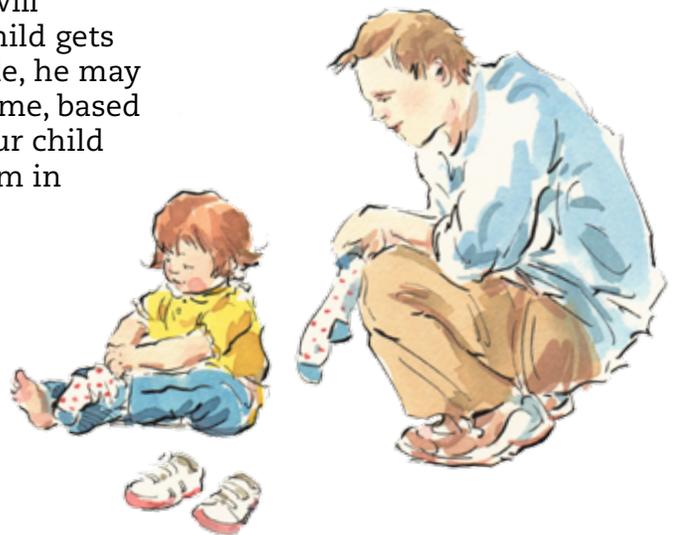
Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Make Reasonable Rules

- **Know what to expect at each age.** Children behave and think in different ways as they grow. Learn what to expect at each age. This will give you a realistic idea of what your child is able to do. It can be frustrating for you and your child if you expect too much too soon.
- **Set clear rules and limits.** When your rules are clear, your child is able to understand what you expect. Tell him the reasons for your rules. Your rules need to be the same every day.
- **Give clear instructions.** Tell your child what she can do instead of what she cannot do. For example, instead of “Don’t run!” say “Walk!”. Instead of “Don’t hit the baby!” say “Touch the baby gently.” Both you and your child will be happier if you don’t have to keep saying “No!”
- **Limits grow with your child.** Your rules will change as your child gets older. For example, he may have a later bedtime, based on his age. As your child grows, involve him in setting limits.
- **Remind often.** Young children may not always think of the rules when you want them to. They make a lot of mistakes. Be patient and calmly firm.

i **Your child needs your guidance. He needs you to be consistent and patient.**



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search “Nobody’s Perfect Tipsheets” on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Simon says...

- This game helps children practice listening carefully and following instructions. It works best with children who are aged 4 years and older. Some 3 year olds may also enjoy it. You can play with just two people or with a whole group.
- The person who is “Simon” stands facing the others. When Simon says, “Simon says touch your cheek,” the others touch their cheek. Simon continues giving orders to do different movements. As long as he begins with “Simon says,” the others obey him. But when Simon just says, “Touch your toes,” for example, no one moves.
- With young children, it is better to play without winners and losers. If someone follows an order when they were not supposed to, just laugh and go on. Take turns being the leader.

A Soundtrack for Your Routines

- Songs are an easy way to remind children of the behaviour that you expect. Children would rather do what the song tells them to do than take orders from you. You can make up new words to a familiar tune. For example, try calling them to lunch with “If you’re hungry and you know it, come and eat.” Sing it to the tune of “If you’re happy and you know it.”
- Some children find it very stressful to move from one activity to another. A made-up song like this can help. It changes the mood and gives the signal for what will happen next. Your child will quickly learn to recognize the song. The first two notes are enough for him to understand what you expect. He may even start singing with you. Then he has the whole rest of the song to decide to do what you want him to.



Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Stay Calm and Connected

- **Help your child calm down.** Children can choose better behaviour when they are calm. Sometimes they need help to calm down. Babies are often calmed by cuddling, rocking and singing. Sometimes you need to take a child away from the difficult situation. You may find it helps to take a few deep breaths with your child and let your muscles relax.
- **Listen to feelings.** Empathy means being able to understand what other people are feeling. When you try to understand your child's feelings, you show him that his feelings matter. He knows that you respect them. By understanding better the reasons for his behaviour, you build the connections between you. He feels that you care.
- **Help your child put her feelings into words.** Talk about common feelings, like happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Give your child's feelings a name. For example, you might say, "I see that you are sad." Or "I'm glad you're happy today! Did something really good happen?" Children learn how other people feel by talking about feelings. They learn empathy when their own feelings are respected and understood.
- **Accept your child's feelings.** Let your child know it is okay to be upset and angry. Other people have those feelings too. You can accept her negative feelings without accepting negative behaviour. It is okay to be angry, but it is not okay to hit other people.
- **Stay calm.** When your child breaks the rules, losing your temper will not help. Children can think more clearly when you speak calmly. Sometimes it can be very hard for a parent to be calm and reasonable. Be a good example. If you are so angry that you think you might say or do something you will be sorry for, take a moment for yourself. Be sure your child is in a safe place. Spend a few minutes alone until you feel calmer.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Blowing Bubbles

- One of the best ways to calm down is to take slow deep breaths. This works for both adults and children. To make deep breathing fun, try blowing bubbles. Here is a recipe to make a bubble mix at home.
 1. Put about 1/2 inch (1 cm) of water in a pot or bowl.
 2. Add about 3 or 4 squirts of dishwashing detergent.
 3. Mix gently so you do not get a lot of suds.
 4. If you have it, add 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of glycerine, which can be bought at drug stores. This will make the bubbles even better.
- Bubbles can be blown through almost anything with a hole in it. You can buy a plastic bubble wand. You can also use a small funnel or a plastic cookie cutter. You can even cut a hole in the centre of a margarine lid.
- Bubble blowing takes practice. Most children can control their breath enough to blow bubbles around age 2 years. Every child is different though. It may be easier for your child to blow bubbles if you hold the wand.

Dance to the Music

- Sometimes your child needs to move to calm down. Put on some music and dance around the kitchen. Change the music to suit your mood. Do you need fast music to burn off energy? Or do you need some slow music to calm down to? Give your child a dish towel to hold. A piece of wide ribbon would work too. She can wave it around in time to the music. Join in with your child. Maybe you need to move too!



Body

nobody's perfect

Help Your Child Eat Well

- **Serve healthy meals and snacks.** Your child has a small stomach and can eat very little at one time. He needs to eat often. This can mean three meals and a nourishing snack between meals. Canada's Food Guide has lots of ideas for healthy foods that will help your child grow.
- **Some foods are better than others.** Try to limit "other" foods like cookies, pop, and chips. These foods do not give a growing body what it needs. They can keep your child from eating enough of the foods that she needs to grow and develop.
- **How much is enough?** You may be surprised by how little food your toddler or preschooler needs to eat each day to be healthy. Many parents are not sure how much is enough or too much. Remember, it is your job to provide the right amount of healthy food at regular meals and snack-times. It is your child's job to decide if and how much to eat. Help your child learn to eat only when hungry and to stop when full.



i If you have concerns about how much your child is eating, talk to your health care provider.

For more information about Nobody's Perfect, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Food That Looks Fun Enough to Eat

Keep your child interested in eating by making the meal look fun. You can arrange food on the plate to look like something else. Find a funny name for your creation, or ask your child to think of a name. A 4 or 5 year old can help make these “recipes.” Here are some ideas:

- **Ants on a log** – Cut a piece of celery about 6 cm long. Fill it with peanut butter, hummus or cheese. Put a few raisins on top of the filling. Do they look like ants sitting on a log?
- **Funny face pizza** – You can buy a small pizza crust about 15 cm across. Or use a piece of pita bread. Spread some tomato sauce on the crust and grate some cheese on top. If your child is old enough, she can help you do this. Now make a face on the pizza. For example, to make eyes, you can use two tomato slices. For the mouth, try slices of green pepper. For a nose, you can use a small tomato. Put the pizza in the oven till the cheese melts.
- **Sandwich shapes** – Your child will like your sandwiches better if you cut them into interesting shapes. Try cutting some triangles and some circles. You can use a cookie cutter to make heart-shaped sandwiches. Then arrange the shapes on the plate in fun ways.

Playing with Food

Young children can learn to recognize healthy foods. Cut out pictures of food from ads. Look for coloured flyers in grocery stores. Find pictures of vegetables, fruits, bread, cereal, rice, meat, beans, cheese, and milk. Put all the pictures on the table and ask your child to find food he eats for breakfast.

Put these pictures in a pile together. Ask which foods would make a good lunch. Get your child to put them in a pile. Talk about which foods help his body grow.

Now add pictures of cookies, pop and chips. These foods do not give a growing body what it needs. Explain why you do not serve them often.

Look at Canada’s Food Guide for more ideas. Soon your child will be helping you plan healthy meals and snacks.



Body

nobody's perfect

Keeping Your Child Healthy

- **Active play, every day.** To grow and be healthy, your child needs to run, play, and be active. When your child gets enough exercise he is healthier and happier. Play with your child and show him that you have fun being active too.
 - **Limit screen time.** Children are not active when they are watching TV or playing on a computer. These screen-based activities are not recommended for children under 2 years of age. After that, continue to limit the time your child spends in front of a screen.
 - **Help your child get enough sleep.** Most children need about 10 to 14 hours of sleep each day. The younger your child, the more sleep she needs. Without the right amount of sleep, a child's body cannot grow properly. Make a regular bedtime
- part of your daily routine. A quiet time during the day is a good idea even if your child does not sleep.
- **Keeping clean and keeping well.** Keeping clean is an important part of staying healthy. Teach your child to wash his hands often. Explain that he will stay clean and safe from germs. Even when your child is a baby, he only needs a bath 2 or 3 times a week. Keep his face, hands and bottom clean every day.
 - **Clean your child's mouth.** Take care of your baby's gums even before the teeth come in. Later, help your child to brush her teeth in the morning and before bed.
 - **Get regular check-ups.** Take your child to a health care provider and to the dentist for regular check-ups. Make sure your child is immunized.

i Give your child a smoke-free home. Your child needs you to protect him from second-hand smoke.



For more information about Nobody's Perfect, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

An Obstacle Course at Home

Being active can help your child maintain a healthy weight and have more energy. An obstacle course will encourage your child to move her body in different ways. You can make one in the kitchen or outdoors in the backyard. You can even make a simple one in the park. You have all the materials you need in your home.

For example, if your baby is crawling, open both ends of a large cardboard box. This makes a tunnel. Put her at one end and a toy at the other. Encourage your baby to crawl through the box and get the toy. Build longer obstacle courses as your child gets older and bigger.

Add more challenges to develop her skills. Here are some ideas:

- Turn a chair on its side. Your child crawls over the legs of the chair.
- Make a circle with string on the ground. Your child jumps in and out of the circle three times.

- Put a pair of shoes on the ground. Your child runs around the shoes three times in one direction, then three times in the other direction.
- Make a straight line with string on the ground. Your child walks keeping her feet on the string.
- Give your child a small plastic bag with rice in it. Make sure it is tightly closed. Your child stands still and balances the bag on her head while you count to ten.
- Make this more difficult by asking your child to stand on one leg with the bag on her head. Or ask her to keep the bag on her head and walk backwards ten steps.

Your child will have even more fun if you do the obstacle course with her. Show your child that you have fun being active. Your child learns more from your example than almost anything else.

Good Clean Fun

Children do not always want to wash their hands, take a bath or brush their teeth. It will be easier if you make these activities fun to do.

When your child washes his hands, sing the “ABC” song with him. It will help him understand how long he should be washing. Use lots of soap and rub his hands together to make sure all areas are covered with soap suds. Then rinse his hands under warm running water.

Toys like cups, empty plastic bottles, or sponges make bath night fun. Wash your child while he pours water from one cup into another.



Body

nobody's perfect

Caring for a Sick Child

How Can I Tell If My Child Is Sick? A child who is sick often looks and acts differently from usual. She may say she has a stomach ache or does not feel well. Her skin may be hot and sweaty or it may be pale and cold. Your child may be more sleepy than usual. She may not want to eat or drink. She could look unhappy or become whiny. You know your child best. It may be that she just does not seem right to you.



How can I look after my sick child? Keep your child home. Do not send him to school or day care if he is sick.

- Encourage your child to rest.
- Take his temperature.
- If his skin feels hot, do not put on extra blankets.
- Encourage him to drink extra fluids.

When do I call my child's health care provider? Often you only need to give your child rest and fluids. But sometimes a child becomes more ill and other signs of sickness show up. If you do not know what is wrong or what to do, talk to your health care provider.

Prepare for an appointment. Before you call for an appointment, think about what is wrong. Make notes to remind yourself what to say when you see the health care provider. The more you can tell the health care provider about what is wrong with your child, the sooner your child will get the help she needs.

Understand your health care provider's advice. Your health care provider may tell you things to do at home. If you do not understand, ask again. Repeat the instructions to make sure you understand.

For more information about Nobody's Perfect, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Giving Medicine

When Should I Give Medicine?

Do not give medicine to a baby or child without checking with a health care provider or pharmacist. Giving the wrong medicine or the wrong amount can do more harm than good.

If your health care provider prescribes medicine for your child, there are things you need to know.

- What is the medicine called?
- What is it supposed to do?
- How much should you give your child?
- How often should you give it to your child?
- Should you keep giving it until it is all gone?
- Should you give the medicine with food or on an empty stomach?
- Should your child avoid certain foods while he is taking the medicine?
- Will the medicine interfere with any other medicine your child may be taking?
- Should you wake your child up during the night to give him the medicine?

Stop giving medicine if your child has a reaction. A reaction to medicine could be something like a red rash or vomiting. Call your health care provider right away.

Give your child's medicine only to your child. Give the medicine exactly as prescribed. Do not give your child's medicine to other children. Do not give someone else's medicine to your child. A prescription is given for a particular child with a particular illness. If any medicine is left over after your child's illness, take it back to the pharmacist.

 **Keep all medicines locked up and out of reach of children.**



Mind

nobody's perfect

Attachment and Your Child's Feelings

- **Connect with your child.** A child's ability to love, trust, feel, and learn starts with the deep emotional tie that he forms with the people who take care of him. This emotional connection starts before birth. It is called attachment.
- **Respond to your child's needs.** Secure attachment develops when you respond to your child's needs. She needs you to be warm, loving, and dependable. Comfort your child when she is upset, frightened, sick, or hurt. Cuddle your baby and give lots of hugs. Speak and sing softly to her.
- **Teach your child about feelings.** Your baby cries to tell you when she needs you to look after her. It is best to go to your baby when she cries. When your child is older, talk to her about her feelings. Use words that name feelings such as happy, sad, angry, or nervous.
- **Your child's attachment to you makes a difference.** A baby's attachment to her parents influences how her brain develops. When she feels safe, she is open to learning.
- **Pay close attention to your baby.** Notice what he is trying to tell you. Notice what he likes and does not like. Follow his lead. Smile back when he smiles. Talk to him when he makes little sounds.



i The strong attachment you build when your child is young will last a lifetime.

For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Peek-a-Boo and Hide-and-Seek

- Babies and young children are sometimes scared when their parents go away. You can play games that teach your child that even when you go away, you always come back.
- You can start when your baby is only 4 or 5 months old. Put your baby in a baby seat and sit facing him. Sit so that your face is quite close to his face. When he is looking at you, hide your face behind a cloth. Say, "Where am I?" When he starts to move his feet and hands, take the cloth away and say gently "Peek-a-boo!" Smile at him. Wait till he smiles back then hide again. Go slowly. Stop if your child seems not interested any more.
- When your child is older, he can put the cloth in front of his own face to play the game. In the game of hide-and-seek, take turns with your older child. Sometimes he will hide where you can see him. Pretend you cannot see him and say, "Where are you?" He will get excited. Look a few places before you finally say, "I found you!" Then you hide and wait till he finds you.

Feelings in Pictures

- You can make a homemade book about feelings. Cut pictures of children out of magazines and newspapers. Look for pictures of children with different expressions that show feelings. Glue or tape the pictures onto pieces of cardboard. Make two holes on one edge of each page. Put string through the holes to tie the pieces of cardboard together into a book.
- If you have a camera, you can use photos of your child to make your book. Take pictures of her pretending to be sad, happy, frustrated, angry, bored, and so on. Your child will enjoy looking at photos of herself. Let her turn the pages and tell you how she feels.



Mind

nobody's perfect

Surround Your Child with Chances to Learn

- **You can help build your child's brain by talking to him.** Talk to your baby right from the beginning. Talk about what you are doing and what he is doing. Describe the things he sees and hears around him. When your child begins to speak, listen to what he says. Encourage your child to talk about things that happen to him. Take turns talking and listening.
- **Read and tell stories every day.** You can look at picture books with your baby and talk about what you see. Children can learn about things from books that they do not see in their daily life. Tell your toddler stories about what you did during the day.
- **Share your stories, songs and rhymes.** Talk about your culture, beliefs, traditions, and values.
- **Give your child a variety of materials to play with.** Children's toys do not need to be expensive. You have lots of things in the house that are fun to play with. Here are some ideas: empty plastic containers and bottles, plastic measuring cups and bowls, cardboard tubes and empty boxes.
- You can make different colours of play dough for your child. In the winter, bring some snow inside in a dish pan. Check everything you give your child to make sure it is clean and safe.
- **Play outdoors.** Children can do things outdoors that they cannot do in your home. Your child will enjoy outdoor play in any weather. Play in the sandbox at the park. Play in the snow. Splash in puddles when it is raining. Take your child to a wading pool or to a beach.

i **Your child's brain is growing. You can help by talking to him, playing with him, and reading to him.**



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Play Dough

Play dough encourages children to be creative. They can create whatever shape they want. They can push different tools into it to make different patterns and textures. They develop control of their fingers and hand muscles. When they get older, they can make little people and animals to play with. Some children find that playing with play dough helps calm them down.

You can give play dough to your child as soon as she stops wanting to eat it. For some children, this is around 12 months. For other children, it might not be till age 2 ½. Your child will enjoy playing with play dough for many years.

Here is a recipe for homemade play dough. Look for cream of tartar in the spice section in a grocery store or bulk food store.

1. Mix together in a pot:
 - 1 cup flour (250 ml)
 - 1/4 cup salt (60 ml)
 - 2 tablespoons cream of tartar (30 ml)
2. Add to the mixed ingredients in the pot:
 - 1 cup water (250 ml)
 - a few drops of food colouring
 - 1 tablespoon oil (15 ml)
3. Stir everything together and cook over medium heat for a few minutes.
4. When the mixture is warm and makes a lump in the pot, scrape it out onto a flour-covered counter and knead until smooth.
5. Store in a plastic container in the fridge.

Sidewalk Drawings

Sidewalk chalk is not expensive and can give your child hours of fun. Some children as young as 1 year old can hold chalk and make marks. However most children this young just want to put the chalk in their mouth. Just in case, look for chalk that is non-toxic.

By the time they are around 2 years old, most children are able to draw with chalk on the sidewalk. They can make lots of drawings and never run out of space!



Mind

nobody's perfect

Play Is the Way Your Child Learns

- **Children learn when they play.** When she is playing, your child is learning about the world and her place in it. She learns how to do new things. She finds out how to get along with other people. Playing helps her show her feelings and become more sure of herself.
- **Children need to explore.** Let your child try to do things for himself. He will learn more by doing than by hearing you explain things. Give him time to explore and discover on his own. Make sure his surroundings are safe to explore. Keep him away from danger, both indoors and outside.
- **Limit screen time.** Children learn most when they play actively with other people and with real objects. Your child does not learn as much sitting in front of a screen. This includes activities like watching TV, using a computer, playing with a cell phone and playing video games. These screen based activities are not recommended for children under 2 years of age.
- **Give your child new experiences.** Stimulate your child's learning by adding new things to play with. Introduce your child to new people and new situations. Make time every day for play both indoors and outdoors. Take your child to parks and playgrounds.

i Play is how your child learns. Play changes as your child grows. Your child needs to play right from birth.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

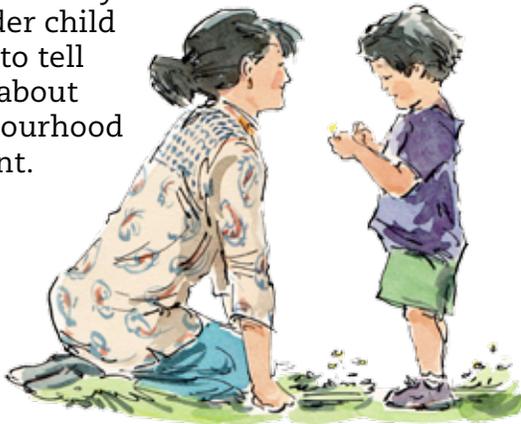
Fun & Easy Activities

Going on a Treasure Hunt

Before taking a walk in your neighbourhood, make a list of things that you might find on the way. If your child is very young, three or four things will be enough. For example, you can look for a tree leaf, a white flower, a twig and a grey rock.

If your child is older, make the list longer and more specific. Talk about what is on your list before you go out. Make sure that the things on your list are in season and can be found in your neighbourhood.

Take a bag with you when you leave. When you find each object, put it in the bag and check it off your list. When you get home, put your treasures on a tray. Talk to your child about where you found them and what other things you saw on your walk. An older child will be able to tell you a story about your neighbourhood treasure hunt.



Exploration Bags

You can play guessing games with your child using a bag and some objects you find around the house. For each game, tell your child to close his eyes or tie a scarf over his eyes. Now he has to use his ears, his nose or his fingers to guess what you put in the bag. Take turns guessing.

- **Listening** – Put things in the bag that you can use to make noise. For example, keys you can jingle, paper you can crumple, a pen you can click. Take each object out of the bag and make a noise. Can he guess what is making the noise?
- **Smelling** – Collect some small bottles, like pill bottles. Put something that smells strongly in each one. If it is liquid, put some on a cotton ball and put it in the bottle. Here are some ideas: peanut butter, banana, vinegar, onions and cinnamon. When your child pulls a bottle out of the bag, open it. Let him smell the bottle without looking. Can he guess what is making the smell?
- **Touching** – Put things in the bag that have different textures. For example: a pot scrubber, a sponge, and tissue paper. Name one of the items in the bag and ask your child to pull it out without looking. Give your child the name for each texture: scratchy, soft, bumpy, stiff. You could also name the texture first. Can your child find something smooth in the bag?

Parents

nobody's perfect

Take Care of Yourself

- **Be active.** Being active helps your body stay healthy. It also helps you deal with stress. Enjoy physical activities with your child.
- **Eat well.** Your child learns from your example. If you eat nourishing foods, like fruits and vegetables, she will want them too. Both of you will stay healthy.
- **Get enough rest.** Take time to be alone, even for just a few minutes, every day. Rest when your child naps. If you have a baby who wakes at night, go to bed early. Try to get enough sleep at night.
- **Keep your relationship strong.** All parents need to meet their needs for love and sex. It takes time, energy, care, and love to build a healthy relationship with your partner. It is worth it for you and for your child.
- **Stay interested.** Parents need a chance to get together with other adults to talk. Take your child to places where you will meet other parents. You and your child can learn and do new things. You can both make new friends too.
- **Have fun.** Having fun is part of looking after yourself. Play with your child and laugh together. Have fun with your partner and with friends too.

i Parents take better care of their child when they take care of themselves too.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Get Active with Your Child

You don't have to join the gym to get exercise. You can just go out for a walk with your baby in a stroller or a baby carrier. You will have more fun if you have company. Look for another parent who has a baby the same age. Make a regular date to go walking together.

When your child is older, you can pretend to be in a marching band. Pretend to play an instrument while you march from room to room. Make the noise of your pretend instrument. Your child will imitate you. When he gets tired of beating the drum, you can pretend to play the trumpet.

Try doing stretching exercises with your preschooler. Look for a video to borrow from the library or find an exercise program on TV. Have fun doing the movements together.

Laugh Time

Laughter will help make you feel better. Make a list of what makes you laugh and plan a "laugh time" every day.

Here are some ideas to try with your child, with friends, or on your own.

- Play games where you repeat rhymes with gestures. Move your baby's hands as you say the rhyme. In some rhymes, you say the name of parts of her body while you touch them. Soon she will start to laugh before you get to the end.
- Make silly faces and imitate animal noises to get your toddler laughing.
- Make up silly songs with your preschooler and sing them together.
- Get together for fun with a friend.
- See a funny movie.
- Watch a funny TV show.
- Read the comics or a funny book.



Parents

nobody's perfect

Feeling Good About Yourself

- **Build self-esteem.** Self-esteem is the feeling you have inside that says you are a good person. Part of your job as a parent is to build your child's self-esteem. You help her to feel safe, secure, loved, and understood.
 - What about you? What can you do that will help you feel safe, secure, loved, and understood too?
 - **Be good to yourself.** When you take care of yourself, you show your child that you deserve respect. Your child will learn to respect herself too. Try to do something nice for yourself every day. You deserve it.
 - **Connect with your cultural traditions.** Talk to your child about things in your culture that are very important to you, like values, beliefs, traditions, and practices.
 - You do not have to give up your cultural beliefs just because they are different from the people around you. Your child needs to know where he came from, as well as where he is today.
 - **Trust your judgment.** There will always be people who think that the way you are being a parent is wrong. The important thing is what do **YOU** think? Ask for advice from people you like and trust. Ignore the others.
 - **Expect others to respect you.** A child learns how to behave by watching how her parents treat each other. If parents respect each other, then their child will learn to respect others.
- i Don't worry about being perfect. Feel good about doing your best.**



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Cook a Family Recipe

Do you remember special foods that you ate when you were growing up? Did you eat certain dishes at special times of the year? Share your memories with your child and make the special dishes with him. Even young children can help you cook. If you measure the ingredient, they can pour it into a bowl. Older children are strong enough to stir.

While you are making the recipe together, talk about your childhood memories. Enjoy eating your special dish together.

Make sure your child is safe while you are cooking. He may be safest sitting in his high chair. He will be up at your level. Keep him away from sharp utensils and hot surfaces.

Give Yourself a Compliment

After your child has gone to bed, take a moment to think about something you did well with your child during the day.

Write a few words in a notebook about your success. Read your notebook when you want to feel good about being a parent. Your notes will remind you of all the things you're doing well.

Good Time Nuggets

When you are putting your child to bed, ask her to think of three good things that happened during the day. Encourage her to think of small things. Did she like what she had for lunch? Did she enjoy playing with a friend? Did she have fun making a snowman with you? You can add your own happy times too.

If you want, write a few words about each happy time on a piece of paper. Fold the papers up and put them in a box. You and your child can decorate the box with ribbons and coloured paper. If your child says, "Nothing good ever happens to me!" pull some papers out of the box and read the good time nuggets.

Before long, positive thinking will become a habit for both you and your child.



Parents

nobody's perfect

Your Feelings after Your Baby is Born

Most new mothers will have “baby blues.” Baby blues are normal. Mothers experience physical, emotional, and hormonal changes after having a baby. You might feel restless and tense, sad and teary, or overwhelmed.

The baby blues should pass within a few weeks after having your baby. They will pass more easily if you take care of yourself.

Eat well and get as much sleep as you can. Try not to be hard on yourself. Ask for help when you need it. Look for advice from your health care provider.

Some mothers will have postpartum depression. Sometimes the “baby blues” do not go away. The feelings become more serious. Dads can become depressed after the baby is born as well.

Talk to a health care provider if:

- Your symptoms do not seem to be going away within a few weeks after the birth.
- You have been depressed in the past.
- Your symptoms started while you are pregnant.

If you are a parent with postpartum depression, it is important that you take care of yourself. Reach out to your partner, friends and family for help. Get counselling. Consider medication if your healthcare provider thinks this is right for you.

 **Postpartum depression is REAL. There is help available and you can get better.**



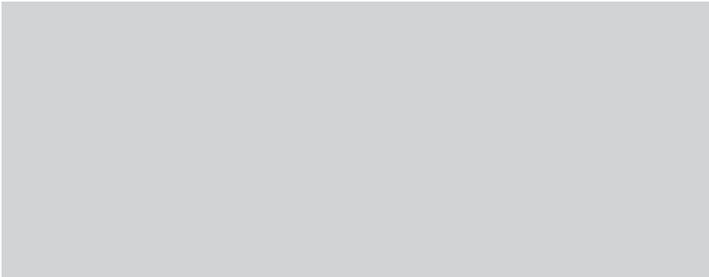
For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search “Nobody’s Perfect Tipsheets” on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada



Parents

nobody's perfect

Handling Stress

Parents sometimes feel stressed. Any change in your life can cause stress. The situation you are in can be stressful, too. Stress becomes a problem when you feel like you have too much to deal with. Maybe you feel that life is getting out of control.

You may have physical, mental or emotional signs of stress. Pay attention to them and look after yourself. Find someone to talk to. Ask for help from friends or professionals.

Anger is one way that many people react to stress. Everyone gets angry sometimes. Remember that anger is a feeling. You cannot help what you feel. But you can help what you **do** about your anger. Being angry is **never** an excuse for hurting someone.

Look for help if you have trouble handling your anger, get angry too often, or are afraid you might hurt your child.

i Positive coping tools to handle stress

- Talking with friends and family
- Asking for help
- Eating well
- Getting exercise
- Getting enough rest
- Talking to a counsellor

i Coping tools that can cause problems

- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Gambling
- Spending lots of time on the Internet and playing video games



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

- **Many people get sad when they are under a lot of stress.** It is stressful when unhappy things happen in your life. You can help yourself move past your sad feelings, or keep them from getting worse, by doing things to look after yourself. Talk to a friend. Do something you enjoy.
- With love and support from people we care about, most of us are able to work through sad feelings and feel better.

- **Many Canadians experience depression sometime in their lives.** Sometimes, nothing you do seems to make you feel better. You still feel helpless and hopeless. You do not care very much about anything. If you do nothing, depression like this may get worse.
- Depression can be helped with counselling and medicine. Look for professional help.
- **It is very important for you and for your child that you get the help you need.**

i **Be an example to your child. Choose positive tools to handle your stress.**



Parents

nobody's perfect

Make Life Easier for Yourself

- **Decide what is most important.** People are more important than things. It is always important to cuddle, play, and talk with your child.
- **Tidy is more important than clean.** No one will see the dust on the woodwork, but toys all over the floor are dangerous. Put the toys into a box and put the box in a corner. The room will look much better, you will feel good about it, and it will only take a few minutes.
- **Be as organized as you can.** Every day, make a list of what you have to do. This could include planning meals, cleaning, errands, appointments, and anything else you need to get done that day.
- **Work out ways to get things done quickly and easily.** There are ways to save time and energy. For example, prepare enough stew for two meals then freeze half for another day. Do as much as you can by phone or online.
- **Share the work.** You do not have to do everything on your own. Share the work with your partner, if possible. Ask for help from friends and family members. Ask a neighbour or a friend to watch your child for an hour or so while you take a break. Maybe you can watch her child in return or do some other favour.
- **Prepare for problems BEFORE they happen.** Problems will seem smaller if you've already figured out how to handle them. What will you do if your child has a fever? Or if your babysitter gets sick?

i Give yourself credit for what you do. Do not feel guilty about what you do not get done.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

What Can Wait?

IS THIS A MUST DO JOB OR A SHOULD DO JOB?

When you feel you have too much to do, take a break and make a list. Write down all the jobs that you think you need to do. Decide whether each job is a must do job or a should do job. Work on the must do jobs first. You do not have to think about the should do jobs right away. They can wait.

Examples of must do jobs:

- Feed your child.
- Take care of a sick child.
- Get some rest and exercise.
- Pay your bills.
- Make sure your child goes to school or daycare.

Examples of should do jobs:

- Clean the floor.
- Do laundry.
- Clean the bathroom.
- Mow the lawn.

You cannot delay should do jobs forever. If you have no more clean clothes to wear, doing laundry is a must do job! Ask yourself: "Will something bad happen if I don't do this job?" If the answer is yes, then this is a **must do** job.

Spend your time doing **must do** jobs and having fun with your family and friends.

What Can You Get Help With?

Look to your community.

Help and support from neighbours, friends, and family can make many problems easier to handle. Stay connected to your family and friends. Reach out to other people.

- Buy and cook food as a group or use a community kitchen program.
- Arrange a car pool.
- Join a babysitting co-op. In a co-op, parents trade babysitting time instead of paying for it.



Safety

nobody's perfect

Make Your Home Safe for Your Child

Most injuries to young children happen at home. Check your home often. Look at your home from your child's point of view to see what might be dangerous.

Around 6 months of age, your baby starts to move around a lot more. Look for possible dangers in your house and remove them. As your child grows and can do more things, the dangers will change.

Make your home a safe place to explore

- Block the stairs with gates at the top and bottom.
- Cut cords for blinds and curtains short. Remove all drawstrings from clothing. Children can be strangled on these cords.

- Lock all medicines, vitamins, household cleaners, and other dangerous chemicals in a high cabinet. Keep lighters, matches, sharp objects and electrical appliances out of your child's reach.
- Attach all bookcases, heavy appliances, and other heavy furniture to the wall.
- Keep electrical outlets covered and tie up electrical cords.



Keep your child safe at meal time.

- Cook on the back burners of your stove. Turn pot handles away from your child.
- Keep hot liquids and hot foods away from the edge of the table or countertop.
- Choose a high chair with a safety belt. Use the belt every time your child sits in the chair.

i Prevention is the most important part of child safety.

For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Keep your child safe at play.

- Keep small toys and other small objects away from your baby. He could choke on them.
- Check the size of your baby's toys. If a toy, or any part of a toy, can fit inside a toilet paper tube, it is too small for your baby to play with before age 3 years. Choose toys that are meant for your child's age.



Keep your child clean and safe.

- When your child is in or near water, always make sure you are able to touch him by reaching out your hand. If you have to leave the room for any reason, take your baby with you.
- It is never safe to leave a baby alone in the bath, not even for a few seconds.
- Keep one hand on your baby at all times when you change her diaper or clothing on a changing table.

Keep your baby safe while sleeping.

- Always place your baby on his back to sleep, both at night and for naps. Put your baby on his back right from the start.
- Use only a crib that meets current Canadian safety standards. The crib mattress should fit tightly inside the crib. Use only a fitted sheet. Keep toys and loose bedding out of the crib. Anything extra can increase the risk of injury and suffocation.
- Have your baby sleep in a crib in your bedroom for the first 6 months. You can sleep in a separate bed or on a mattress beside the crib. It is unsafe to share the same sleep surface as your baby, like a bed, couch or futon. Bed sharing is linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and suffocation.

Safety

nobody's perfect

Why Do Children Need Adults To Keep Them Safe?

- **Children want and need to be active.** They need to explore if they are to learn and grow.
- **Children live in a world that is not always safe.** Many common items are not made with the safety of children in mind. They are safe for adults, but they are not safe for children.
- **Children grow and change quickly.** They are learning new and different skills all the time. They need extra protection while they practice new skills.
- **Pay close attention to your child's development.** You may be surprised when she starts to do something new. When you know what she can do and what to expect at each stage, you can help prevent serious injuries.
- **Children do not always know the difference between what is fun and what is dangerous.** Children do not think and act like adults. They do not react to danger the same way that adults do.

i It takes only a second for your child to get hurt. Children need your help to stay safe.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

- **Be prepared.** Think ahead. Look for possible dangers in your home and when you go outside. Remove the dangers if you can.
- **Protect your child.** Remove dangerous things in your home so your child can play safely. Sometimes you cannot remove the danger outside. Help your child stay safe even when there is danger. For example, you cannot stop all the cars on the street. But you can hold your child's hand when you cross the street.
- **Notice the new things your child can do.** Check often to see if your child can now reach something that is dangerous.
- **Stay close to your child.** Many injuries happen when a parent or caregiver is not close by. Stay close to a young child so you can reach her quickly if she is in danger. When your baby is younger than 1 year old, stay very close unless she is in a safe place, like an approved crib or a playpen.
- **Start early to teach your child about being safe.** Talk to your child about what is safe and what is not safe. Teach your child how to look for dangers.
- **Be a good example.** Be safe yourself so your child can learn from you. For example, wear a helmet when you are riding a bike so your toddler will learn to wear one too.
- **Be ready in case your child is injured.** Keep a First Aid kit in your home and in the homes of those who care for your child. Have up-to-date training in First Aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Make a list of emergency telephone numbers and keep the list near the telephone. Include the number for the Poison Control Centre.



Safety

nobody's perfect

Choosing Safe Children's Products

It is important that all baby furniture and children's products meet Canadian safety standards.

A product is recalled because the company that makes it has found something wrong that could be dangerous. Contact Consumer Product Safety at Health Canada to learn about children's products that have been recalled.

Highchairs

- Choose a high chair with a safety belt. Use the belt every time your child sits in the chair.
- Make sure the food tray is firmly attached to the frame and has no parts that could pinch little fingers.

Cribs

- Do not use any crib made before 1986.
- The crib should be in good condition and not have loose, missing, or broken parts.
- The crib mattress should fit tightly inside the crib. You should have room for only one finger between the mattress and each side of the crib.

Playpens

- Use a playpen with small holes in the mesh.
- The playpen should only be used with the mattress pad provided. Do not add an extra mattress, large toys, or blankets to the playpen. Do not use a playpen as a crib.

Baby gates

- Use screws to fasten a baby gate in place at the top of any staircase. Use a pressure gate at the bottom of stairs and in doorways. Always keep the gates locked.
- Openings in the gate should be too small for your child's head or body to fit through.

i If you have concerns about a product, call the company that made it or check their website.



For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Strollers

- Choose a sturdy stroller. Follow the instructions for your child's weight and height.
- Always use a stroller that has a safety belt. Make sure you use the belt each time your child sits in the stroller.
- Make sure the stroller's brakes work properly. Use the brakes each time you put your child into or take him out of the stroller.

Baby slings and soft carriers

- Check the sling or carrier for any rips, torn straps, or broken hardware.
- Check on your baby often while she is in the sling or carrier. Adjust your baby's position so that she is able to breathe freely.

Baby walkers

- Do not use baby walkers. They can cause a baby to fall down the stairs. It is against the law for anyone to sell baby walkers in Canada.

Car Seats

- The right car seat is one that matches your child's height and weight and can be correctly installed in your vehicle. Use it for every ride in a vehicle.
- Be careful when buying a second-hand car seat. Make sure that it has not expired or that the car seat has not been in a crash.

Second-hand products

- You can save money by buying used products, but be careful. Before buying, check carefully to see if the item
 - has been damaged or is cracked
 - is missing parts or has loose parts
 - is missing the instructions
 - has been banned or recalled because it does not meet Canadian safety standards.



Safety

nobody's perfect

Everyday Safety Outdoors

Playground Safety

- Play structures are designed for different ages. A child under 5 years of age should play on the low structures. Watch out for sharp objects or spaces where your child's head could get stuck.
- Check the surface under swings, slides and climbing structures. It should be a deep and soft surface, not dirt or grass.
- Stay close to your child. This means staying right beside her as she comes down a slide or when she is on a swing.
- Be sure your child is not wearing helmet, scarves or drawstrings when using playground equipment.

Tricycle and Bicycle Safety

- Be sure your child wears an approved bicycle helmet every time he rides a tricycle or bike. Remove his helmet before he moves onto play equipment.
- Be a good example. Wear a helmet when you ride a bike. You are your child's best teacher.



Road Safety

- Make sure your child plays in a park or a fenced yard and not near the street or driveway. Make sure someone is watching him at all times.
- You can start to teach your 3 or 4 year old safety rules for crossing the street but you must always hold her hand when crossing the street.
- Be a good example. Follow safety rules yourself.

For more information about *Nobody's Perfect*, or to download this document, please search "Nobody's Perfect Tipsheets" on Canada.ca.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

Fun & Easy Activities

Games to Teach Safety Rules

Safety Rule Rhymes

You can make up songs about traffic safety and sing them to a familiar tune. This is an easy and fun way to help your child remember the rules. Here are two examples you can sing to the tune of “Frère Jacques.”

Yellow light means wait.

Yellow light means wait.

Red means stop.

Red means stop.

When the light is green,

Then we can cross,

Holding hands, holding hands.

At the corner.

At the corner.

We look left.

Then we look right.

We look left again,

Then we can cross,

Holding hands, holding hands.

Freeze and Unfreeze

Sometimes it is hard for a child to stop moving when you want him to. Make a game out of stopping and starting when you say the special words. Practise first at home by walking around the room together. When you say “freeze!” you and your child stop and pretend to be frozen statues. When you say “unfreeze” you can both start moving again.

In the game, your child will learn to react quickly. Then you can use the word “freeze” to tell him to stop when you are walking outside. It is easier to obey the rules when your child feels he is playing a game.

