

Disciplining Your Child

8 Tried and True Discipline Techniques

Here are some tips to keep the peace in your house and foster your child's self-control.

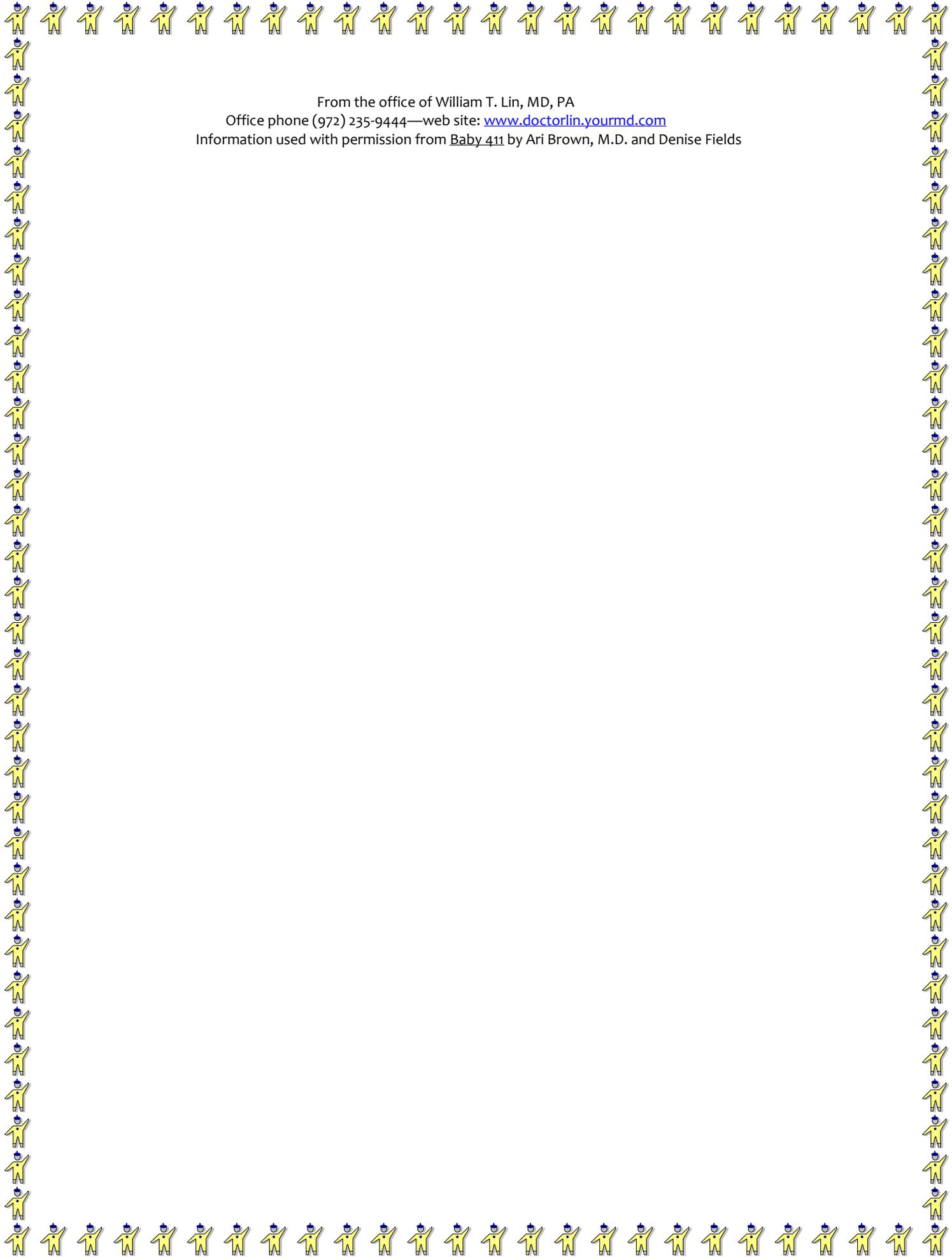
1. **Ignore.** If it's not a major infraction, ignore the behavior. If your child doesn't get a rise out of you, he will stop doing it.
2. **Redirect.** Move your child to a different activity. Children repeat the same inappropriate behavior to see if they can get away with it. It often takes numerous times and consistent redirection of the same misbehavior until you can eliminate it. Don't give up.
3. **Use Humor.** It works beautifully with power struggles. Instead of digging in to the trenches and holding your ground on the situation, change to an upbeat approach. Your child will do the same.
4. **Time out.** Yes, it really does work. The premise is that your child is removed from his play and must sit out for a period of time. Your child gets one minute for every year of age. Kids under age two rarely sit in isolation for the time requirement. Little ones can sit facing away from your lap. You do not talk to them or interact. Time out is reserved for particularly inappropriate behavior and it should be used every time the behavior occurs.
5. **Positive Reinforcement.** Catch your child being good. Tell your child how proud you are when they are behaving well. This will pay off.
6. **Avoid Negative Reinforcement.** Any attention, good or bad, that you pay a child is attention. So behavior that causes a reaction from you, even a negative reaction, are likely to be repeated by your child. This concept is called negative reinforcement of a behavior. Think before you react.
7. **Give Choices/Teach Consequences.** As your child gets older, he, who is seeking independence, will appreciate being given choices. Instead of getting into a power struggle, let him pick the consequences of his actions. Example: If your child insists on picking out his pajamas, which might take a long time, then he will opt not to read books that night. One real world parent tip: LIMIT the number of choices any baby is offered. Too much choice can be overwhelming.
8. **Loss of Privileges.** As your child gets older, he will appreciate that certain activities are special. You can reinforce consequences of actions by withholding special activities for misbehavior. The most important activity in your child's world is special time with a parent--not TV time, dessert, etc. Use this to your advantage.

Bottom Line: If you give in to a situation when your child has a tantrum, you have just taught him that a tantrum is an effective way to get what he wants. Be strong!

The Terrible Two's

The Terrible Two's is a misnomer. It actually starts when your child declares independence from you.

We usually see this behavior start around 18 months and last up until age three, but some kids are ahead of their time.



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