

Parenting



**Big Dreams,
Small Steps**



Dr. Dad
www.drdad.in

Dear Reader,

We thought of the idea of Dr Dad when I became dad. Even though being a doctor, whenever me and my wife would want to order few things or get the right information on internet, we would end up getting more confused. Hence the concept kept evolving.

We wanted Dr Dad to be purely a product company, but the whole lack of good and quality information on internet, led to the birth of the website www.drdad.in with our focus shifting towards quality content and getting the best content writers on board with us. We needed to make a panel of Paediatricians, OBGYNs, Psychologists and Parents. In Middle of all this, we pushed back our product line and Voila, Dr Dad Is Here.

The next big thing was to start this magazine. When we found out that the people believing what's printed in a publications more than what's just written on a website, we knew it, we have to start a magazine, comprising the best articles and centre around the core issues of Pregnancy, IVF and Parenting. And we did just that.

We made this magazine with lots of love, care and intelligence. We wanted it to be highly interactive and thus we employed few more IT people with us. And now we have one of the leading magazines on parenting and pregnancy in the country.

I really hope that you enjoy this edition of So Parenting and will look forward for more. We want to make this magazine for you. If you feel we are going wrong with anything, please write to us. If you feel you have a suggestion and we should add that thing, write to us. If you just want to say Hi, just write to us.

Write to us on our email address soparenting@drdad.in . We would love to hear from you. We might even feature you in our future editions.



EDITORS NOTE

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

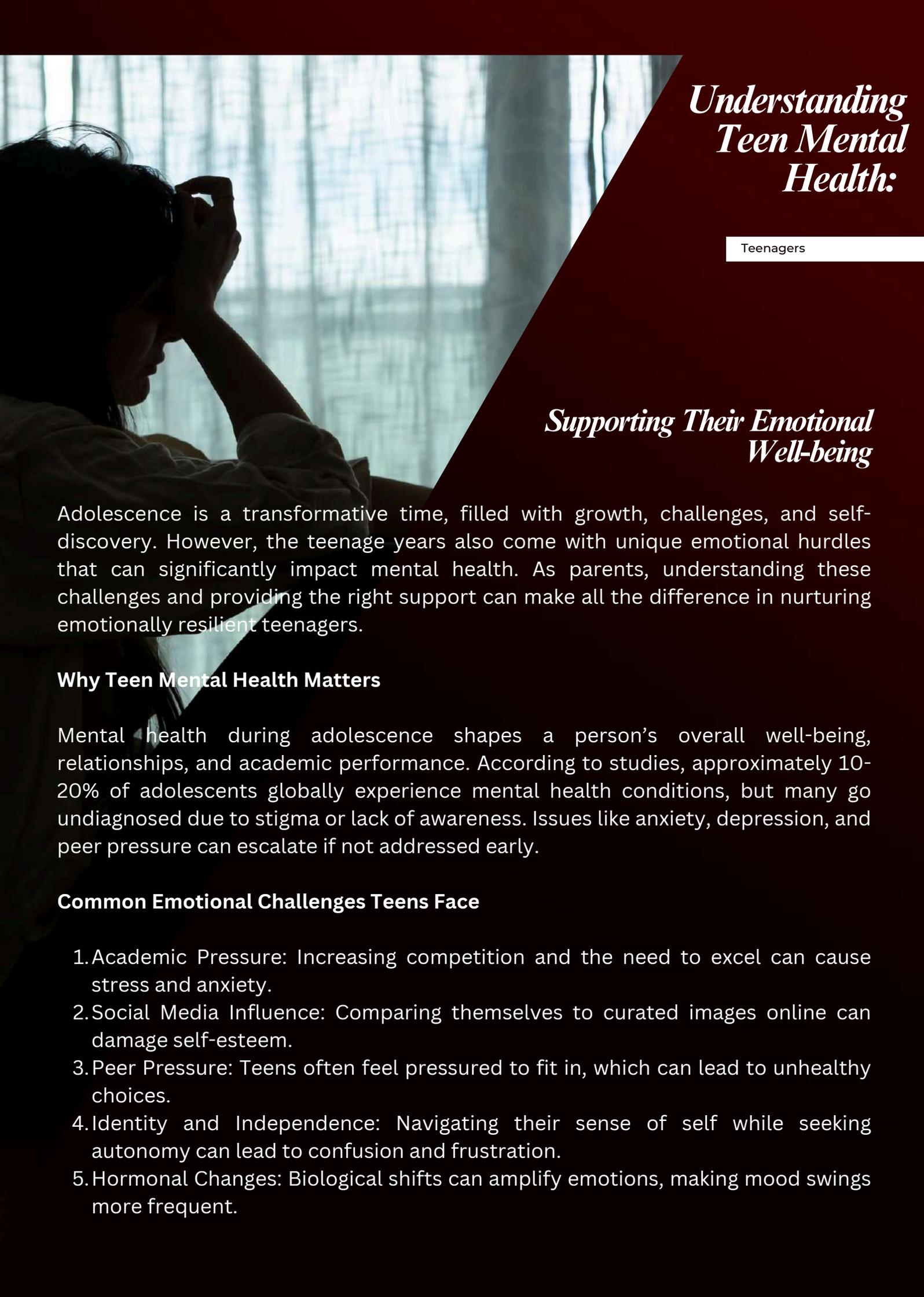


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Understanding Teen Mental Health:

Teenagers

Supporting Their Emotional Well-being

Adolescence is a transformative time, filled with growth, challenges, and self-discovery. However, the teenage years also come with unique emotional hurdles that can significantly impact mental health. As parents, understanding these challenges and providing the right support can make all the difference in nurturing emotionally resilient teenagers.

Why Teen Mental Health Matters

Mental health during adolescence shapes a person's overall well-being, relationships, and academic performance. According to studies, approximately 10-20% of adolescents globally experience mental health conditions, but many go undiagnosed due to stigma or lack of awareness. Issues like anxiety, depression, and peer pressure can escalate if not addressed early.

Common Emotional Challenges Teens Face

1. **Academic Pressure:** Increasing competition and the need to excel can cause stress and anxiety.
2. **Social Media Influence:** Comparing themselves to curated images online can damage self-esteem.
3. **Peer Pressure:** Teens often feel pressured to fit in, which can lead to unhealthy choices.
4. **Identity and Independence:** Navigating their sense of self while seeking autonomy can lead to confusion and frustration.
5. **Hormonal Changes:** Biological shifts can amplify emotions, making mood swings more frequent.

Signs Your Teen May Be Struggling

Parents often wonder how to differentiate typical teenage behavior from signs of deeper emotional distress. Look for:

- Persistent sadness or withdrawal
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed
- Irritability or unexplained anger
- Difficulty concentrating or drop in academic performance
- Expressions of hopelessness or self-harm

How Parents Can Support Teens

1. Foster Open Communication
2. Create a safe space where your teen feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and emotions. Listen without judgment or interruption, and validate their feelings, even if you don't fully understand them.
3. Educate Yourself
4. Learn about the mental health challenges teens face. Understanding the underlying causes can help you empathize and provide informed support.
5. Encourage Healthy Habits
 - Physical Activity: Exercise boosts mood and reduces stress.
 - Sleep: Ensure your teen gets 8-10 hours of sleep, as rest is crucial for emotional regulation.
 - Nutrition: A balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals supports overall well-being.
6. Limit Screen Time
7. Set boundaries on social media and encourage meaningful offline interactions. Be a role model by practicing mindful screen use yourself.



8. Recognize When to Seek Help
9. If your teen's emotional struggles persist or worsen, consider consulting a counselor or therapist. Early intervention can prevent long-term challenges.
10. Teach Coping Skills
11. Help your teen develop resilience by teaching stress management techniques like deep breathing, journaling, or mindfulness.

The Role of Schools and Communities

Collaborate with schools to ensure they have programs that support mental health, such as counseling services, peer support groups, and awareness campaigns. Community-based initiatives can also provide teens with additional resources and safe spaces to express themselves.

Breaking the Stigma

Talk openly about mental health to normalize these conversations at home. Share examples of how even adults struggle with mental health and seek help. This openness teaches teens that it's okay to ask for support.

Conclusion

Understanding and supporting teen mental health is not about eliminating challenges but equipping them with the tools and confidence to overcome them. By being attentive, empathetic, and proactive, parents can guide their teenagers toward a balanced and emotionally healthy future.

Encourage your teen to voice their feelings and remind them: no matter how tough life feels, they are never alone. Together, as a family, you can navigate these formative years with strength and compassion.



The Secret of Healthy Skin

As a new mother, your days are filled with the joys and challenges of caring for your baby. Amid sleepless nights and endless diaper changes, self-care often takes a backseat. However, caring for your skin is not just a luxury but a necessity. Healthy skin not only boosts your confidence but also reflects your overall well-being. Here's a guide to help you achieve radiant, healthy skin amidst your busy schedule.

A Guide for New Mothers

1. Hydration is Key

Water is your skin's best friend. As a new mom, dehydration can sneak up on you, especially if you're breastfeeding. Aim for 8-10 glasses of water daily to keep your skin plump and glowing. Herbal teas, coconut water, and fresh fruit juices are excellent alternatives to add variety.

2. Nutrition for Radiance

Your diet directly impacts your skin. Include these skin-friendly foods in your meals:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Rich in vitamins and antioxidants, they combat free radicals and delay aging. Opt for berries, spinach, and carrots.
- **Healthy Fats:** Found in nuts, seeds, and avocados, they maintain your skin's elasticity.
- **Protein Power:** Lean meats, eggs, and legumes support skin repair and rejuvenation.



Healthy skin isn't about perfection; it's about nurturing yourself from the inside out. By following these tips, you can achieve radiant skin and feel confident as you embrace the beautiful journey of motherhood.

You're glowing, Mama—inside and out!

3. Simplified Skincare Routine

As a new mother, time is limited. A simple yet effective routine can do wonders:

- **Cleanse:** Use a mild cleanser twice a day to remove dirt and oil.
- **Moisturize:** Choose a lightweight moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated.
- **Protect:** Sunscreen is non-negotiable, even if you're indoors. Opt for one with SPF 30 or higher.

4. Sleep: Your Skin's Natural Healer

Lack of sleep can lead to dark circles, dull skin, and breakouts. While it's tough with a newborn, aim for short naps during the day to give your skin time to repair and rejuvenate.

5. Embrace Natural Remedies

Homemade remedies are safe and effective. Try these easy options:

- **Honey and Yogurt Mask:** Mix equal parts of honey and yogurt for an instant glow.
- **Cucumber Slices:** Place them on your eyes to reduce puffiness.
- **Aloe Vera Gel:** Apply for soothing hydration.

6. Stress Management

Motherhood comes with its share of stress, but chronic stress can wreak havoc on your skin. Practice mindfulness techniques like deep breathing, yoga, or meditation to calm your mind and promote skin health.

7. Stay Active

Regular exercise improves blood circulation, giving your skin a natural glow. Even a 10-minute walk with your baby can work wonders for your skin and overall health.

8. Avoid Harsh Chemicals

New mothers often experience skin sensitivity due to hormonal changes. Choose skincare products free from parabens, sulfates, and artificial fragrances to avoid irritation.

9. Listen to Your Skin

Your skin may undergo changes postpartum. If you notice persistent issues like acne, pigmentation, or dryness, consult a dermatologist for personalized advice.

10. Self-Care is Not Selfish

Amid the chaos, remember that taking care of yourself is vital for your well-being and your baby's. Dedicate a few minutes each day to your skincare routine, and cherish the results as a small but meaningful reward for your efforts.

that's the
story of
childhood
ambition!



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THE RISE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Impact on Parenting

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a concept of the future; it's shaping the way we live and parent today. From smart baby monitors to educational tools, AI is revolutionizing parenting practices, offering both convenience and challenges.

How AI is Helping Parents

AI-powered devices like smart cribs and virtual assistants simplify tasks by providing real-time baby monitoring, sleep analysis, and even personalized parenting advice. Educational apps are using AI to create interactive learning experiences tailored to a child's pace, helping kids learn more effectively.

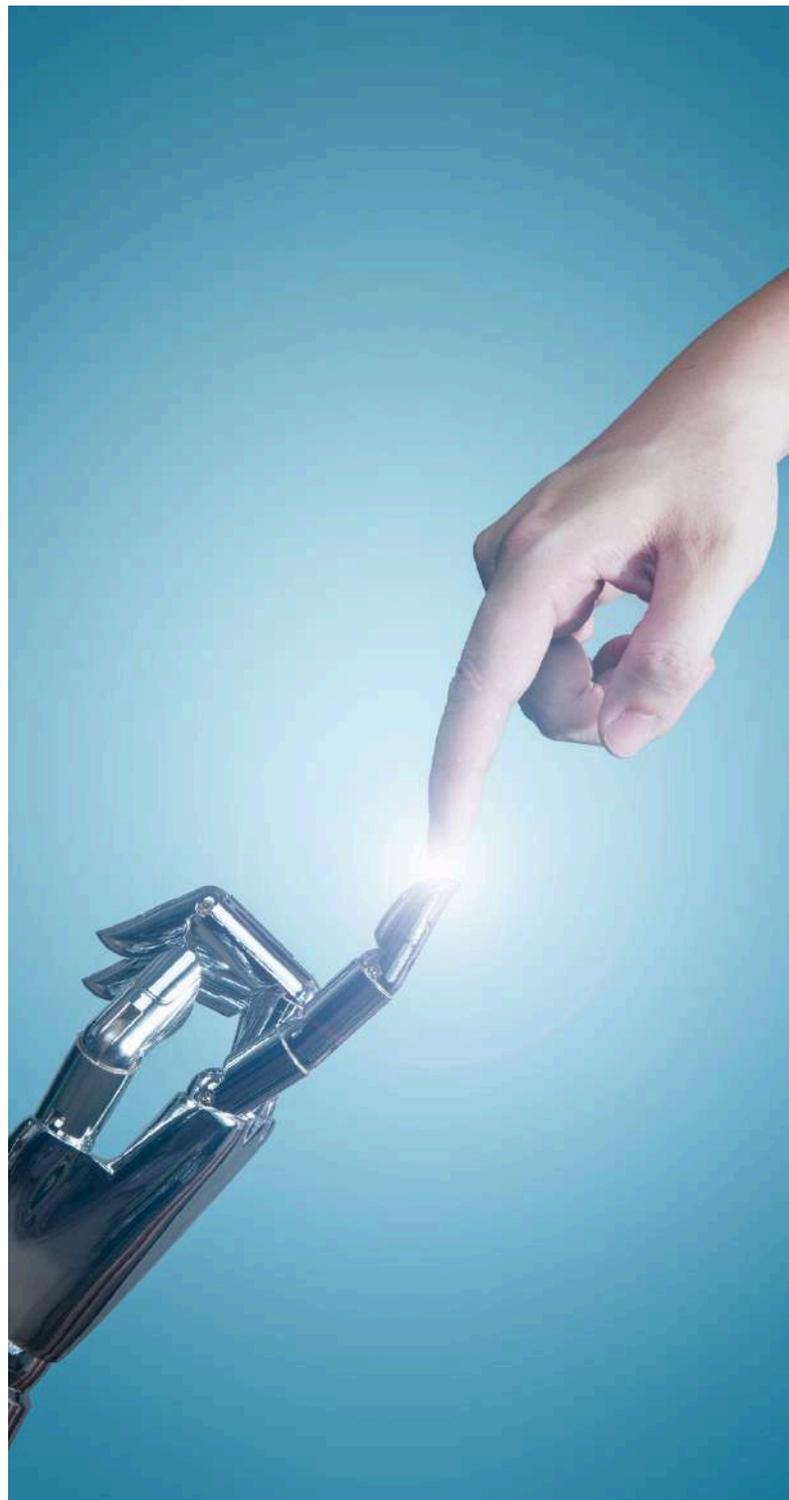
Challenges and Concerns

While AI brings convenience, it also raises concerns. Excessive reliance on AI for parenting decisions can undermine parental instincts. Moreover, privacy issues with AI devices storing personal data are valid concerns for families.

Striking a Balance

Parents can use AI as a helpful tool but must remain mindful of its limitations. Technology should complement—not replace—the human touch, love, and understanding that only parents can provide.

As AI continues to evolve, it's up to parents to ensure it's used thoughtfully to enhance family life while preserving the irreplaceable essence of parenting.



Big Dreams, Small Steps

**The True Reward of Big Dreams:
Personal Growth and Becoming
Your Best Self**

As a new college student, you're stepping into a world filled with possibilities. It's the perfect time to dream big—whether it's becoming a top professional in your field, traveling the world, or making a difference in society. But the real magic lies in how those dreams shape you, step by step, into the best version of yourself.

Big Dreams Spark Your Motivation

Having big dreams gives purpose to your efforts. They push you to think beyond limits, take chances, and set meaningful goals. Whether it's excelling in a subject, landing an internship, or mastering a skill, your dreams are the driving force behind your determination.



Small Steps Build Character

Achieving big dreams doesn't happen overnight—it's a journey of small, consistent actions. Each time you take a step, you're not just moving closer to your goal but also growing as an individual:

- **Discipline:** Following daily routines to study, manage your time, or stay healthy teaches self-control.
- **Resilience:** Facing challenges and learning from setbacks builds mental strength.
- **Confidence:** Every small victory boosts your belief in your ability to tackle bigger challenges.

The True Reward: Personal Growth

While achieving your dreams is rewarding, the process itself transforms you. It teaches patience, builds a strong work ethic, and helps you discover your passions and capabilities. These qualities stay with you, helping you navigate life's ups and downs long after college.

Tips for the Journey

- **Start Small:** Break your goals into manageable tasks. Focus on progress, not perfection.
- **Embrace the Process:** Celebrate small wins and learn from failures—they're essential for growth.
- **Stay Inspired:** Surround yourself with supportive friends, mentors, and motivational content.

Big dreams aren't just about the end goal—they're about becoming your best self along the way. So dream big, take small steps, and let the journey shape the amazing person you're destined to be.

In the end, chasing big dreams isn't just about reaching a destination—it's about the incredible journey of self-discovery and growth. Every small step you take molds you into a more confident, resilient, and capable individual. Embrace the challenges, celebrate the victories, and cherish the lessons along the way. Remember, the true reward of dreaming big is not just achieving your goals but becoming the best version of yourself in the process. So, step forward with courage and determination—your future is waiting!

**"BIG DREAMS MAY SHAPE YOUR FUTURE,
BUT IT'S THE SMALL STEPS THAT SHAPE
WHO YOU BECOME."**



Failure

THE STEPPING STONE TO ◆ SUCCESS

Teenagers today face immense challenges — from academic expectations and social comparisons to the emotional toll of social media. These pressures can sometimes lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, depression, or even thoughts of suicide. As parents, recognizing these struggles and providing unwavering support is crucial in guiding your child toward resilience and hope.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

It's vital for parents to be attuned to their teenager's emotional well-being. Watch for signs such as:

- **Changes in Behavior:** Withdrawal from friends or family, loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed, or drastic changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- **Expressions of Hopelessness:** Statements like “I’m worthless” or “Life isn’t worth living” should never be ignored.
- **Decline in Academic Performance:** Sudden lack of interest or significant drop in grades may indicate emotional struggles.
- **Physical Symptoms:** Unexplained headaches, stomachaches, or fatigue can be signs of stress or depression.

If you notice any of these signs, don't hesitate to seek professional help. A counselor or psychologist can provide valuable support.

Tips for Parents to Support Their Teens

- **Foster Open Communication:**
 - Create a safe space for your child to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment.
 - Listen actively and validate their emotions, even if you don't fully understand their perspective.

- Educate Yourself About Mental Health:
 - Learn about the challenges teenagers face and the mental health resources available.
 - Share age-appropriate stories of resilience to help normalize seeking help.
- Encourage Healthy Habits:
 - Promote regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep.
 - Encourage hobbies or activities that bring joy and relaxation.
- Be a Source of Positivity and Stability:
 - Remind your child that their worth isn't tied to achievements or grades.
 - Share examples of people who overcame challenges to succeed, such as:
 - Thomas Edison: Failed over 1,000 times before inventing the light bulb, proving perseverance leads to breakthroughs.
 - J.K. Rowling: Rejected by 12 publishers before Harry Potter became a global success.
 - Michael Jordan: Cut from his high school basketball team but used failure as motivation to improve.
- Know When to Seek Help:
 - If your teen exhibits signs of severe depression or suicidal thoughts, consult a mental health professional immediately.
 - Familiarize yourself with crisis hotlines and support services in your area.

Building Resilience in Teens

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks. Parents can help cultivate this quality by:

- Modeling Positive Coping Strategies: Show how you handle stress or failure in healthy ways.
- Celebrating Effort, Not Just Outcomes: Focus on the process and lessons learned, rather than solely on results.
- Teaching Problem-Solving Skills: Help your teen break down challenges into manageable steps and brainstorm solutions.

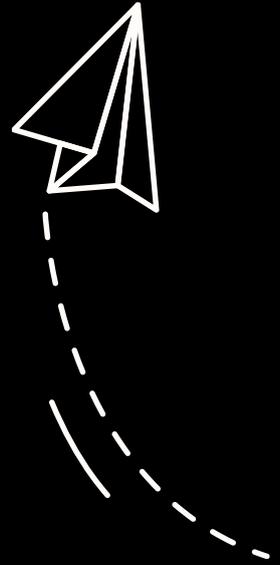
A Message to Parents

Your support and understanding can make all the difference in your teenager's life. Be their anchor in turbulent times and remind them that setbacks are temporary. **Life is a journey, and every failure is a stepping stone toward growth and success.**

Together, we can create an environment where teens feel loved, valued, and equipped to face life's challenges with confidence and hope.

Support. Encourage. Empower. Your child's mental health matters.

H



Selecting the right school for your child is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make as a parent. A good school not only imparts knowledge but also shapes character, instills values, and lays the foundation for your child's overall growth. With so many options across the country, it can be overwhelming to decide where to send your child. Here is a curated list of the Top 10 Schools in India that are widely regarded for their academic excellence, infrastructure, extracurricular activities, and holistic approach to child development.

Choosing the right school is crucial for your child's overall development. These schools not only provide top-notch academics but also emphasize the importance of values, creativity, and emotional intelligence. Whether you're looking for a prestigious residential school, a well-established CBSE institution, or a global curriculum with international exposure, the schools listed above offer excellent opportunities for your child's future success. Remember, the right school can make all the difference in shaping a well-rounded, confident, and capable individual.

1. The Doon School, Dehradun (Uttarakhand)

Established in 1935, The Doon School is one of India's premier residential schools. Known for its rigorous academic curriculum and focus on leadership development, it provides a balanced approach with an emphasis on outdoor activities, arts, and social responsibility. The school's sprawling campus, student-driven initiatives, and alumni network make it a top choice for parents who want a world-class education with a focus on personal growth.

Key Highlights:

- Internationally recognized for leadership programs
- Strong emphasis on outdoor activities like trekking and sports
- Impressive alumni network, including diplomats, entrepreneurs, and artists

2. Delhi Public School, R K Puram (Delhi)

As one of the leading schools in the capital, Delhi Public School (DPS) R K Puram has set the standard for academic excellence and all-round development. With its state-of-the-art facilities, experienced faculty, and strong focus on both academics and co-curricular activities, DPS R K Puram provides students with the tools to succeed in a rapidly evolving world.

Key Highlights:

- Excellent track record in academics, especially in the CBSE board exams
- Rich variety of extracurricular activities like sports, drama, music, and debating
- Strong emphasis on digital literacy and global exposure

3. The Shri Ram School, Gurgaon (Haryana)

A pioneer in progressive education, The Shri Ram School offers a well-rounded curriculum that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. With its highly-trained teachers and well-established infrastructure, it ensures that children develop their academic, social, and personal skills in a nurturing environment.

Key Highlights:

- Child-centered approach to education
- Strong emphasis on community service and social responsibility
- Diverse extracurricular offerings, including arts and sports

4. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Bangalore (Karnataka)

A well-established chain of government schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas are known for their academic rigor, discipline, and commitment to values-based education. The Kendriya Vidyalaya in Bangalore is one of the top choices for parents in the region due to its modern facilities, experienced teaching staff, and wide range of extracurricular activities.

Key Highlights:

- Affordable fees while maintaining high standards of education
- Strong focus on science, technology, and cultural activities
- Wide network of schools across the country, ensuring consistency in quality

5. The International School, Bangalore (Karnataka)

For parents seeking an international curriculum, The International School, Bangalore (TISB) offers the best of both worlds: a blend of rigorous academic standards and diverse extracurricular programs. TISB is known for its state-of-the-art facilities, commitment to global education, and the holistic development of its students.

Key Highlights:

- Offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) and IGCSE curriculum
- Focus on innovation, creativity, and leadership
- Excellent facilities for sports, arts, and science

6. Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, Delhi

A highly respected school in the national capital, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya is well-regarded for its commitment to providing quality education that encourages critical thinking, discipline, and integrity. The school's emphasis on academic excellence, along with a vibrant co-curricular program, makes it a popular choice for parents across Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- Balanced focus on academics, arts, and sports
- Strong heritage of excellence in both academic and cultural fields
- Commitment to community and social values

7. Mallya Aditi International School, Bangalore (Karnataka)

Renowned for its blend of Western and Indian teaching methodologies, Mallya Aditi International School provides an enriching academic experience. It offers both the IGCSE and IB curriculums, ensuring that students are prepared for global challenges while respecting their cultural roots.

Key Highlights:

- Global exposure with IB and IGCSE curriculums
- Strong emphasis on leadership and entrepreneurial skills
- Regular participation in international exchanges and competitions

8. Modern School, Barakhamba Road (Delhi)

Modern School is one of the oldest and most prestigious schools in India. Located in the heart of Delhi, it is known for its emphasis on academic rigor and an array of extracurricular activities. The school's ethos revolves around nurturing intellectual curiosity, discipline, and cultural awareness, making it one of the top choices for parents in the city.

Key Highlights:

- Long-standing tradition of academic excellence
- Wide range of co-curricular activities, including sports and music
- State-of-the-art infrastructure and modern facilities

9. Bishop Cotton Boys' School, Bangalore (Karnataka)

Bishop Cotton Boys' School, established in 1865, is one of the oldest schools in India and boasts a legacy of academic excellence and holistic development. The school focuses on moral education, leadership, and global awareness while maintaining high standards in academics, sports, and extracurriculars.

Key Highlights:

- Strong focus on character-building and ethical values
- Excellent sports programs, including cricket, basketball, and football
- Active alumni network and community engagement

10. Mysore School of Arts and Science (Mysore)

For parents looking for a school that blends academics with a deep focus on arts and creativity, Mysore School of Arts and Science stands out. The school offers a dynamic curriculum that integrates STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education with a strong emphasis on arts, music, and theatre, making it perfect for students who wish to pursue a variety of interests.

Key Highlights:

- Interdisciplinary focus with equal emphasis on arts, science, and sports
- Unique approach to integrating technology in the curriculum
- Excellent infrastructure for music, drama, and the visual arts



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WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR A SECOND BABY?

Pregnancy can be fun and challenging at the same time. A baby brings joy and happiness into the family. Are you thinking of a second baby? This article will help you decide whether you are ready for another baby or you should wait a little longer.

Make a decision

Before indulging in setting after plans on welcoming a new member into the family, let's first see that,

"Are you ready for a second baby?"

The below-listed points will help you consider and confirm your second pregnancy.

Don't assume that if your first baby is calm and composed, your second baby would be the same. Every child is unique. You must prepare yourself for a 360° change in your experience with the second baby. Now, you won't be the mom of only one child there, will be a new one soon. The change will occur in your **family dynamics** and relationships with each other.

The second thing to consider is the **timing** or the age gap you want in your children. Some parents prefer to have children close together so that they can get along well or are in diapers at the same time. Other parents prefer to have a long gap, where the first child is slightly mature to handle his responsibility, and the newborn, which is about to enter. Let's remember one thing that every child is unique, and maybe the newborn turns out to be a little different from your expectations. Therefore, you must prepare for everything in advance. The timing won't be perfect depends on you, how you want to go about it. Yes, when you figure out your choice, you'll create, anyhow.

Don't forget to look into your **finances** before preparing for a second pregnancy. Keep the savings ready. Also, you can use the new stuff you barely touched at the first newborn's arrival. Remember, it's a long way to go, so you must be prepared with the essential things like finances in the list for better caring for your newborn.



Ways You Can Prepare

The listed ways will help you prepare in advance for the fun and madness that'll begin soon.

Make your first child ready for the arrival of a newborn. Read the books or play them cartoons defining their role as the big brother or sister in the house. Prepare them for the transitions they're counting on the arrival of their baby sister or brother.

Don't plan to shock a newborn without giving them hints of the baby's arrival.

It's time to surround yourself with the people who love and care about you. You can't handle this alone.

It is necessary for you to ask for help and be with people you know will care for you. Also, divide in the responsibilities for each person in the family so don't choke yourself with chores.

Keep everything in place beforehand, from a diaper on every floor to the necessary things, like medicines, frozen food, and other stuff you can require at the time.

Changes You'll Be Part Of

Second pregnancy means you will be countering new challenges and sweet moments. Some changes that you

can experience while having a second baby are:

1. Your attention will get divided among your two kids despite trying hard to handle everything with perfection.

2. There might be jealous situations between the two kids, which is quite common because the first one can feel he isn't getting more attention than he used to.

3. You can face fewer sleeping hours because of the two running around and making nuisances over the place. Even your outings will have two kids to handle and focus on.

Changes in experience for the mom-to-be

The second pregnancy can be surprising for the mother because of the changes she will feel.

1. The baby bump will be visible sooner this time.

2. You will feel more tired, can experience more pains and aches.

3. You will feel the baby's movement in the womb early.

4. You will experience more contractions this time than you felt during your first pregnancy.

5. Don't worry, your labor will be shorter this time, but you will feel increased after pains.

Raise your hand if you love falafel! I've gone back into the archives to highlight my all-time favorite homemade falafel recipe. Making falafel at home can be tricky, but this recipe is easy.

This homemade falafel recipe is absolutely delicious, and remarkably crispy! Be sure to allow 4 hours soaking time for the chickpeas, preferably overnight. Then, the falafel mixture is super easy to make in a food processor. Recipe yields 12 to 13 falafels

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup + 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 cup dried (uncooked/raw) chickpeas, rinsed, picked over and soaked for *at least* 4 hours and up to 24 hours in the refrigerator

½ cup roughly chopped red onion (about ½ small red onion)

½ cup packed fresh parsley (mostly leaves but small stems are ok)

½ cup packed fresh cilantro (mostly leaves but small stems are ok)

4 cloves garlic, quartered

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

½ teaspoon (about 25 twists) freshly ground black pepper

½ teaspoon ground cumin

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

INSTRUCTIONS



With an oven rack in the middle position, preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Pour ¼ cup of the olive oil into a large, rimmed baking sheet and turn until the pan is evenly coated.

In a food processor, combine the soaked and drained chickpeas, onion, parsley, cilantro, garlic, salt, pepper, cumin, cinnamon, and the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Process until smooth, about 1 minute.

Using your hands, scoop out about 2 tablespoons of the mixture at a time. Shape the falafel into small patties, about 2 inches wide and ½ inch thick. Place each falafel on your oiled pan.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, carefully flipping the falafels halfway through baking, until the falafels are deeply golden on both sides. These falafels keep well in the refrigerator for up to 4 days, or in the freezer for several months.

Crispy Falafel



How
Much
Vitamin D
Should
You Take
When
Pregnant?

Vitamin D is very important and is a requirement for all. It helps us in the process of absorbing calcium and phosphate in our bodies. Vitamin D is even more important if you are pregnant. It not only helps you to absorb calcium and phosphate but also makes sure that your baby's bones, teeth, heart, kidneys, and nervous system is growing and developing properly.

Where is Vitamin D found?

Vitamin D can be found in a variety of sources, making it easier for pregnant women to meet their nutritional needs. The body naturally produces Vitamin D when exposed to sunlight, so spending some time outdoors can be helpful. Additionally, Vitamin D-rich foods include fatty fish like salmon and mackerel, egg yolks, beef liver, and fortified foods such as milk, orange juice, and cereals. For those who have limited sun exposure or difficulty obtaining enough Vitamin D through diet alone, supplements can be an effective way to maintain healthy levels. Ensuring adequate Vitamin D intake during pregnancy is essential for the proper development of the baby's bones and immune system, as well as the overall health of the mother.

How much Vitamin D should you take when pregnant?

Pregnant women have been prescribed a vitamin D dosage of 10 micrograms daily.

The above dosage is enough to give your baby the required Vitamin D for a couple of months after he or she is born.

But excessive vitamin D is also harmful, anything over 100 micrograms is not advised at all. Pregnant women need to consume Vitamin D supplements daily to make sure their baby doesn't develop any soft and brittle bones.

Pregnant women who have a BMI over 30 or higher quantity melanin pigment in the skin might require a higher Vitamin D dosage.

Pregnant women who don't go out of the house that often would also require a higher dosage of Vitamin D.

Conclusion

Vitamin D is an essential vitamin that helps in the healthy growth of your baby. According to your medical history, BMI and lifestyle you will be prescribed the right dosage of Vitamin D by your doctor.



Fighting in Front of Your Kids and Why You Need to Stop

No matter what you're fighting about: money, sex, kids or something else, the fighting is an indication that your communication isn't working. If this happens only occasionally, such as when one or both of you are tired or stressed; it's not too big a problem. However, if you argue or bicker on a daily or weekly basis, or you keep fighting about the same thing over and over, then your communication is not functioning as it should, and you don't know how to move from a problem to the solution. When this happens, problems are recurrent, endless, and they can be exaggerated into relationship disasters.

5 tips for ending arguments.

Don't Participate

Disagreements always require two people. If you don't participate, your partner can't argue without you. If the issue arises at an inopportune time, you can just find a temporary resolution (temporarily give in, go home, leave the restaurant) and wait until things calm down to discuss what happened (the squabble may just have been a case of too much alcohol, or being tired and irritable.) Then talk about what you can do instead if it ever happens again.

Discuss Recurring Problems

To resolve recurring problems, discuss related decisions with your spouse and find out what each of you does and does not want before making important decisions. You have a lot of options; so don't let confusion add to the stress.

Seek to Understand

Make sure you and your partner understand each others' point of view before beginning to solve the problem. You should be able to put your mate's position in your own words, and vice versa. This does not mean that you agree with each other, just that you understand each other.

Solve It for the Two of You

Come up with a solution that works for just the two of you, ignoring anyone else's needs. It's much easier to solve a problem for the two of you than for others you may not understand. After you are clear with each other, discuss the issues with others who may be involved.

Talk to Others

If extended family members or friends might have problems with your decision, talk about what objections they might have, so you can diffuse them beforehand. Discuss possible ways to handle their objections.

Squabbles often occur because you're following automatic habit patterns that lead to a problem before you know it. Using these guidelines will help you overcome negative habit patterns you may have built that lead to arguments or bickering.

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TIPS TO MAKE YOUR KIDS Give Attention



1

Provide fidgets and teach them how to use them

2



2

Play attention-boosting game and activities

3



3

Teach student to check in with themselves

In today's fast-paced world, getting kids to focus can be a challenge. Whether they're in school or at home, children often find it hard to stay engaged and give their full attention to tasks. However, with the right tools and strategies, you can help them improve their focus, boost their attention span, and make learning and daily tasks more manageable. Here are three practical tips to help your kids give better attention, making life a little easier for both of you!

1. Provide Fidgets and Teach Them How to Use Them

Fidgeting is often seen as a distraction, but for many children, it can actually help improve focus and concentration. Fidget toys—like spinners, cubes, or textured bands—can provide an outlet for restlessness, allowing kids to channel their energy while keeping their minds engaged with the task at hand. It's important to teach your child how to use fidgets appropriately. Start by explaining that these tools are meant to enhance focus, not distract from it. Encourage them to use fidgets when they feel their mind wandering, helping them stay calm and concentrated. Be mindful, though—too many fidgets can lead to overstimulation, so finding the right balance is key. Once your child gets comfortable with fidgeting as a tool for focus, you may notice their attention span improve over time.

2. Play Attention-Boosting Games and Activities

Games and activities that challenge a child's ability to focus can be both fun and beneficial for their development. Interactive activities like puzzles, memory games, or Simon Says encourage children to pay close attention to instructions and details, fostering mental engagement. You can also incorporate movement-based games such as "Freeze Dance" or obstacle courses to keep their energy levels balanced while improving their ability to focus. Games that require problem-solving or strategic thinking, like chess or board games, help children practice staying attentive for extended periods. Additionally, try introducing timed challenges where kids need to complete tasks within a certain period—this can teach them to concentrate while managing their time effectively. By making focus-building games enjoyable, you'll reinforce the idea that paying attention can be both fun and rewarding.

3. Teach Students to Check In With Themselves

One often-overlooked strategy for improving attention is helping children develop self-awareness about their own focus levels. Encourage your kids to periodically “check in” with themselves during tasks to assess how well they’re concentrating. Ask them questions like: “How focused are you right now?” or “What’s making it hard to focus?” This self-reflection encourages children to identify distractions or feelings that may be interfering with their attention, such as hunger, tiredness, or external noise. Once they’re aware of these distractions, they can take action—whether that means taking a break, adjusting their environment, or using a tool like a fidget to refocus. Teaching kids to recognize when their attention is slipping and what they can do to regain it empowers them to take responsibility for their own learning and focus.

Helping your kids develop better attention is a process that takes time and practice. By providing the right tools—like fidgets, engaging activities, and opportunities for self-reflection—you can create a nurturing environment that supports focus and concentration. Remember, every child is different, so it may take some trial and error to find what works best for them. With patience and consistency, your child will be on the path to mastering their ability to focus, benefiting their academic success and overall well-being.



A photograph of a man and a woman embracing. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a red shirt, with his arms around the woman. The woman is on the right, wearing a white shirt, smiling warmly. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

Birth control methods: Facts every couple should know

Birth control measures

Both men and women can use birth control to avoid becoming pregnant. With the increase in technology, humans are offered a wide variety of options today. They could be a procedure, medicine, or device that helps women avoid getting pregnant. There are different types of birth control available, some for men and some for women. They're all effective, but the one you pick entirely depends on your needs and comfort.

When does birth control come into the picture?

If you and your spouse aren't on the same page regarding unwanted pregnancy, it can have a lot of bad consequences. It can cause financial hardship, disrupt your relationship, and even impact the mother's emotional and physical health. When you engage in protected sex, the chance of unintended pregnancy is always present. Start using birth control right away if you're sexually active and don't want a child. When you have unprotected sex, an unplanned pregnancy can occur.

Let's look at some common birth control options that you must know about.

1. Diaphragms

Diaphragms are reusable birth control devices that are tiny, soft, and silicone. They're soaked in spermicide before being inserted into the vaginal canal to keep sperm out of the womb. It is approximately 96% effective and must be fitted by a physician. However, it is ineffective at preventing STDs and should not be used when menstruating because of the risk of toxic shock syndrome.

2. Internal condoms

Internal condoms, often referred to as female condoms, are latex-free, hormone-free polyurethane sachets placed inside the vaginal opening to prevent semen from entering the womb. Female condoms are 95% efficient at preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. However, remember that even before a man fully ejaculates, some semen can still flow out of the penis. As a result, before sex, the condom should be inserted into the vaginal canal. Before inserting the condom, check for the expiration date and any tears or defects.

3. External condoms

Men use external condoms as contraception. They're usually composed of latex, so males with latex allergies should avoid them. This type of condom resembles a bag that fits over an erect penis to prevent any fluid from getting into a woman's vaginal canal, resulting in an unprotected pregnancy or STD. External condoms are approximately 98% effective and should be discarded after one use.

4. Oral contraceptive pills

Oral contraceptive pills are perhaps the most widely used technique of preventing pregnancy worldwide. These are little tablets. They are a type of pill that combines estrogen and progestin and come in various forms. Oral contraceptive pills work in two ways: first, they block the ovaries from producing eggs, and second, they prevent conception. They must be taken to work every day at the same time. Contraceptive

pills are nearly 100% effective; however, they do not protect you from STDs.

5. Intrauterine device

A doctor or nurse inserts an intrauterine device (IUD), a little T-shaped device made of plastic and copper, into a woman's womb (uterus). It is threaded through the cervix and into the top end of the vagina with a nylon thread. The device releases copper for around 5 to 10 years, which keeps you from becoming pregnant (depending on the type). The device must be replaced when this time period has passed. This technique of contraception prevents pregnancy with a 99 percent success rate. It does not, however, protect you from STDs.

6. Female sterilization – tubal ligation (surgical)

Tubal ligation is a surgical technique in which a woman's tubes are tied together (fallopian tubes). This stops the egg from reaching the uterus, resulting in sterility for the rest of the woman's life. This also prevents sperm from passing up the tube to the ovulating ovary, where fertilization normally occurs.

7. Male sterilization – Vasectomy

A vasectomy is a quick and painless treatment that permanently sterilizes men. The vas deferens, or sperm-carrying tubes in the male reproductive system, are cut and sealed during the procedure. It is usually done in a physician's surgery. The transport of sperm out of the testes is prevented by a vasectomy. The surgery does not affect a man's ability to orgasm or ejaculate (potency). Although there will be a flow of ejaculate, it will be devoid of sperm.





Keep a journal



Think on harsh critiques



Write all the time



Read widely and deeply



Take a walk



Perfection is impossible



Never give up



Collect your inspirations



8
IMPORTANT
WRITING TIPS

Writing is a valuable skill that can enhance your child's communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Whether they're crafting a story, penning a report, or simply expressing their thoughts, writing is an essential tool for success in both academics and life. As parents, encouraging your kids to write regularly and helping them develop strong writing habits can lay the foundation for future achievement. Here are eight important writing tips that can help your child become a more confident and effective writer.

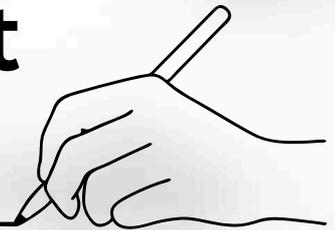
1. Write All the Time

The most effective way to improve writing skills is through regular practice. Just like learning a musical instrument or a sport, writing gets better the more you do it. Encourage your child to write daily—whether it's in a diary, on a blog, or through school assignments. Don't worry about length or complexity at first—just get them into the habit of putting their thoughts on paper. The more they write, the more comfortable and skilled they'll become with expressing themselves.

2. Never Give Up

Writing, like any creative pursuit, comes with its challenges. There will be times when your child feels frustrated or unsure of their abilities. Remind them that persistence is key. Even when things feel difficult, it's important to push through and keep writing. Great writers often face rejection or struggle with their work, but their success comes from not giving up. Teach your child that perseverance is a valuable part of the creative process.

8 Important Writing Tips Every Parent Should Know



3. Keep a Journal

Journaling is a wonderful way to foster a habit of writing while also helping your child process their thoughts and emotions. A journal doesn't have to be structured or formal—it's simply a space to write freely. Encourage your child to use their journal as a safe space to explore their feelings, reflect on their day, or brainstorm new ideas. This practice can help them develop a sense of ownership over their writing and nurture their creativity.

4. Take a Walk

Sometimes, the best way to get unstuck in writing is to take a break and change your surroundings. Taking a walk or engaging in another form of physical activity can help clear the mind and spark new ideas. This might sound counterintuitive, but stepping away from the writing for a bit often leads to fresh perspectives and more creativity. Encourage your child to step outside, breathe in some fresh air, and let their thoughts wander. You'd be surprised how a simple walk can ignite inspiration.

5. Collect Your Inspirations

Ideas don't always come on command, but inspiration can strike at any time. Teach your child to keep an "inspiration collection"—a place where they can jot down interesting thoughts, words, images, or snippets of conversation that spark their creativity. This can be a notebook, a phone app, or even a physical folder where they keep magazine clippings, drawings, and notes. Over time, this collection will serve as a valuable resource when they're looking for inspiration for a story, essay, or project.

6. Perfection Is Impossible

One of the biggest obstacles to writing is the desire to make every sentence perfect on the first try. Let your child know that perfection is an unrealistic goal. Writing is an evolving process that often requires multiple drafts and revisions. The key is to focus on getting words down first, and then refining them later. Teach them to embrace mistakes as part of the learning process and remind them that every draft is an opportunity for improvement.



7. Think on Harsh Critiques

Feedback is a vital part of the writing process, but it can be tough to hear negative comments about one's work. Help your child understand that critiques—especially the harsh ones—are not personal attacks but tools for growth. Encourage them to reflect on constructive criticism and use it to make their writing stronger. Remind them that every writer faces criticism, and it's through thoughtful revision that great writing is made. By fostering resilience in the face of critiques, your child will become more adaptable and skilled in their writing journey.

8. Read Widely and Deeply

Reading is one of the best ways to improve writing. When your child reads a variety of materials—books, articles, poems, and stories—they absorb different writing styles, tones, and vocabulary. Encourage them to read both widely (across different genres and topics) and deeply (paying close attention to language and structure). The more they read, the better they'll understand how writing works, and the more tools they'll have at their disposal when they write themselves.

By adopting these eight tips, you can help your child cultivate a lifelong love of writing. Whether they're crafting a simple story or tackling a complex research paper, these strategies will empower them to be more confident and creative in their writing endeavors. Remember, the journey of becoming a skilled writer is one of continuous learning and growth, and with your support, your child can achieve great things with pen and paper.

Chickpea Curry



This creamy south Indian style Chickpea Curry with coconut milk and spices like fennel seed and cardamom is aromatic and so delicious, you might have a hard time stopping yourself from eating it straight out of the pot. It is super easy to make and there's nothing here that's not absolutely great for your health.

Ingredients

- 4 cups chickpeas (canned or boiled. Drain before adding to recipe)
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 sprigs curry leaves
- 1 medium onion (finely diced)
- 1 tablespoon ginger garlic paste (or crush together 4 pieces garlic and a 1-inch knob of ginger)

- 2 medium tomatoes (finely diced)
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon cayenne
- 1 cup full fat coconut milk
- ¼ cup cilantro (chopped)
- Salt to taste

For masala powder or spice mix:

- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- ½ teaspoon methi seeds
- 2 pods green cardamom pods
- ½ inch cinnamon stick

Directions

- Make a powder of all of the masala ingredients in a spice grinder or a blender. Set aside.
- Heat the oil in a saute pan or saucepan. Add cumin seeds. When they sputter, add the onions, curry leaves and ginger garlic paste.
- Sprinkle some salt and saute, over medium heat until onions turn translucent.
- Add the tomatoes, paprika, cayenne, turmeric, and the spice mix.
- Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the tomatoes darken and most of the liquid has evaporated.





The only
reasons
you must
avoid
exercising
during
pregnancy

Some circumstances when you should avoid exercising

Exercising is good for everyone, even when you are pregnant. Engaging in any kind of low impact physical activity can provide relief from different pregnancy-related symptoms like backaches, swollen ankles and also help you sleep peacefully at night. Exercising regularly before and during pregnancy not only helps the mother but is also beneficial for her unborn baby. The baby may be born with a fitter heart, lower BMI, and a healthy brain. However, there are a few circumstances where exercising can do more harm than good. So, you must talk to your doctor to avoid any complications.

History of premature labour

If your first child was born before 37 weeks gestation, which is also referred to as premature delivery, then it is best to avoid any kind of stern physical activity. Even if you have experienced premature labour in your current pregnancy (contraction after week 20 and before week 37) , it would be advised to you to take more rest. If you are very keen to exercise, talk to your doctor about it. They might suggest some easy exercises.

History or signs of miscarriage

Women with a history of miscarriage or those who have witnessed bleeding or spotting in the current pregnancy should be extra careful during their nine months of pregnancy. Most women avoid exercising in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy to avoid miscarriage. It is best to consult your doctors about what kind of activities you can perform.

Placental problems

In the case of placenta previa, it is usually recommended to decrease the activity level as stern physical activity may provoke contractions

or bleeding. Women with placental problems need to be extra careful in the first trimester, after that they can be permitted to engage in light physical activity. It all depends on their health condition.

Heart and lungs issues

Expecting mothers with a history of heart and lung diseases are also advised to stay away from all kinds of aerobic exercises. In these kinds of exercises, the heart rate goes up and the



requirement of oxygen by the body increases. This may be problematic for women suffering from high blood pressure, asthma, and other heart and lung-related complications.

Exercises that pregnant women must not do

All kinds of exercises are safe to perform during pregnancy as long as you are healthy and not suffering from any pregnancy-related complications. Swimming, brisk walking, indoor stationary cycling and low-impact exercises are best for an expecting mother. However, there are some particular activities they must avoid for the baby's safety.

Let's Go In the Out & Run

Benefits of Studying in the Outdoor for Kids

Kids these days no longer enjoy outdoor activities anymore. For them, staying indoors in the comfort of their room in front of their TVs or Laptops is the only break they want to have. The only alternative would be, if going out is

made compulsory, and they are taught something in a fun way when they go out. There are several schools and afterschool centers that are using Outdoor methods to teach children.

Here are some benefits of studying outside for the kids.

MAKES THEM HEALTHY

We are well aware of the fact that moving around and going out is really good for the health as well. If made

mandatory, the kids will go out on a regular basis, that will make them healthy. Outdoor education is also a key factor in avoiding childhood obesity. If the kids spend less time in the natural surroundings, their senses tend to narrow and their psychological development is also jammed.

DECREASES STRESS LEVEL

Kids think that they are happier when they are at home, with their gadgets and comfort, but little do they know that their stress needs to be released with the help of outdoor activities. Being exposed to the nature helps them release stress. Educational activities like monitoring a plant's progress is important for stimulating production of dopamine. Outdoor Studying can help them release stress and focus on their lessons in a better way.

INCREASES MOTIVATION

When it comes to outdoor studying, kids tend to enjoy it more than traditional classroom studying. This doesn't only ensure that they are having some outdoor activity, but also builds interest in studying, and they become more keen in knowing more about what they are being taught.





WRITING ACTIVITIES

By involving children in writing activities have multi fold benefits. On one hand it helps in knowing kids better by the way of diary writing and on the other hand it increases creativity through story writing. These days a trend of increasing communication gap has been noticed in families. Here diary writing can be used in an innovative way by allowing kids to express themselves.



PUZZLES

Puzzles involve s brain streaming to come to a solution. Brain storming is an integral part of solving puzzles. It enhances the “out of the box” thinking. A picture divided into small parts...and asking child to rearrange them...or else listing some facts, characteristics and asking what it closely resembles to, are a few such examples.

When children come in picture, there are no hard core rules that can be followed. Every child is a unique package in itself. So parents need to appreciate the peculiar needs of their children and have to come up with an activity that fits them best, is able to extract maximum from them and provides for the deficit to make them achieve their full efficiency.

To conclude probably it would not be wrong to say that a blend of different activities in child's life can result in his beautiful unique story.



NUMBER ACTIVITIES

Since the time immemorial, some kids fail to establish chemistry with numbers. So parents need to give special emphasis that this initial hesitation to numbers should not turn to fear or phobias. From the very beginning numbers need to be the very part of conversations. Children can be involved in routine activities involving simple mathematics like: checking grocery bill, comparing the prices of different items, counting the notebooks, calculating distance during driving, in summing the sum of characters in number plate and solving Sudoku etc.



ROLE PLAYING

Involving kids in various role playing activities make them undergo various situations that are unique to that particular character. They become more sensitive to various role characters and helps them to understand their current position and also in better adjustment in next level of maturity. For example, involve kids in kitchen activities or in some family related decision making. Assigning some responsibilities also helps in developing a virtue of accountability.

There are no set of rules or guidelines to initiate weaning your baby, but there are some recommendations that have proven to be scientifically useful. This article has been taken from studies that were conducted by several lactation consultants and developmental experts on how you can make your **baby ready for weaning**.

Babies and surprises are two peas in a pod. Every day you

express interest in adult food, put their hands and toys inside their mouth, etc are some common signs. You will also note how your baby's active tongue thrust reflex will also fade away with time.

2. Set a timetable for weaning

Give you and your baby one full month to stop breastfeeding once and for all. Prevent weaning during major

older then wean directly to a cup to not deal with feeding bottles right away.

There are two reasons why you should go slow, you will produce less milk every week and allow your baby to adjust.

4. Provide emotional support to your baby

Since breastfeeding provides physical support to your baby when you are weaning your baby find alternative ways to

10 STEP GUIDE TO WEANING YOUR BABY



will see or note your baby do something surprising. So here are 10 steps guide to weaning your baby.

1. Identify when your baby is decreasing breastfeeding

Your baby will leave clues and it is up to you whether you can comprehend the signs or not. They will sit up straight, put their head up,

changes taking place in your baby like teething, starting daycare, or even moving homes. This could disrupt the schedule.

3. Give time, be steady but slow

Give time to you and your baby to adjust to all the changes. Reduce breastfeeding to six times a week instead of seven. In case your baby is 9 months or

provide support. You can start doing activities as alternatives.

5. Let your baby lead you

It is okay for your baby to take lead. Some babies excel in taking lead while weaning while others let their mothers take charge. Rely on doesn't offer, don't refuse method, i.e. you cater to your baby's interests and not initiate anything on your own.

6. Level up the feeding routine

If your baby is not taking the bottle from you, then ask someone else to step in. say for example the father, grandparents, or aunts and uncles. Depending on who gets well with the baby, they can step in with the bottle weaning the baby.

7. Don't be surprised when you receive resistance from your baby after stopping breastfeeding.

Your baby might mourn for the loss of breasts for a day or two. That is completely normal and nothing for you to worry about. Usually, Babies have no trouble drinking from sippy cups. Healthy babies usually prefer eating when they are hungry despite having an urge to nurse.

8. Prevent-or soothe- engorgement

This is a tip for mothers, if you are engorged then soothe the pain with ice packs and takes it easy for the next few days. Wait for your

breasts to get adjusted so that the milk production is under control.

9. Be gradual with the breastfeeding, consider partial breastfeeding

If you are a working mother, then this step should work in your favor. During the day, your caregiver could provide the baby with baby

formula while during the night and morning you can breastfeed your baby. Through this schedule, your baby will slowly leave breastfeeding and will start sticking to baby formulas.

10. Comprehend how you feel about the whole process

Do not undermine how you feel. Even though it is your baby who is weaning, your body too will change so whatever you feel, sit with them and comprehend them.

Conclusion

Even though there are no definitive steps that will help in weaning your baby, this guide should do the trick.





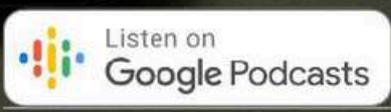
Healthy Bananas

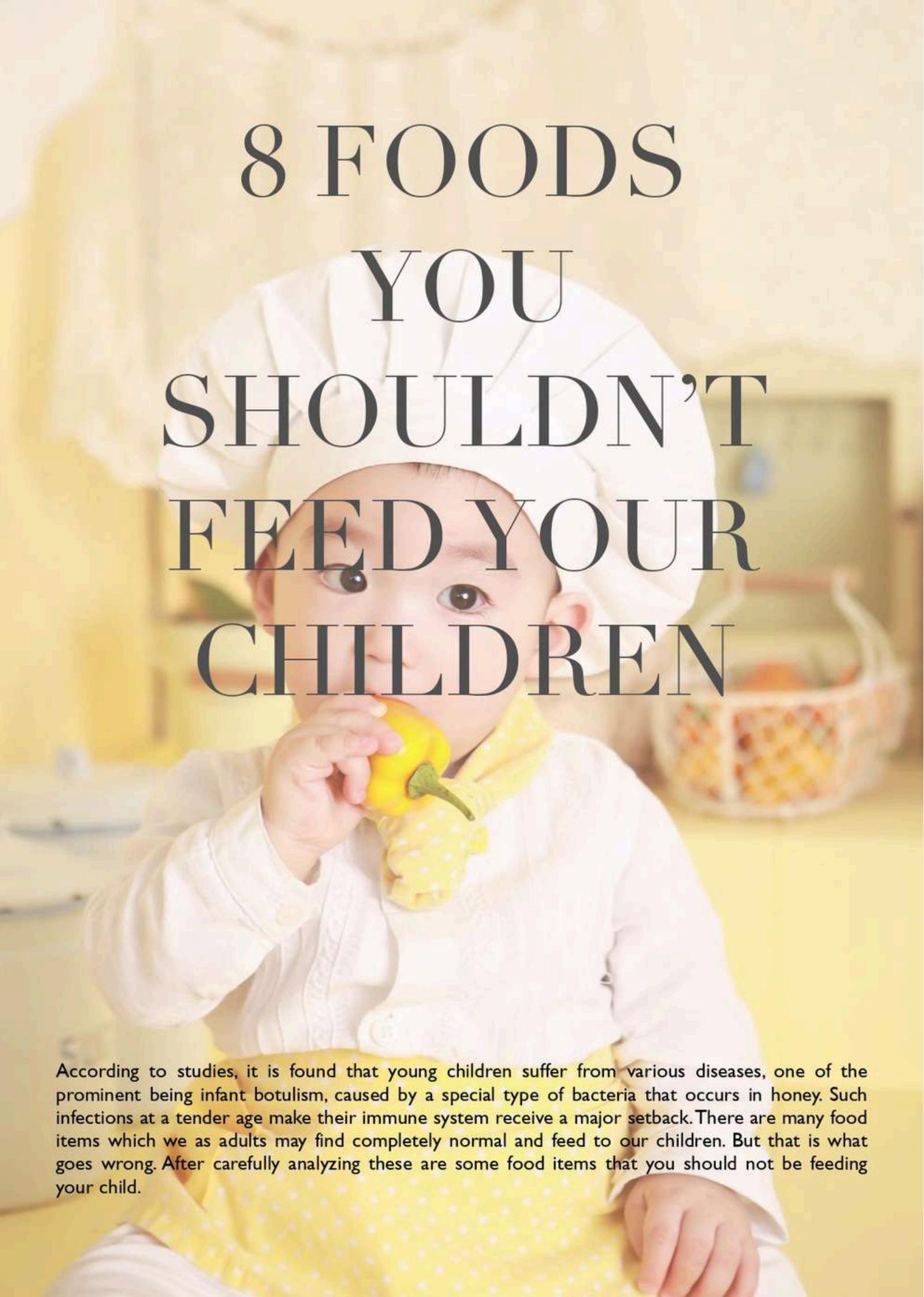
Great source of Potassium may help to prevent high blood pressure , promotes bone health and protect against stomach ulcers.

Protects eyesight
rich source of prebiotic fructooligosaccharides
improve nutrient absorption
rich in provitamin A
caterenoids and
rich in iron

Promotes
Kidney health,
reduces risk of colon and kidney cancer.
Great source of natural energy,
contains tryptophan which can lift the spirit
bananas have a level of vitamin B6 that helps to regulate blood glucose level
may calm morning sickness
Banana peels helps to soothe mosquito bites.
help produce haemoglobin production.

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A baby wearing a white chef's hat and a white shirt with a yellow polka-dot bib, holding a yellow bell pepper. The background is a warm, yellow-toned kitchen setting with a basket of vegetables visible on the right.

8 FOODS YOU SHOULDN'T FEED YOUR CHILDREN

According to studies, it is found that young children suffer from various diseases, one of the prominent being infant botulism, caused by a special type of bacteria that occurs in honey. Such infections at a tender age make their immune system receive a major setback. There are many food items which we as adults may find completely normal and feed to our children. But that is what goes wrong. After carefully analyzing these are some food items that you should not be feeding your child.

As parents, we want the best for our children, especially when it comes to their health. The food we serve them plays a crucial role in their growth, development, and overall well-being. However, in today's fast-paced world, it can be tempting to rely on convenience foods, which are often packed with unhealthy ingredients. Understanding what to avoid is just as important as knowing what to feed your kids. Here's a rundown of 8 foods you should avoid feeding your children and why.

1. Sugary Cereals

While sugary cereals may seem like a quick and easy breakfast option, they are often packed with refined sugars and little nutritional value. These cereals may cause blood sugar spikes, leading to energy crashes and potential weight gain over time. Moreover, sugary breakfasts are linked to an increased risk of developing obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cavities.

Healthy Alternative: Opt for whole-grain cereals or oatmeal with fresh fruit and a sprinkle of nuts or seeds. These options provide lasting energy, fiber, and important vitamins and minerals.

2. Processed Meats (Hot Dogs, Sausages, Bacon)

Processed meats, including hot dogs, sausages, and bacon, are often high in sodium, preservatives, and unhealthy fats. Studies have shown that diets high in processed meats are associated with an increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and other chronic health issues. Additionally, some processed meats contain nitrates and nitrites, which may be harmful when consumed in large quantities over time.

Healthy Alternative: Choose lean, unprocessed meats such as chicken, turkey, or fish. You can also try plant-based protein sources like beans, lentils, or tofu.

3. Sugary Drinks (Sodas, Fruit Juices, Energy Drinks)

Soda and sugary fruit juices are loaded with empty calories and added sugars, which contribute to obesity, tooth decay, and a range of metabolic problems. Many fruit juices, though marketed as healthy, can be just as sugary as soda and lack the fiber of whole fruits. Energy drinks are especially concerning for children, as they often contain high amounts of caffeine and other stimulants, which are not safe for young bodies.

Healthy Alternative: Water should be your child's drink of choice. You can also offer milk, unsweetened herbal teas, or homemade smoothies made with whole fruits.

4. Packaged Snack Foods (Chips, Crackers, Cookies)

While convenient and often delicious, packaged snack foods like chips, crackers, and cookies are high in unhealthy fats, refined sugars, and additives. These foods can cause weight gain, lead to poor eating habits, and contribute to the development of conditions like diabetes and hypertension. Additionally, many of these snacks are low in essential nutrients and don't contribute to your child's overall health.

Healthy Alternative: Choose whole food snacks like fresh fruits, vegetables with hummus, air-popped popcorn, or nuts (if there are no allergy concerns). These snacks are nutrient-dense and provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

5. Fried Foods (French Fries, Fried Chicken, Fried Fish)

Fried foods are high in unhealthy trans fats and oils, which can increase the risk of obesity, heart disease, and other chronic health problems. Additionally, fried foods often contain added salt and sugars that can negatively impact your child's health in the long run.

Healthy Alternative: Baking, grilling, or steaming are healthier cooking methods. If your child enjoys crunchy foods, try oven-baked sweet potato fries or homemade baked chicken tenders with whole-grain breadcrumbs.

6. Candy and Sweets

While an occasional treat won't hurt, regular consumption of candy, chocolate bars, and other sweets can have long-term negative effects on your child's health. These sugary snacks are loaded with empty calories, increase the risk of cavities, and contribute to poor eating habits. Plus, excessive sugar intake is associated with a variety of health problems, including obesity and metabolic syndrome.

Healthy Alternative: If your child craves something sweet, try offering fresh fruit, homemade fruit popsicles, or yogurt with a drizzle of honey or maple syrup. These options provide vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants without the sugar overload.

7. Pre-packaged Frozen Meals

Frozen meals, such as frozen pizzas, TV dinners, and microwaveable pasta dishes, are often high in sodium, unhealthy fats, and artificial preservatives. These meals may be convenient, but they lack the essential nutrients your child needs for healthy growth and development. Additionally, the excessive salt in these meals can contribute to high blood pressure and kidney issues later in life.

Healthy Alternative: Prepare homemade meals and freeze individual portions for convenience. Focus on dishes that are balanced with lean proteins, whole grains, and a variety of vegetables to ensure your child is getting proper nutrition.

8. Artificially Flavored and Colored Foods

Many processed foods contain artificial flavors, colors, and sweeteners that are not only unhealthy but may also have adverse effects on your child's behavior and development. Some studies suggest that artificial colors, such as Red 40 and Yellow 5, may contribute to hyperactivity and attention issues in children, especially those with ADHD.

Healthy Alternative: Focus on whole, unprocessed foods. Fresh fruits and vegetables naturally offer a variety of colors, and you can even let your child get involved in preparing meals to make it a fun experience.

Final Thoughts: Encouraging Healthy Habits

As a parent, the choices you make about food can set the foundation for your child's lifelong health habits. By limiting processed and sugary foods, and encouraging balanced, nutritious meals, you can help ensure your child grows up strong, healthy, and ready to face the world. Keep in mind, it's okay to indulge occasionally, but it's the daily habits that truly make a difference. Teaching your kids about healthy food choices early on will empower them to make smarter decisions as they grow older—and set them on a path toward a lifetime of health and well-being.





The Book Bug

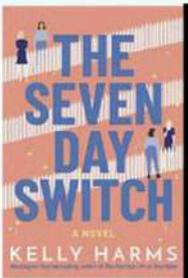
One of the best gifts you can give to your child is the love for reading. In due course of time if there's one thing that I have realised is that when you read a lot, you know a lot, but the real benefits of reading goes beyond the knowledge of the subject. You become a better person. You become articulate and my personal favourite reason: you know how to tell how you are feeling.

The Book Bug is an effort by Dr Dad's team to find out the best of best books for you. Our team comprises of authors, teachers, parents and children.

So, lets start with our this months list:

BEST BOOKS FOR PREGNANT MOTHERS

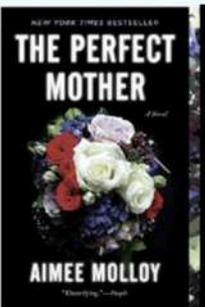
THE SEVEN DAY SWITCH



Two very different moms switch places, Freaky Friday style, in this funny book about motherhood that'll help you

decide what kind of mom you do (or don't!) want to be.

THE PERFECT MOTHER BY AIMEE MOLLOY



This (fortunately) fiction book about motherhood explores what happens when an infant goes missing, and the secrets

within the mother's circle of friends come out into the open.

(Though skip this if you're the worrying type!)

BEST BOOKS FOR NEW PARENTS

SAVE OUR SLEEP



If you're feeling exhausted, Save Our Sleep is an excellent pick. The author, Tizzie Hall, is a baby sleep expert with nearly two

decades of experience working with newborns and their families. Thanks to the simple steps listed out in this guide, you'll learn how to manage a sleep schedule to stay rested and ready for parenthood.

"It's so informative and plans out everything for you, but the best part is it really works," says reader Sacha S. "I had several friends who used this with great success, but it wasn't until my sister did that she then bought it for me. I had a very fussy baby with colic, so this book really saved my life. It has great information around what and

when to feed a baby, with sleep schedules to follow.

BRINGING UP BÉBÉ

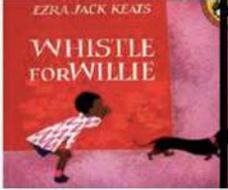


It's no secret that mothers in other countries approach parenting in different ways from Americans; every culture has its own norms and

traditions, after all. But when this American mother had her newborn while working as a journalist in France, she discovered that French babies had habits worth looking into—like sleeping through the night in the early months, acting less picky toward new foods, and being more independent at young ages. Author Pamela Druckerman learned from the French, and she shares her findings in Bringing up Bébé to help parents of every cultural background adopt their best practices.

BEST BOOKS FOR TODDLERS

WHISTLE FOR WILLIE BY EZRA JACK KEATS



Peter wants to learn how to whistle, but it's not as easy as it looks.

Toddlers that enjoyed The Snowy Day will especially like this beautifully illustrated story of a young boy living in the city.

ADVENTURES WITH BAREFOOT CRITTERS BY TEAGAN WHITE

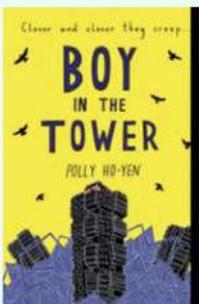


This is the cutest alphabet book I've ever seen. The adorable illustrations, short

sentences, and gentle rhyme make it a favorite with toddlers as well.

BEST BOOK FOR BIG KIDS

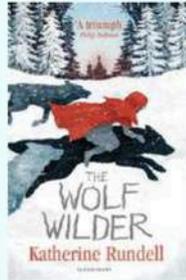
BOY IN THE TOWER BY POLLY HO-YEN



A boy who lives in a tower block sees the whole world below him. But one day the

tower begins to crumble and fall. The world around him collapses amongst peculiar and menacing plants. Is all hope lost or can he find a way out?

THE WOLF WILDER BY KATHERINE RUNDRELL

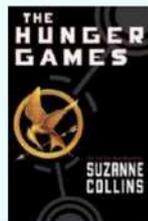


Set in deepest snowbound Russia, a mother and daughter live in fear of the encroaching Red Army. But Feodora and her mother have a unique talent –

they can turn tame wolves into wild beasts fit to fend for themselves. A great story about struggling for freedom and independence.

BEST BOOK FOR TEENS

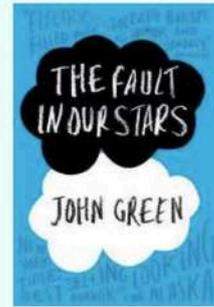
THE HUNGER GAMES SERIES BY SUZANNE COLLINS



In the ruins of a future North America, a young girl is picked to leave her impoverished district and travel to the decadent

Capitol for a battle to the death in the savage Hunger Games. But for Katniss Everdeen, winning the Games only puts her deeper in danger as the strict social order of Panem begins to unravel.

THE FAULT IN OUR STARS BY JOHN GREEN



Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few more years, Hazel has never been anything but

terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at the Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.





PREGNANCY



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