

Navigating Challenging Behaviors: Bedtime Battles, Body Exploration & Aggression

Key Webinar Takeaways from Drs. Lauren and Jack

Bedtime Battles

Sleep deprivation and parenthood go hand in hand, especially during a child's first 12 months. It may be a surprise to some families that establishing sleep routines for a preschooler can also be a challenge. For toddlers and 2-year-olds, the difficulty may be in their newfound freedom of a toddler bed. For older preschoolers, the struggle may be the child's burgeoning imagination — having scary thoughts, bad dreams or fear of being alone. For all young children, the most important element is establishing consistent, predictable sleep routines and not reinforcing sleep disruptions with unintended positive reinforcement. •



Body Exploration

Self-stimulation and body exploration is a common behavior seen in older preschool-aged children. In the preschool years, body exploration is done out of curiosity and as a comforting behavior. Self-stimulatory exploration is most commonly seen at naptime, bath time or bedtime. Some children may attempt to explore the genitals of others. While the latter may be uncomfortable, it's important to address privacy, boundaries, consent and respect for others. •

Aggression

Aggressive behavior is common among toddlers and preschoolers. It may look like a sudden shove, kick or snatch of an item. As children mature and gain greater self-control, these behaviors can be redirected and will eventually be outgrown. Toddlers and two-year-olds frequently show aggression due to communication frustration or seeking independence. Three and four-year-olds more readily show this behavior as they look to control their surroundings, as a cause-and-effect experimentation or as a reciprocal modeling of behavior that they may have seen elsewhere. The root cause of aggression can often be visually observed, and the response will vary accordingly. •