

# Treehouse News

Vol.2: July 2009

Dedicated to learning through play

## Negative Reinforcement

Have you noticed how effective positive reinforcement can be on a child's behavior? Or how different approaches to managing your child's behavior have either more or less of an effect depending on the situation, environment or your child's mood? Well we're happy to introduce a new technique that can help you set your child up for success when it comes to exhibiting the behavior that you would like to see!

When people hear the phrase "negative reinforcement" they often think it means "to reinforce negative behavior," although the actual definition is the exact opposite. "Negative reinforcement" essentially means "to take something out of the environment that keeps your child from doing what you need them to do". For example, in the sleep-strategy section in this issue of the newsletter, we explain that by putting away all toys so that they are "out of sight, out of mind", you will increase the likelihood of your child actually going to sleep at bedtime. When toys are accessible, they may become a distraction that will keep your child awake and stimulated. Putting away toys is a form of negative reinforcement in the sense you are achieving a desired behavior by removing objects from the environment that could potentially keep your child from going to sleep.

Last, but certainly not least, another benefit of negative reinforcement is its ability to act as a proactive alternative to punishment, thus helping you avoid negotiation and power struggles. By using this technique, you set both yourself and your child up for success and everyone wins!

Welcome to the second edition of City Treehouse's parenting newsletter. We know that being a parent can be tough, so here are some tricks and tips to help make it easier!



## Save 10% on Play Packs

Make play time reservations when you purchase your play pack to save big!

## Upcoming Events

**7/10 (F)** Rumpus Room, 12:30-1:30p

**7/13 (M)** Dance Together, 11:30a-12:15p

**7/13 (M)** Creative Movement, 1:30-2:15p

**7/14 (Tu)** Meeting of the Moms, 12:00-1:00p

**7/17 (F)** Let's Make Lunch, 10:00-10:45a

**7/20 (M)** Fun with Numbers, 4:00-4:45p

**7/21 (Tu)** Baby Signs, 2:00-2:45p

**7/23 (Th)** Meeting of the Moms, 12:00-1:00p

**7/24 (F)** Karma Kids Toddler Yoga, 10:30-11:15a

**7/29 (W)** Rumpus Room, 2:00-3:00p

**7/30 (Th)** Creative Play 18+m, 11:00-11:45a

**7/30 (Th)** Creative Play 6-18m, 12:00-12:45p

**8/6 (Th)** Bilingual Birdies French, 9:30-10:15a

## Play Techniques to Try at Home

If you're looking for new ways to break out of those old routines around the house, why not get the band back together with some homemade musical instruments! Because kids enjoy music and arts and crafts, combining the two is an awesome way to get your groove on while building your child's self esteem through creativity and play.

Two instruments that are easy to make are a guitar and a tambourine; you can decorate them with magazines, buttons, glitter or even some of those holiday ribbons that dad always saves. Get out your camera and snap some silly shots of your rock band, then press record and lay down the first track. This is a great activity to let the imagination run wild and have fun playing your very own kind of music.



## Sleep Strategies

Creating a peaceful and soothing environment can be the key to making sure that children get a full night's rest. Although it is fun for a child to have an engaging and cheery daytime atmosphere in their room, it is important that it become a quiet, dark and cool place at bedtime; thus ensuring a feeling of tranquility.

Removing major distractions is critical. Putting away favorite toys eliminates the urge to avoid going to sleep and keeps the focus on calming bedtime activities like a book, song, or relaxing puzzle. "Tucking in" dolls and teddy bears will also help ease kids into sleep mode. Try white noise machines, classical music or sounds from nature, or aromatherapy as finishing touches to a successful sleep experience.

Having a bedtime mantra helps children know that it is time for bed. A vocal catchphrase or consistent saying such as "time to put teddy to bed", or "goodnight, sleep tight" will encourage cooperative bedtime routines and help eliminate ineffective tactics such as yelling or begging.



## Newsworthy

**Cheap Parking!** City Treehouse offers you inexpensive parking right across the street! Come play with us for an hour and receive discounts from Rapid Park with validation.

Have any suggestions or ideas for us? Let us know by calling (212)255-2050 or see a friendly, helpful staff member!

## Nutrition

How often does your child see veggies on his plate and refuse to eat them? There's actually a very easy way to get your child to enjoy those vegetables and even ask for seconds! It may sound like a no-brainer, but "hiding" vegetables by incorporating them into a dish is a fool-proof way to make sure that your children are getting their recommended daily amount. Here is a deliciously fun, well-balanced meal that will help you accomplish this amazing feat!

### **Veggie Lasagna** *6 servings*

#### **Ingredients:**

- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 med. onion
- 1 med. carrot
- 1 med. zucchini
- 1 box whole-wheat lasagna noodles
- 2 cups tomato sauce
- 2 (10-oz) packages frozen chopped spinach
- 1 1/2 cups ricotta
- 3 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1/2 cup parmesan
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, sliced into pats
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

#### **Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and brush the base of the dish with olive oil.
2. Chop veggies into small chunks and layer in dish with tomato sauce, cheese and pasta sheets. Dot butter on top. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Cover top of lasange with foil and bake for approx. 1 hour, or until veggies are soft.

#### **Other Veggie Options**

1. Try fajita style quesadillas with onions and peppers!.
2. Mix in chopped veggies with eggs for fun, colorful omelets.
3. Bake homemade pizzas with veggies on top instead of just plain cheese.



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