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Parent Relationships

Maintaining The T.I.E.S. That Bind

Improve your parenting skills AND relationship

February 2008

Dear Fiona,

Raise your glasses, offer a toast, and let's hear it for parents!

I want to take this opportunity to state loudly and clearly that, although this is not life-changing or exciting news, parents rarely get the public (or private) thanks or praise that they heartily deserve. Nor do they necessarily expect it. Parents in general accept the job of raising their children because they wanted and chose to have them.

But let's take a moment to consider something: the job of a parent is similar both in terms of serious responsibility and challenge to that of a high-level manager in a large organization. Would anyone apply for such a high level job without credentials, experience, education or training? Probably not - but if they did, they would not even get on the candidate shortlist. Nobody would think ill of the hiring manager for not selecting them. But we apply for, and in many cases are accepted, for the job of parent without any training or experience at all.

The fact that so many of us parents manage to guide our children from birth into early adulthood without major mishap or catastrophe, is something that indeed deserves praise and respect. But why not make life a little easier for everybody?

My challenge to us all for the remainder of the month, is to consciously and conspicuously offer support and praise to parents that you run into. Praise and support are free, plentiful resources, and can only improve already outstanding odds.

Best regards,
Fiona

**Services
Offered**

Parent Skills Classes

New Information on Upcoming Classes for Parents:

"How to Set Limits and Expectations and Eliminate Unwanted Behaviors"

From Parent and Child Coach Fiona Cattermole, MSA, CPBA



Group Coaching. Have your parents group meet with me on a weekly or monthly basis to learn how to eliminate or change problem behaviors.

Individual Coaching

Contact me to see if individual or couples coaching would help your relationship or any of your children's behavioral issues.

In-Home Evaluation

of your children's behaviors. Get experienced and honest feedback, sound recommendations, and coaching that will improve the quality of life for the entire family.

Not sure if coaching is for you? Get [15 minutes of free coaching](#) and then you can decide.

Choose **ONE** session from the following locations:

Session 1 in Fort Collins:

Wednesdays March 5, 12, 26 and April 2 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm
Werner Elementary, 5400 Mail Creek Lane, Fort Collins
\$79.95 for entire 4-week session, \$90.00 at the door.

[Buy Now](#)

Session 2 in Loveland:

Thursdays March 6, 13, 20 and 27 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm
Namaqua Elementary, 209 N. County Line Road 19E, Loveland
\$79.95 for entire 4-week session, \$90.00 at the door.

[Buy Now](#)

Each session is 4 weeks in length, 90 minutes per week, and provides parents with all the education, support and coaching they need to successfully eliminate unwanted behaviors in their children!

For further information, contact:
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"Whining" and Dining With Your Toddler

Taking your 2 or 3 year old out to a restaurant can be a rewarding experience, but it can just as easily turn out to be challenging, to put it mildly! When it turns into the latter, I'm challenging you to see it as an opportunity to have a positive experience by being aware of his developmental needs.

At this age your child is developing a sense of mastery over simple social skills (simple is defined by adults, but very complex for him), and beginning to be aware of his emotions. In this stage it's easy for him to be overwhelmed and over-stimulated, especially by something as stimulating as dining out, and tantrums and rages are his way of showing emotional overload.

Your reactions to his behavior will determine how well or poorly he masters the social and emotional skills required of him, as well as how proud or ashamed he feels about himself. It's important that parents understand what's going on behind the tantrum - what his behavior is telling us that his words can't - and respond with compassion, guidance and help, just as we would if he fell and scraped his knee and needed a

band-aid and a hug.

If the dining experience mentioned above turns out to be one where your toddler has a meltdown, understand that he is in danger of embarrassing himself with his uncontrollable public show and it can actually be very frightening for him. He needs to know that the adults around him can remain in control no matter how badly he "loses it". He's fragile right now and you need to be his "rock".

Start by taking him somewhere private, give him assurance that you know he can calm down and you'll wait with him while he does (don't berate him, just be there for him). Hold him if he'll let you, let him climb onto your lap if he wants, and as he begins to calm down, praise him for trying hard. When he's ready - after he's been at his normal energy level for 2 or 3 entire minutes, say you'll take him back to the table, but that if he needs you to help him calm down again, you will be happy to return to this quiet place with him. Keep the tone positive and reassuring. He's accomplished a lot by calming down and should be allowed to feel proud of himself. (If you find it hard to be patient while doing this, it might be helpful for you to compare it to putting him on the BRAT (bread, rice, apple juice, and toast) diet when he's recovering from the flu. It's just what he needs and it's just what you do, and you don't get angry doing that).

If, when you rejoin the party, someone makes mention of his behavior, redirect the conversation to how proud you are of his ability to calm down. Put-downs or recriminations at this point - or at any point - are psychologically and emotionally damaging. Children live in the moment and if it seems as if the incident never happened, to him it's over and he's moved on. There's no need to dredge it up.

To allay any fears that helping your child in this way can be a disguised way of giving in, rest assured that's not the case. What you're actually doing is setting a firm boundary, holding him in a psychological and emotional embrace that is every bit as needed and effective as a physical one. Although he'll probably resist some of the limits and boundaries you set, he *does* need them and any resistance he shows is normal but not to be given in to. Giving in means you've handed him back the control that *you* should have, control he can't possibly handle.

If you sincerely believe that your toddler is trying very hard to learn an enormous number of things every day, rather than seeing him as "messing up" when he doesn't have complete mastery of a skill yet, you will be giving him a wonderful gift and discipline in his teens will be a breeze!

About Fiona

*Fiona Cattermole, MSW, CPBA, is a Parent Relationship and Child Behavioral Coach. Her mission is to help parents strengthen their relationship with each other **at the same time as** raising happy and well-adjusted kids.*

Contact her at 303.807.1044, fionacattermole@finexex.com if you would like engage her for a presentation, attend a seminar, or talk to her about parent relationship or children's behavioral coaching.

Contact Information

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