

Parenting the Second and Third Year

What is "Parenting the Second and Third Years?"

Parenting the First and Second Years is a parenting newsletter series that is available bimonthly to parents during their child's second and third year of life. It is written by the University of Wisconsin Extension to encourage effective child rearing. Age-paced newsletters are effective because they are relatively inexpensive and offer small amounts of highly relevant information at a "teachable moment."

This series in Racine County is distributed through a partnership among Memorial Hospital of Burlington, Aurora Health Care, Memorial Hospital of Burlington Auxiliary, and Racine County UW-Extension. The Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Fund of Milwaukee provided a "seed grant" to fund the printing of the newsletters for the initial two years of the project.

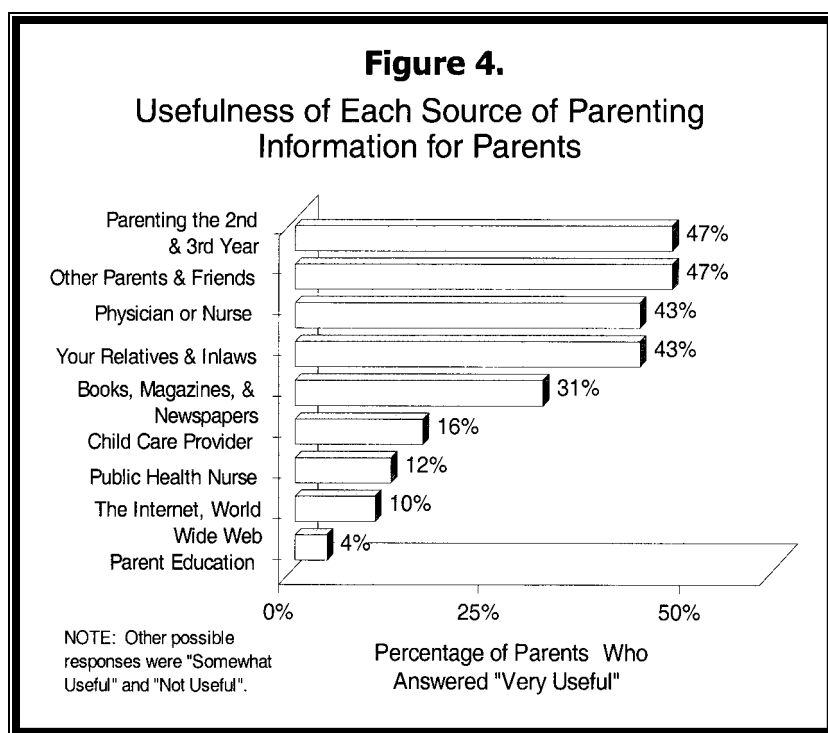
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A Parenting Newsletter for Racine County

Parenting the First Year newsletter has been distributed in Racine County since 1989. In Spring 2000, families in western Racine County with 13-month-olds started receiving *Parenting the Second and Third Years*. An evaluation of this parenting project was recently conducted. Of the 228 questionnaires that were deliverable, 107 were returned for a 47% response rate.

In Figure 4, parents rated sources of parenting information:



Parents commented:

- "In general, the newsletters are great because they come just in time for new issues with my son. I find them more useful and easier to use than the books and magazines I have."
- "There were certain things I didn't know dealing with parenting that were useful and it was nice to have the newsletter to back me up with disagreements with my partner on how to raise our child."
- "I very much enjoy your newsletter, I look forward to it every month for advice on how my child is growing and what are the next steps of what she is thinking and feeling and how she is see the world around her."
- "Too much to say in this small space. They serve as excellent guideposts to handling all types of issues from discipline to development."

A Continuing Project

"Parenting the Second and Third Year" follows in the footsteps of the highly successful "Parenting the First Year" newsletter series. The second and third-year series was started in response to parents' requests for a continuation of the first-year series. Like the first year newsletter, this one focuses on key issues of development such as language learning, and child guidance and discipline.

Parents Report Making Their Homes Safer

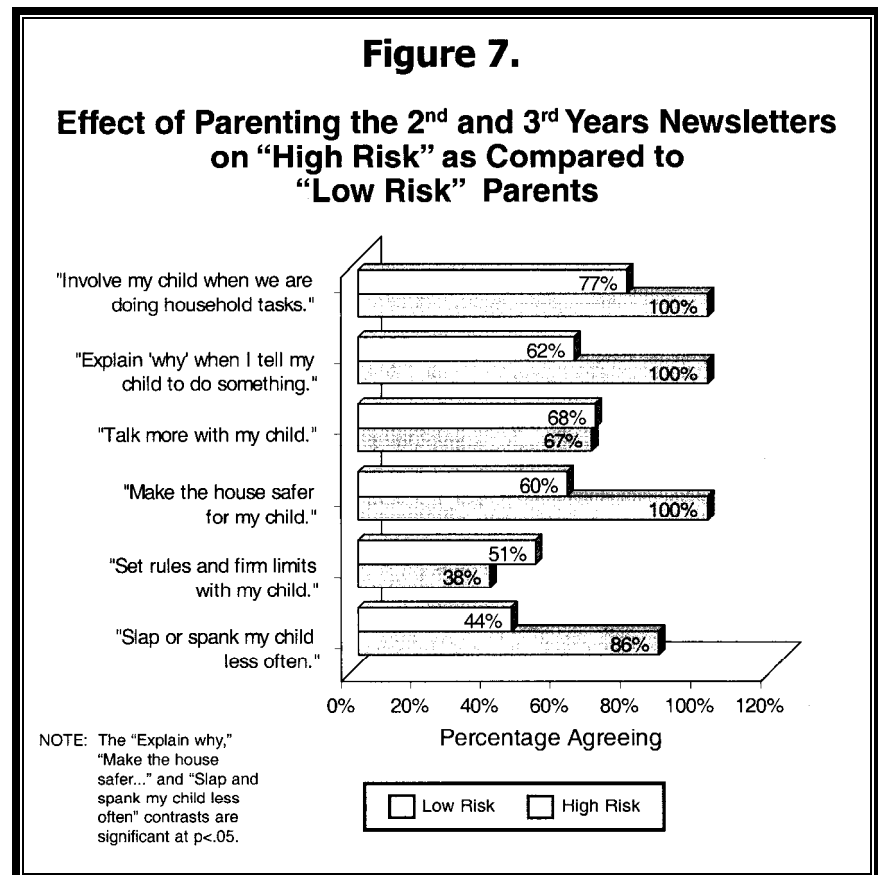
Besides encouraging positive parenting, the newsletters may also be promoting children's safety and potentially reducing childhood injuries. This is especially true for high-risk parents who report making more safety changes in their homes than low-risk parents. Parents may not be aware of many safety issues covered in the newsletters.

In Summary:

1. Parents read the newsletters, share them with others, and even save them.
2. Parents rate the newsletters highly useful for parenting advice, more often than most other sources of advice.
3. Parents report positive changes in their parenting due to the newsletters.

Parents Report Positive Changes in Their Parenting

One of the goals in distributing the newsletters was to influence the positive changes in parenting behavior. Although the parents in the high risk group were a fairly small minority of the sample, the prior research tells us these conditions (low-income, single parent, etc.) make parenting a lot more difficult. The newsletter seems to have a positive impact for most parents, but also has its most consistently positive impact on high-risk parents. In Figure 7, parents responded to the statement, "Reading the newsletters caused me to:"



Parents commented as a result of reading the newsletter:

- "I will usually try new things i.e.: food, games, activities that I may otherwise not have known (my) child was capable of doing."
- "It has helped me with ideas for more activities and games to play, which in turn helped my child learn more skills."
- "It has helped me to discipline without yelling and spanking."
- "Reduced crying and whining when I would say "no."
- "Getting her to eat different foods. Play different games. Involving her in daily 'chores'. It has really made me see that she isn't just being defiant. Rather she is testing her limits. I try to look at things from her point of view."