

# FAMILY CONNECTION



## Spring into New Learning Adventures!

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BREAK HABITS NOT SPIRITS

BOOKS ON BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS

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# BREAK HABITS NOT SPIRITS

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Before we start using the techniques that grandma said worked for you as a child, it is important to first understand the why behind some of those habits.

Nail biting, nose picking, thumb sucking, and hair twirling; these are just a few habits that some children display that annoys and concerns parents. As parents, we all want to break these bad habits that our children display quickly because of how it makes us feel. But before we start using the techniques that grandma said worked for you as a child, it is important to first understand the WHY behind some of those habits, and we have to recognize whether or not the child is ready to stop the habit.

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What you will find is that most of these habits are just a passing phase. Conversely, some of these same habits are actually coping mechanisms for stress, frustration, boredom and from just being tired (Laule, 2018). The most important thing to remember is that screaming and punishment do not lead to the habit being broken; but screaming and punishment can lead to a child's spirit being crushed and broken. The real key here is positive reinforcement and patience.

The following tips are helpful when your child is ready to break the habit:

- Ignoring the behavior: when you give a lot of negative attention to the behavior it sometimes has an adverse effect and encourages the behavior.
- Encourage mindfulness: encouraging mindfulness will allow your child to slow down a bit to examine his habits and make conscious change happen.
- Switch the stimulus: this option offers the opportunity to replace something unhealthy with something healthy. For example, give the child a fidget toy, rubber bracelet or a spinner ring.
- Make tiny new habits: tiny new habits will enable children to automatically engage in the new healthier habit which will lead to long-term change.
- Celebrating success: Praise your child for good behavior. The best kind of praise simply describes what you see that you'd like to see more of is a critical part of the process (B'sheart, 2019).

Breaking your child's undesired habits is not an easy thing to do. There is no promise that these habits will end, but there is a good chance that the habit will fade away over time. With knowledge about the roots of the habit and sound educational research; you can give your child power, and help to break the habit but not their spirit!



## References

- B'sheart, M. (2019, April 15). How to Stop Bad Habits in Children. Retrieved from Metro Parent: <https://www.metroparent.com/daily/parenting/child-behavior-discipline/breaking-bad-habits-how-to-help-kids-kick-bad-habits/>
- Laule, S. (2018, December). Your Child: Parenting Guides and Resources. Retrieved from CS Mott Children's Hospital: <https://www.mottchildren.org/posts/your-child/bad-habits>

# BREAK HABITS NOT SPIRITS

*Continued*

Here are some books on kid-friendly books on how to build healthy habits!

Gregory, the Terrible Eater by Mitchell Sharmat

Little Pea by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

You are Healthy by Todd Snow

The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist by Stan Berenstain

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

The Busy Body Book: The Kid's Guide To Fitness by Lizzy Rockwell

Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert

My Very First Book of Food by Eric Carle (recommended for infants to age 2)

Mealtime by Elizabeth Verdick (Recommended for infants to age 3)

Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli by Barbra Jean Hicks

The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food by Stan Berenstain

I Will Never Eat Tomatoes by Lola Child

”

A book is a  
dream that you  
hold in your hand.

“



## Family Dinner Activity: Chit Chat Jar

With technology being at the forefront of almost every aspect of our lives, it's hard to sit at the dinner table with our children and carry on a meaningful conversation without a cell phone being out or having the TV blaring in the background. To bring back family conversations put a Chit Chat Jar in the middle of your dining room table. The jar will contain slips of papers with conversation starters on them. The conversation starters can range from funny things that happened over the course of the day, or fantasy. Whatever you choose for your topics, dinner time will be more engaging and your children will gain more conversational skills. Here are some sample questions:



# 'SPRING' INTO LEARNING & FUN ACTIVITIES

Spring is finally here! After such a long and cold winter, it's thrilling to feel the wind in your hair and the warm sun on your face. Here are simple ways to enjoy the outdoors and celebrate spring:

## Play in the rain.

Put on your rain gear and play in puddles!

## Catch the wind.

Create a wind sock, kite, pinwheel, or weather vane and learn all about the wind.

## Go on a walk or bike ride.

Observe the natural world as you make your way through the woods or park.

## Plant a garden.

Reconnect your child with the wonder of nature by showing her that a tiny seed can grow into a plant

## Watch for wildlife.

Make a bird feeder and go bird watching. Look under a rock or log for creepy crawlies.

## Look to the skies.

Lie down and watch clouds. Let your imaginations run wild as you spot shapes in the clouds.

## Go on a picnic.

Spring is the perfect time for a picnic — there are no mosquitos or flies yet! Bring a blanket and some delicious sandwiches or snacks.



Photo credit: Shutterstock

### Source:

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/7-simple-springtime-outdoor-activities>

## Easy Kids' Lunches: Fun Shaped Sandwiches

A cookie cutter is all it takes to jazz up your child's lunch. Get the kids involved cutting out healthy sandwich ingredients into their favorite shapes. Hummus is a nutritious alternative to mayo and delicious on sandwiches. Use low-sodium smoked turkey breast and reduced-fat Cheddar for a lighter lunch.

### Ingredients

- 2 slices whole-grain bread
- 2 slices low-sodium smoked turkey breast
- 1 slice reduced-fat Cheddar
- 1 tablespoon hummus
- 2 slices tomato
- 1 thin slice cucumber
- 1 small lettuce leaf

### Special equipment:

Cookie cutters

### Directions

1. Punch shapes out of the bread with a cookie cutter. Punch shapes out of the turkey and cheese. Place the hummus in a small food storage container to use as a spread for the sandwich.
2. Pack the hummus, bread, cheese, turkey, tomato, cucumber and lettuce in a lunch container. Assemble the sandwich when ready to eat.



Photo credit: Food Network

Source: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/easy-kids-lunches-fun-shaped-sandwiches-3416205>



## Toddlers + the 3Ts

**Every word you say builds  
your toddler's brain!**

Research shows that children do better in school when their parents talk and interact with them from birth. Make the most of your time together by using the 3Ts.



Be in the moment. Respond to what you think your toddler is communicating.



Use a wide variety of words.



Engage your child in conversation.

When you use all 3Ts at once, you build the strongest possible brain for your child.

# Start now. Here's how!



## Tune In

- Listen to your child - they may communicate through words, sounds, or gestures.
- Notice what catches your child's attention, and talk about it.
  - *"Oh you want to wear the dinosaur shirt today? The dino is big and strong just like you!"*
  - *"I hear you getting fussy. Are you feeling hungry?"*



## Talk More

- Talk, read, or sing with your child - let your child take the lead! You don't need to flip through the pages in order or sing the words just right for your child to learn.
- During play time, describe the colors and textures of their toys, or Math Talk about the number, size, or shape of them.
- Narrate daily routines like getting dressed by talking your child through what you're doing, as you do it.
  - *"Let's put your right arm in the sleeve, now your left arm. Good! Now it's time to zip you up!"*
  - *"What a tall tower you're building. I see one, two, three blocks. Wow, it's three blocks tall!"*



## Take Turns

- Ask questions and wait for your child to respond, whether with words or otherwise.
- Respond to your child's words and gestures as though they are turns in the conversation.
  - *"It's a little cold today, what do you think we should do before we go outside?"*
  - *"You're reaching for the crackers, do you want more to eat?"*



Have a child that will be 5 on or before September 1st? Registration for Kindergarten is now available at Broward County Public Schools.

Is your child ready for kindergarten? It is never too early to prepare for this milestone in their life and yours. We can get ready by sharing books all about kindergarten. Not sure which school is your school (zoned school)? Check out the Find My School page at <https://www.browardschools.com/school-locator>. Once you find your school, visit the main office and pass by with your child. Keep an eye out for upcoming events at the school for new students.

- Documents you need register your children include:
- Legal Proof of Child's Age
- Certificate of Immunization (Florida HRS 680). The 680 form can be obtained from the Broward County Department of Health or a Private Physician/Health Care Provider.
- Evidence of Medical Examination (well check-up) within the last 12 months of beginning school.
- Florida Driver's License or Identification
- To (2) Proofs of Residency
- Documentation of Grade Placement (N/A for Kindergarten)
- For more information, visit <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/8805>.



Open Enrollment is here! The time to lock in the future cost of college for your child is NOW. The earlier you start, the more you save. Florida Prepaid Plans start at just \$45/month AND you could win a scholarship!

Enroll today using promo code

ELC2021 and save \$50.

<http://bit.ly/3s5S3eU>



## Contact us

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ELC Broward is teleworking but still able to support parents remotely.

Parents/Guardians can reach us in the following ways:

Main Office Number: (954)377-2188 | Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Online Chat Service: [www.elcbroward.org](http://www.elcbroward.org) | Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



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