GROWING HEALTHY MINDS

TIP SHEET: General Tips Every Parent/Caregiver Should Know

For the parent

Being a parent isn't easy, and we all know children don't come with an instruction manual.

Here are the top 10 tips that every parent should know:

- Prepare ahead of time. Before the baby arrives, parents/caregivers should take a First Aid/Child CPR class.

- Baby proof. Look for electrical outlet covers, drawer and cabinet latches, baby gates and many other required items. Click here to download a checklist of household items to babyproof: http://www.totsafe.com/checklist.htm

- Trust your instincts. This is the most important thing you can do as a new parent. People have natural parenting instincts. If your heart is telling you to do something, do it.

- Feed your baby when she is hungry. Many parents try to put their newborn on a feeding schedule and end up feeling frustrated when the baby resists. Newborns operate on instincts. They know when they are hungry and full. Feed them on demand. In their first 2-3 months, obesity is not an issue.

- Ask for help. No one can do everything alone. Anytime you feel overwhelmed or frustrated, seek help from your partner, family and friends. There is nothing wrong with needing help.

- Remember to get your rest. This can make a huge difference between feeling irritable and stressed as opposed to joyful and patient as you care for your child every day.

- Keep a routine with your children. As they get older have a set time for bedtime, for meals, for bath time and so on.

- Praise, praise and praise some more. Make the most of the good things that your child does. The more you praise your child, the better your child will do.

- Remember that beginning at the age of 2, your child will model themselves after you. Whatever you do, your kids will mimic. So don't do anything in front of them that you wouldn't want them to copy.

- Spending time with your children is a great way to be a better parent. When you spend a lot of quality time with them, changes in their personality, friends and habits will be more noticeable.