



# Living With Children

By John Rosemond  
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**Q:** In your column of last week, you referred to the “hump of toddlerhood.” Can you please explain further?

**A:** In using the word “hump,” I’m equating chronological toddlerhood – roughly, eighteen to thirty-six months of age – with the idea that there is a point at which one surmounts the most difficult or stressful point of a challenge. Concerning the discipline of a child, toddlerhood is the critical period during which either positive or negative precedents are set by the child’s parents. If the former, they get over the hump; if negative, they all – parents and child – become stuck on the upslope of the hump. In that event, the child’s behavior continues to worsen, the parents become increasingly frustrated, and their responses to the child’s misbehavior become increasingly counterproductive.

Eventually, the child brings toddler behavior with him to school: short attention span, defiance of one form or another, socialization issues, and emotional control deficits. The likelihood is nearly one hundred percent that he is quickly identified as having “special needs.” That leads to testing, one or more diagnoses, and more often than not, psychiatric medication.

The diagnosing professional tells the parents that their child suffers from a brain-based problem, perhaps involving a so-called “biochemical imbalance” (claims made without a physical examination, mind you), thus absolving them of any responsibility for the child’s problems. If they accept this unverifiable, non-scientific narrative, they become enablers and a solution to the child’s problems becomes, over time, more remote and difficult to bring about.

Getting over the hump requires that parents establish the legitimacy of their

authority, and unequivocally so, during that critical eighteen-month period. In that regard, consequences are helpful, but key is that the parents properly occupy their authority – that they LOOK like authority figures (e.g. give instructions from a standing position as opposed to getting down to the child’s level), SOUND like authority figures (e.g. give instructions without explanation or “okay?”), and FOLLOW THROUGH like authority figures (e.g. calmly and self-confidently).

Getting over the hump also requires accomplishing certain developmental milestones according to schedule. Toilet training, for example, should be introduced before the second birthday and completed within a month to six weeks. Unfortunately, the current psycho-pediatric narrative has it that waiting until age three is okay if that is how long it takes for the child to be “ready.” The fact is, the longer parents wait to toilet train, the more difficult it will be, thus setting the stage for further parent-child struggles. Furthermore, “toileting readiness” is nothing but a myth that greatly assisted in the marketing of disposable diapers.

By age three, a child should be dressing himself, taking care of his own toilet, eating what is put in front of him at mealtimes, obedient, and tantrum-free. That description defines a happy child who is on the path to a happy childhood, which is every child’s birthright. Pie-in-the-sky? Hardly. That description was the norm sixty-plus years ago, which explains why the mental health of kids back then was by some estimates ten times better than it is today.

Thus, my latest slogan for parents of toddlers: Trump the Hump!

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# Youth program provides school supplies, PPE amid pandemic changes to events



Do All Things Children’s Circle, in Lexington, could not let the coronavirus stop them from connecting with their participants. On Saturday, October 3, the organization passed out 30 book bags filled with school supplies and PPE (personal protection equipment) items at the Holmes County Arts Council Building. They called it the DATCC School Supplies/COVID-19 Survival Kit. The school supplies consisted of a notebook with paper and subject dividers, a pencil bag with pens, a pencil sharpener, pencils, glue sticks, erasers, a composition book and index cards. The COVID-19 PPE items consisted of several face masks, bandages, ointment, hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes and most of all, a Bible. “We feel that God’s Word is crucial for such a time as this.” said DATCC Program Director Arnita Knight. “We are grateful to all of our annual supporters, but special thanks go to Beth Alford, Claudrine Hill and Comesha Simmons with this project, for donating PPE items for our children’s protection. Also, special thanks is extended to the R.E.A.L. Christian Foundation of Richland, MS.” Pictured above, Deedra Wright (center left) and Knight (center right) were more than happy to distribute bookbags to the children who participate in DATCC’s summer program and DATCC’s Black History performances. DATCC plans to resume its programs as soon as the coronavirus is over. Pictured from left to right are: Titus Deering, Jakadyn Donald, Jarque Langston, Wright, Knight, Marque Langston, Jamiyah Williams and Michell Rand. (Photo Submitted)



Maggie Stingley, pictured seated, brought her two children, Jessica Stingley (center) and Quran Stingley to fellowship with the other children, as they picked up their bookbags. (Photo Submitted)



Le’Baudrio Bridgeford, DATCC participant was happy to receive his bookbag. Bridgeford participated in the Black History program earlier in the year. (Photo Submitted)

## Holiday decisions

I am feeling blessed as I do every day but as I pause to look outside at my tired but still flourishing and blooming flowers of summer, then at the trees as their leaves turn to gold, red, and orange, and realize what a watercolor show God is beginning this time of year. I told my



Peggy’s Take

husband last week that I had decided to just let my exhausted and worn-out flowers die a natural passing away of the season. Then, after a week of no water, they look better than they did when I was watering every day. Now, go figure that.

As we traveled the roads from Jackson to Kosciusko last week, the Deep South’s snow, cotton, was blooming as the fields were completely white from all the beautiful fully opened cotton bolls. Fields of peanuts were being harvested as the green tops were laid on the top of the soil chock full of green peanuts. Summer gardens still held the tall green okra plants with the pointed pods reaching for the sky, but all other bounty was gone and had been plowed under, some replaced by little green

sprouts of mustard greens. One season overtaking the last. Before long the weather will get colder, the rain will become sleet, and the fields and gardens will lie dormant for months. Halloween is only nine days away, Thanksgiving a little over six weeks, and my favorite, Christmas a little less than three months. How will we celebrate these three holidays this year? Will we face time, virtual distance, or will you just forget the safeguards and chance the visits and trips this year?

We have never been challenged with this dilemma, so we are all scratching our heads, searching our hearts, and consuming all the information as to how to go about being with our families on these holidays. There is no right or wrong way, only uncertain and alarming circumstances. As for my family, we are still pondering and questioning the possibilities. We may not give out candy this year (COVID-19) but I will make treats for my grandchildren. These

are fun and delicious.....  
**CARAMEL APPLES**  
Cut as many Granny Smith apples as you would like to use, in half, remove stems, and hollow out each half coring out the apple. Using a muffin tin holds the apples balanced. Fill with warmed caramel. I use bought caramel candies and microwave in 15 second intervals until melted. Fill the apples with the caramel, cool and harden. Slice apples and enjoy.  
\*Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.