

ENQUIRER LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE

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Dr. Brazelton answers

**Please note page 3 for
Dr. Brazelton's opinion
on "Babywise".**

Our parents' panel poses questions to child
development expert

BY CINDY KRANZ
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Grateful parents everywhere fondly recall how Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, through his books and syndicated newspaper column, carried them over the rough spots of raising children.

Dr. Brazelton, professor emeritus of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, will be in Cincinnati on Saturday for the Every Child Succeeds workshop; Beech Acres' parenting conference "For the Love of Kids" (sold out) and the United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Cincinnati 50th anniversary gala.

Although he's talking to three disparate groups, their common goal is to help people be the best parents they can be. That's a harder task these days.

"The combination of the stresses on parents today make life a lot tougher, and they need a lot more support than they got in the past," Dr. Brazelton says.

The Pampers Parenting Institute's Web site at www.pampers.com (created by Procter & Gamble in 1996) receives 50,000 hits a day, says Dr. Brazelton, a faculty adviser to the site. "That's showing an enormous hunger for information that we're trying to meet."

Dr. Brazelton, agreed to answer a few specific parenting questions from the Enquirer's Internet Parent Resource Panel.

Question: What's the most important thing I can do to raise a good child?

Answer: "Learn to read the child. That's really what all of my work has been aimed at, trying to help parents understand their own child as an individual and tie that to the ghosts of their nursery - the biases that dominate their lives. Then, you can make decisions that make sense. The main things a child needs are good self-esteem, enough self-esteem to have altruism and motivation to learn. Those three things happen in the first three years and really happen from parents who feel good about themselves.

Q: Any advice on easing food battles with preschoolers? Should you make a preschooler clean his plate?

A: "I think the only way you do that is into the waste basket. Anytime you get into a struggle with a child over food you're going to lose one way or another. You set up problems in the future. Food ought to be really fun. One of the things parents need to do today is make every meal an exciting family event. Really, what children need is a pint of milk, two ounces of protein with iron, fruit, and I use a multivitamin so they don't have to worry about vegetables."

Q: How do you get kids to sleep in their own rooms? My children are 2 and 4 and are sleeping on the floor in our bedroom. We really feel they would sleep better in their own rooms.

A: "Obviously they have fostered co-sleeping ... Give them a pallet or a bed they can call their own. Gradually move it into their rooms. It's got to be gradual and sympathetic. A lot of mothers working today cannot stand to give the child up."

Q: What are your thoughts on spanking versus time out?

A: "My discipline theory is not punishment. Spanking is absolutely out today. We live in a violent society. Do you want to hand down that it's OK to be violent in settling things? It's not respectful. It's saying "I'm bigger than you." Discipline means teaching. It takes time. It doesn't happen overnight.

"Every time a child does something you can't tolerate, break the cycle by holding or time out. The second it's broken, you say, "I'm sorry, but every time you do that, I have to stop you until you can stop yourself." "

Q: My 11-year-old daughter was raised primarily around females. I have begun to notice, now that she is older, she demonstrates little respect for men. How do I teach her respect when she's not around many men?

A: "I don't believe you teach respect. I believe you learn that from role models. Maybe she hasn't found a role model that she can respect. I bet she's frightened of men. She needs to know one she can model on more intimately, like a grandparent or uncle perhaps."

Q: What's your opinion on separating twins in school? Who should decide? The twins? The principal? The parents?

A: "The twins should decide. I think it's an important, beautiful relationship. When they're ready, they'll tell you."

Q: What is your opinion on the Baby Wise parenting books by Gary Ezzo?

“I’m horrified. I’m absolutely horrified. It isn’t respectful of children. I can’t conceive of a child feeling very good about themselves by conforming. I hate this idea that parents think the child is against me so I have to win. I wonder why we need this in this country at this point. It seems more of a symptom of something that has gone wrong that we haven’t paid attention to. Discipline is the second most important thing you give a child. The first is love. Discipline is not a protagonist thing. It’s learning.”

SOLD OUT, BUT...

Although the Beech Acres’ parenting conference is sold out, interested parents may call 231-6630 or 624-0421 to receive copies of each speaker’s tip sheets. Parents also can be placed on the mailing list for next year’s conference. Some tickets remain for the United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Cincinnati 50th anniversary gala 7 p.m. Saturday at the Hyatt Regency, downtown. Tickets are \$125 per person. 947-8825.

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