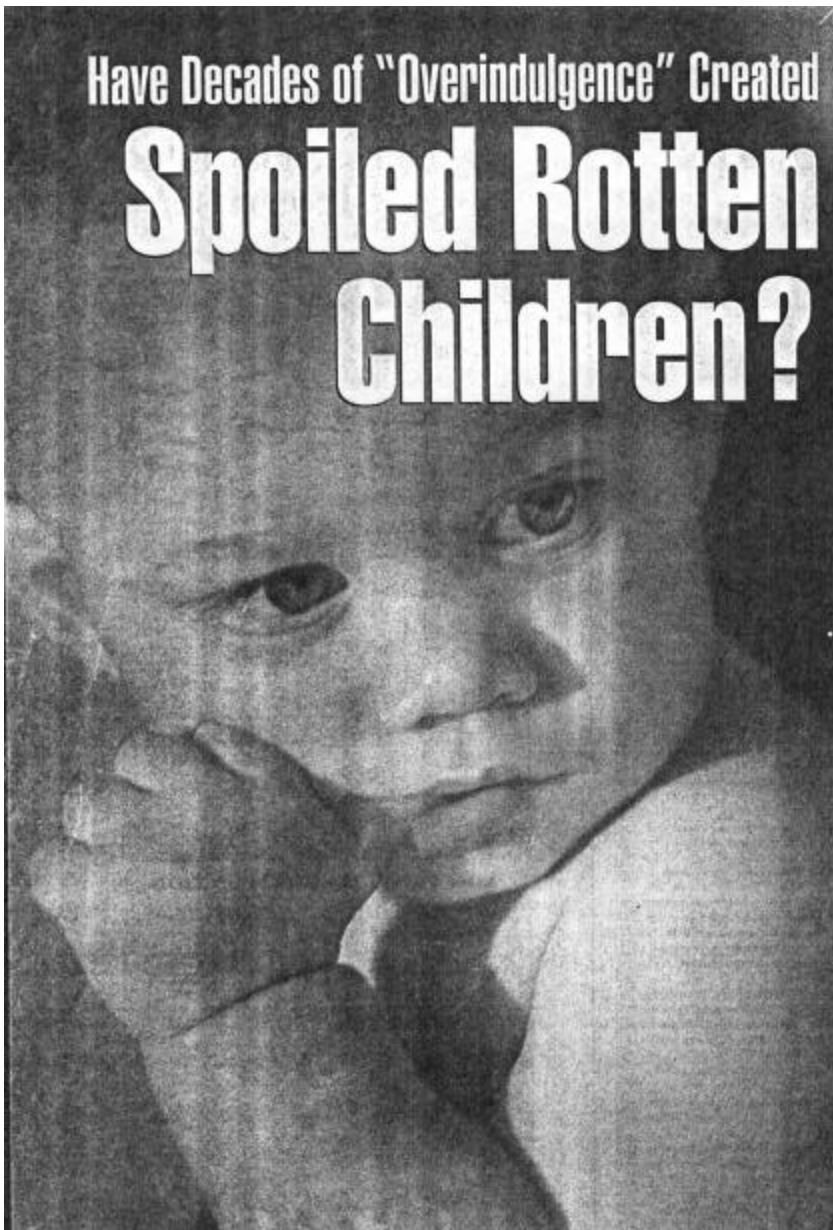


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BayArea Parent

March 1999

South Bay Edition



The hot-selling book *On Becoming Babywise*, by Pastor Gary Ezzo has developed an almost cult-like following because of his parenting methods that return us to the “good old days” when children were disciplined, unspoiled and respectful. Ezzo advocates such ideas as making the children a part of the family, not the center of the family. He encourages parents to go on date nights and build a strong relationship. He offers foolproof solutions to all our parenting dilemmas, from feeding problems to toddlers who shout “No!” His “sleep training” for newborns can be music to the weary ears of novice parents whose baby has been screaming half the night. He also debunks many parenting practices developed over the last two decades. Putting babies to sleep on their backs is not conclusively linked to SIDS, he says. Infants should not be fed on demand. And there’s nothing wrong with spanking a toddler until it stings.

Ezzo has a large following who praise and put into practice his child rearing methods which reportedly are used in 93 countries, 17 languages and more than a million homes. He has a website full of testimonials that swear his techniques work.

So what’s wrong with this picture?

Plenty, according to the American Pediatric Association and many child development experts, doctors, psychiatrists and religious leaders. Ezzo’s “infant management system” can be dangerous to a baby’s physical and emotional health, they say. Critics attack his advice as psychologically harmful at best and child abuse at worst. His harshest detractors even accuse Ezzo and his organization, Growing Families International (GFI), of cultlike activities.

“When *Babywise* first came out I thought it was so ridiculous it would just die out,” says Dr. William Sears, well-known pediatrician and author of 22 child-rearing books. “I don’t think you would find one person in this country who has given their life to studying babies who will have one good thing to say about it.”

Controversial Book Promises Answers

By Anne Belden

The Infant Management System

Perhaps the most controversial of Ezzo's writings is the 'infant management system' explained in *Babywise* and its more extreme predecessor *Preparation for Parenting*. Fundamental to Ezzo's system is the belief that developmental childrearing philosophies of the past three decades have resulted in a generation of spoiled, over-indulged, self-centered children. Take the last 30 years or so of research and throw it all out the window, he seems to be saying.

Ezzo's answer is a highly structured baby-care system that establishes order and routine in an infant's life from day one. It also provides a morality-guiding disciplinary system, for toddlers and children.

The system encompasses all areas of an infant's life. For newborns, Ezzo advocates a three- to three-and-a-half-hour schedule of feeding, "waketime" and sleep, in that order. Mothers are instructed to nurse the infant for a set amount of time on each breast during "parent-directed feedings", not letting the baby drift off to sleep. And there's no snacking between scheduled meals.

During waketime, parents should introduce structured playpen time soon after a baby is born, Ezzo advises. At least one waketime a day should be spent in the play-pen, so the baby can begin learning mental development skills of concentrating, focusing and -sitting alone. Playpen time increases as the baby gets older.

Sleep training begins right away, too. Mom decides when baby goes to bed and when he wakes up. It's OK if the newborn baby cries when he's put down for a nap, Ezzo says, though he does suggest checking on crying babies after 15 minutes. There's to be no nursing or rocking the baby to sleep or sleeping with him. At 8 weeks of age, women should be able to cut out nighttime feedings altogether, Ezzo promises.

Letting Baby Cry

Ezzo tells moms to put their emotions aside as their babies, even newborns, learn to put themselves to sleep and, yes, cry in the process. He writes that jumping to satisfy a baby's every cry will result in a child with a "predisposition for requiring immediate gratification,"

A *Babywise* parent speaks

Kellie McGraw of Sacramento fed her baby on demand, getting up in the night to do so, until she read *Babywise*, when her son was 6 months old. She immediately did sleep training and says it didn't take long and worked "My method of demand feeding made me go crazy. Anytime he cried I thought he was hungry. My son didn't sleep through the night until 6 months," says McGraw, whose child is now 4. "If you can teach him a pattern of eating, you can teach him a pattern of sleeping. Eighty percent of the time, try to have some pattern to life. Deviate when you need to, but always work toward getting back to a pattern. That's all there is to it."

which will become a destructive influence on later development.

Sears disagrees. "I think [this advice] is potentially dangerous to both the mothers and the babies," he says. "It desensitizes a mother to the cues of her infant and it interferes with trust for the babies. The end result is a distance develops between the mother and baby."

Sears views a baby's cry as a communication tool. But the Ezzos, he says, "view a baby's cry as a manipulation tool. When, you do that, you *set your* baby up as an adversary and I think that is a very unwise way to start off your parenting career."

His main concern is the messages the baby receives. "Picture yourself as a 2-week-old baby, you are in a crib, alone in a dark quiet room. You cry and no one listens because mom and dad read a book that said this is how to train your baby to sleep through the night. What if that baby is cold, sick, anxious or just misses mom and dad? What are you teaching that baby? That the world is a cold place to live in that doesn't respond. I think these kids will grow up without trust. I call them unconnected kids."

Ezzo boasts that with parent-directed feeding, babies cry much less in the long run than demand-fed babies, because they are secure and confident in their routine. Burton White, director of the Center for Parent Education and -well-known author of popular parenting books like *Raising a Happy, Unspoiled Child* and *The New First Three Years of Life*, offers an alternative explanation for the decreased crying: "If a new baby is

allowed to cry repeatedly to no avail or to cry for long periods of time when he needs feeding, diaper changing, burping, and so on, the lesson he will learn is that crying does not pay. In orphan ages, crying may not be responded to promptly and sometimes not at all. Infants raised in such an environment cry very little once they reach 6 or 7 months of age, and the crying they do is caused by significant physical discomfort only. These babies do not cry to get someone's attention," he writes.

thrive in babies raised with parent-directed feeding. He points out that some women need to breastfeed far more frequently than others to maintain an adequate milk supply. And some babies, depending on their temperament, environment and physiological makeup, require shorter feeding intervals than others. "Mr. Ezzo doesn't take into account any individual differences. He lumps all babies into one box," Aney charges.

Aney has documented 35 medically unfounded assertions in *Babywise*, including these:

"Demand-fed babies don't sleep through the night."

"Mothers following parent-directed feeding have little or no problem with the letdown reflex, compared to those who demand-feed."

"Colic is very rare in parent-directed feeding babies but is intensified in demand-fed babies."

"In our opinion, much more developmental damage is done to a child by holding him or her constantly than by putting the baby down. In terms of biomechanics alone, carrying a baby in a sling can increase neck and back problems, or even create them."

Ezzo discounts as "inconclusive" SIDS prevention

research recommending that babies sleep on their backs. "There are many...medically false and made-up statements," Aney says, pointing out that the book makes numerous medical statements without citing backup research.

But Robert Garcia, Growing Families International executive vice president and Ezzo's son-in-law, says the bottom line is that the program works. "Why is *Babywise* selling? Because people are using it and their babies are sleeping through the night. If it didn't work, if it wasn't doing something right, nobody would be buying it," he says.

Moral Training and "Chastisement"

As their baby gets older, *Babywise* fans can turn to *Babywise II: Parenting Your Pretoddler Five to Fifteen Months* and *Growing Kids God's Way*. The basic premise of these books is that babies are born "with a propensity to defy parental leadership" and that parents need to "seize the heart of the child." Freedoms, such as feeding oneself, choosing what to wear or playing in a

A *Babywise* user writing on the Growing Families International online forum

"We're now on Day 5 of Timothy's (6 mo.) retraining for naps. Yesterday was the most difficult day ever. I thought that the screaming and crying for 45 minutes was difficult, but I could endure because I felt sure that this was the right thing to do. However, yesterday when I saw a little blood, it was hard not to panic and question my methods...I am actually not concerned at all about the blood—it was just a little, Timothy's fine, and my doctor said it was nothing. However, I am extremely disturbed by what has happened to his voice. At one point yesterday I thought he was asleep, and when I checked by his door, he was really crying, but he couldn't make any noise. This broke my heart and I started crying also...."



Response by a forum "Contact Mom"

"I wish I could pop through my computer and give you a hug...My Tyler was just as you describe Timothy...if only you could know him now, that alone would give you encouragement...YES, IT IS WORTH IT. I'm convinced that some babies are just plain harder to "sleep train"...YOU decide when naps begin and when they end. Attend to cries, but do not interfere if all needs are met...So, I just encourage you to continue in your prayers for little Timothy and look long term..."

Challenge From the Medical Community

Ezzo's fans do not include the 100 health-care providers, pediatricians and child-development experts who sent a letter of concern to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) challenging *Babywise's* baby-care advice. An AAP committee is investigating the matter. (In December 1997, the committee issued a policy statement in support of demand feeding: "Newborns should be nursed whenever they show signs of hunger, such as increased alertness or activity, mouthing or rooting, crying is a late indicator of hunger.")

While Ezzo advises parents to be flexible and not "legalistic" about sticking to the schedule, the message is easily confused. In a Q&A section at the back of *Babywise*, he tells the mother of a 2-week-old baby to make her baby wait until the next feeding if she continues to fall asleep at the breast.

Dr. Matthew Aney, a Lancaster, Calif., Pediatrician who wrote an article about *Babywise* in the *American Association of Pediatrics News*, has reviewed numerous accounts of dehydration, poor weight gain and failure to

certain area of the house are earned only after a child shows the appropriate self-control. Achieving immediate obedience, good manners and order are emphasized. Ezzo warns against allowing children unlimited freedom to explore their surroundings.

From an interview with Kellie McGraw of Sacramento who took Ezzo's 18-week course *Growing Kids God's Way* at a local church and immediately began the discipline techniques with their son, then 2+.

We started being consistent. When we told him there was a consequence to his action, it had to be doable. When he would do something, we would follow through with the consequence with no anger. No warning no 1, 2, 3. Here are the consequences of your action. He made the choice.

Disciplinary methods to squelch rebellion early on include verbal reprimands, isolation, loss of privileges or toys and hand swatting for 5- to 18-month-olds. "Chastisement" begins at 18 months and involves giving up to five swats with an instrument that is not so stiff as to cause bruises or muscular damage but flexible enough to invoke a good sting, according to *Growing Kids God's Way*. Growing Families International's Garcia says he uses a foot-long piece of leather in his home. Biblical chastisement is done for the child not to the child as "an act of love," Ezzo writes.

For babies and toddlers, Ezzo recommends hand squeezing or hand swatting for such acts as pounding on the high chair table, playing with food, throwing food, touching food, crossing boundary lines into different rooms of the house, touching objects that are off limits and any other defiant behaviors.

This is contrary to research findings by child development experts such as Piaget, who say that children this age learn through sensory-motor experiences—touching, tasting, smelling, moving.

"For developmentally normal behaviors, the Ezzos recommend chastisement," Aney says. "Sure it would be nice if your toddler ate his meal without spilling anything on the floor. But it is inappropriate [to expect that] because these are normal behaviors at this particular age."

In addition to punishing for developmentally appropriate behavior, Ezzo instructs parent, to punish children for failing to perform behaviors that are developmentally out of their reach, say critics. For example, Ezzo's suggestion that parents teach their babies sign language skills beginning at 8 months is something many child development experts agree with (signing can cut down on frustration), but Ezzo takes it a

step further. He advises parents to punish children if they fail to sign. "When you sense that your child understands but refuses to say it back, use natural consequences to reinforce the correct response. If, for example, she desires to get down, keep her in her chair. If you find yourself getting into a power struggle, isolate the child, rather than giving her the opportunity to challenge you directly," he writes.

Toilet training is another situation where critics accuse Ezzo of "pushing children's developmental limits. Most child development experts advise parents not to begin potty training until age 2+, but Ezzo tells them to begin between 18 and 24 months and expect their children to be accident-free by 2+. "If soiling continues to be a problem with a child who is over two-and-a-half years of age, hold the child accountable for his or her accidents. By that we mean the child should clean up himself or herself, plus the soiled clothes," he writes in *Babywise Book II*.

By age 5, your child should need very little chastisement, says Ezzo. Age 5, however, is also the time when most children enter kindergarten and come into contact with children from differing backgrounds. Growing Families International teachings encourage parents to only allow their children to associate with those who "like minded and part of the same moral community."

A parent on the GFI online forum

"In our opinion, regular playtime with children away from home promotes an 'out there is exciting' mentality, and in our home we try to cultivate 'here is exciting' mentality. Playtime, especially away, comes after responsibilities are met at home, and is for those who demonstrate self-control and obedience...Our son Bryant, at 7½ may come home a bit too talky and wanting something he saw 'over there.' That would be a clue to us to work on some areas at home."

Intent vs. Application

In his *Babywise* books, Ezzo is careful to tell parents not to stick too rigidly to schedules and to evaluate the context of the situation before acting. In practice, however, parents may take his advice too literally.

In Growing Families International's own online forum, mothers post questions and concerns in a bulletin board. Some messages tell of babies crying with hunger when mom is afraid to feed them because it "isn't time yet." Others talk of babies screaming for more than an hour during scheduled naptime or playpen time as their

"The premise is they are born with all this sin in their life and they have to spank the sin out of them."

Matthew Aney, M.D., a critic of *Babywise*

mothers soberly ignore their cries. Still others speak of spankings so severe that a child's bottom is covered with welts.

Garcia defends Growing Families International's recommendations: "These are people who concentrate on the vehicle and they don't grasp the entire principle. That's why we work so hard with our national conferences and keep our material in a church-based setting even though it hurts our sales. So we can make people get that balance."

A bottom covered with welts shows that the mom is doing something wrong, he says "we say proper correction would be a sting

that not leave a mark; if you don't leave a mark there is no way you can abuse a child. Does that mean something might abuse anyway? Sure, that's possible, but that would never be our intent, nor do I think there is anything inherent in our material that would promote child abuse. These are principles that go back thousands of years."

The Child Abuse Prevention Council of Orange County disagrees. Members reviewed all of Ezzo and Growing Families International's parenting materials and concluded that elements of the program are disturbing and could lead to child abuse in high-risk parents. "The issues of control and authority seem to override the elements of compassion, child advocacy and real developmental needs," the report states.

Mounting Criticism

As Growing Families International's book and tape sales continue to grow, so do the media reports against Ezzo and the organization. In the three years since *Babywise* was published, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Denver Post*, *Child Magazine*, *Mother Magazine* and dozens of other newspapers and magazines have printed negative articles about Ezzo and Growing Families International.

Dealing perhaps the most crushing blow to Growing Families International however, is the Christian community. Damaging articles have appeared in *Christianity Today*, *Catholic Parent* and the *Christian Research Journal*. Several Christian churches and ministries, including the huge Focus on the Family, have

publicly rejected the parenting programs. Even Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, Calif., the parish where Ezzo was associate pastor, cut ties with him and denounced Growing Families International's programs.

A *Babywise* user writing on the Growing Families International online forum

"I just read the CT (*Christianity Today*) article [which criticized *Babywise* techniques] on their Web site. It is really disturbing. I think what is so hurtful is that my husband and I want to raise children who seek after God, and we are applying the principles we best understand to do so. It is a real affront to have it classified as akin to child abuse.

On the other hand, my older son was diagnosed as "failure to thrive" at 6 months. It really shook me up to see his loose skin when he dropped from 16 lbs. at 3 months to 14 lbs. at 6 months. In retrospect I believe it was not the 'scheduling' that was the problem but stress- and nutrition-related milk supply decrease I almost cry, though, remembering his crying when he was hungry and I didn't know that was what was wrong..."

The Christian Research Journal, a publication of the Christian Research Institute International, describes "a pattern of cultic behavior" by the Ezzos and their followers in an article last spring. While not going so far as to call Growing Families International a cult, the article's authors say GIF's actions parallel cults in five ways:

1. **Scripture twisting.** Ezzo twists scripture to make it sound like his parenting philosophies are, in fact, "God's Way."
2. **Authoritarianism.** Growing Families International discounts criticism from outside the group and suppresses questions from within the group.
3. **Exclusivism.** Those who follow the Ezzo way are believed to raise morally superior children and often disassociate themselves from other Christians.
4. **Isolationism.** Growing Families International members are shielded from contradictory opinions, and the group does not disclose its teachings until well into the parenting program.
5. **Physical and emotional endangerment.** Following Growing Families International teachings, babies are left to cry for hours and some newborns are underfed and underdeveloped.

In denying charges that his organization is a cult, Garcia invites critics to see for themselves by spending a week with him and his children, or to visit churches where people are using the material. Responding to the

charges of child endangerment, Garcia says that reports of failure-to-thrive infants on parent-directed feeding usually involve parents who did not fully follow the materials. "If you look at our basic principles found in our material and look at the health-baby growth charts we have, it would be virtually impossible [to have a failure-to-thrive baby]," he says.

A parent on the GFI forum

"My son turns 6 months in a few days and, to my astonishment, he has recently begun arching his back and fussing when I put him in his car seat. This is too soon! Even when you know it in your head, it's so sad to see that they're really sinners."

However, the increasing number of Santa Clara County babies on parent-directed feeding who are failing to gain adequate weight, has prompted the Santa Clara Valley Breast-feeding Task Force to send a letter to Christian leaders in the county warning them against Growing Families International's parenting materials.

A Babywise user on the online forum

"I've got a very mobile 11-month-old. She likes to twist and turn in the highchair and turn her head and look all around the room while I'm feeding her. She used to do this only when she didn't really care for the food I was feeding her. Now she does it all the time. She is also refusing cereal lately too....We are just really frustrated with the movement in the highchair and the sudden picky eating...."

A response from another parent:

Have you corrected her when she twists and turns (verbal reprimand, swat on hand, isolation)? You're probably already doing that, but if not I would give it a shot and if you are, I would definitely persevere. Now for my own problems, ha, ha...my 9-month-old daughter has been VERY REBELLIOUS in the highchair over the last 3 days. Yesterday at dinner, I must have put her in isolation 7 times! I was SOOOO frustrated. When I put her in the highchair she would scream, turn her head and wave her arm... EVERYTIME!!..."

Invoking the Bible

Some 70,000 parents attend Growing Families International classes at local churches around the world every week. Trained volunteers usually lead these

classes, using videotapes put out by the group and following Growing Families International rules and principles.

"I thought I was getting into a course that would teach playing Christian music when your baby was young and praying for your baby," says mom Sheila Larkin (a pseudonym), who learned of the parenting classes through her church bulletin board. "I had no idea I was taking a course that was going to tell me about breastfeeding. Over a six-week period what is being taught is slowly unfolded to you. I asked the leaders for over a month what was being taught and was given no information."

Larkin bought into the program without reservation. "I was really ignorant. I assumed that since my church was advertising it, the leadership was using it, it was good material. It sounded very credible. It made sense when you don't know anything," she says. "Now, I did know there were people who didn't advocate it, but Gary Ezzo makes it very clear that he is right and everybody else is wrong."

A Babywise user on the GFI forum

"My wife and I have come to realize that we probably have not asked our 13-month-old daughter to do very much in terms of positive obedience. In other words, she is fairly good at the 'nos' but we've discovered that now we can't get her to do things like sign "all done" to get down from the chair...she will go back and forth from isolation to the high chair for up to 4 hours and still refuse to sign "all done," even though she has done it before, and knows exactly what we asking of her...after a week of fighting this after every meal, we are exhausted...We feel as if this baby will spend the next month of her life in isolation if we stay on this path..."

When her daughter, Anna, was born, Larkin tried her best to implement Ezzo's program. "My daughter, to put it simply, wanted to eat when she was hungry. I was either forcing her to eat before she was ready or I was listening to her cry because she wanted to eat and it wasn't yet time to eat. I was always struggling with my daughter. It just wasn't working."

One month into it, a seriously sleep-deprived Larkin visited her obstetrician and told him what she was doing. "He just shook his head and was very surprised. He said, 'You learned this from your church?' He had never heard of such a thing." Her physician's doubts, along with those of a La Leche League representative caused Larkin to begin questioning Ezzo's program. She began to feed her daughter whenever she was hungry, but Larkin continued to let her cry it out at naptimes.

"I listened to her cry and cry. I sat in the other room and cried and cried," she says, her voice quivering with emotion. "there was a war going on inside of me all the time. It didn't feel right. But what was going through my head was 'what if Gary Ezzo is right? What if I go and pick her up and she ends up a spoiled brat?' I want to be a good parent."

That fear factor, she says, led her to continue with the bulk of Ezzo's parenting methods, including hand and thigh swatting, until her daughter was 10 months old. She began to envy her husband because her daughter seemed more attached to him. From the start he had refused to abide by Ezzo's advice and would not allow Anna to cry when he was home. Larkin finally contacted someone at Ezzo's former church who sent her information on crying and the myths associated with it. As she read the material, she decided to stop worrying about her daughter being disobedient for a few days and just hold her, play with her, talk to her and respond to her cries.

"After a couple of days of doing this, Hannah just wrapped her arms around my neck and we just held each other for the longest time," she says. Larkin is now waging a battle to get Ezzo's program out of her church. ♦

Anne Belden is a Bay Area Parent freelance editor and mother of two children. Comments? E-mail writers@bayarearent.com

Q&A on GFI online forum

"...Yesterday, my mother stopped by and my 2+-year old daughter was extremely disobedient, jumping on the couch, interrupting conversations, sticking her hand into my Mother's lemonade glass, absolutely 'in my face'...Also, she is just contrary, saying no to things that she enjoys doing...I take her aside and spank her for her willfulness. She says, "I sowwy" on the way to the spanking and cries and asks for a hug after the spanking but when we come back out, again she will not pick up her toys (or whatever the issue is). My sister...says that the consequences are not bad enough to deter her.' But I am serious when I tell you that she has a constant stream of welts on her bottom from the glue stick (sometimes when I change her diaper and see the evidence of my chastisement, I want to puke)..."

Response from a "Contact Mom"

"...Another thought is to really limit all her choices. I mean, don't let her pick out her clothes, her snack, her cup—anything. Just totally cut back. Sometimes if kids have too many choices, they again become wise in their own eyes and assume that since they can make some choices, they can make all the choices..."

From another Contact Mom

"..take another look at the description in the *GKGW* [*Growing Kids God's Way*] book on the rod. It should be whip like, or stiff and unbending. Both of those kinds of things would tend to leave a welt. If you are getting welts, then you are using the wrong kind of instrument. Try finding something that is at least 1+ to 2 inches wide and has just a little flex to it and isn't more than about 10 inches long or so. I'd also let her stay in her room on her bed with no toys or favorite blanket for a good 10 minutes or so after the chastisement. Longer if she throws a fit! She needs some time to think about changing her heart and how she is going to behave when she comes back down. And remember that this truly is a process! There will be lots of much better days and even weeks, but you probably won't start seeing her truly characterized by a changed heart for several more years!"



Q&A on the GFI online forum

"Our 2+-year old shares a room with her brother who is 1. She is in her toddler bed, while he is in a crib. Early this summer she began getting out of bed at night to get a toy, see her brother, pick up his blanket that he dropped, etc. She knows that the rule is that she is not supposed to get out of her bed unless mommy or daddy come and get her. We started dealing with it with chastisement. We were spanking about 5-7 times in a matter of an hour...I checked on [the forum] and there was a blurb where someone said to be sure the consequence reached the heart. Obviously, the spanking was not. My husband and I decided that a logical consequence of her getting out of bed was that she would lose the privilege of sleeping in a big girl bed and she had to spend the next 3 nights in the playpen with no blanket or pillow...She hated this. She cried and cried. It worked for a few days and then she got out of bed again. So we immediately put her back in the playpen. She spent another 3 days in the playpen (this includes naptime as well). It worked for 1 night. Back to the playpen for 5 days. After 5 days in her big bed, she got out again. This is where I am today. I have tried positive incentives (if she stays in bed all night or all naptime, she will get a piece of candy, etc.) and nothing is working. I just don't get it..."

Response by a forum "Contact Mom"

"Camp by the door where you can see her but she can't see you and catch her as soon as the leg starts out of bed—before she's to the door or brother's crib or toys etc...the idea being to not let her enjoy the 'fruit of her sin' so to speak..."

Point by Point

Parenting Issue *Babywise I and II*

Child Development Experts

Ages birth – 5 months

Feeding schedules	Put baby on feeding / waketime / sleeptime schedule of 3 to 3+ hours.	Seven to eight feedings in a 24-hour period. Let babies design schedules. Feed on demand when newborn shows signs of hunger, such as increased alertness, mouthing or rooting. Crying is a late indicator of hunger. Nurse eight to 12 times every 24 hours.
Breastfeeding	Parent-directed feedings will help regulate mother's breast milk supply and improve letdown reflexes. Feeding more frequently than 2+ hour intervals will wear down mom and decrease milk production.	Nursing mothers differ in their capabilities to store breast milk. Supply usually is lowest in the afternoon, so mothers may have to increase nursing frequency. Babies vary in their ability to suck and frequency with which they need to eat.
Naptimes	Mom determines when baby should go to sleep and when to wake up. It is OK to let baby cry so as to train him to put himself to sleep.	Let your baby decide when she wants to sleep, however, do guide her to distinguish difference between day and night. Comfort her when she wakes and cries.
Nighttime sleep	Baby should sleep through the night at eight weeks. Parent-directed feeding babies should be sleeping through the night by this time. Never rock a baby to sleep or sleep with a baby to get him to sleep.	Continue to nurse or feed baby at night if he desires. It is OK to rock or nurse newborns to sleep and respond to cries if he should awaken.
Holding	Don't hold babies all the time or assume she wants to be held whenever she cries. Hold for an appropriate amount of time and have others hold her as well. Don't "wear" babies or use slings as they cause neck injuries.	Babies need lots of holding, rocking, swaying and affection.
Crying	It is a myth that babies need to be picked up every time they cry. When your baby cries, step back and evaluate the type of cry and try to figure out why she is crying instead of immediately picking her up.	Babies cry to communicate needs. Do everything you can to take care of those needs and comfort your crying baby. Respond promptly to her cries.
spoiling	If you pick up your baby, or nurse her every time she cries, she will expect immediate gratification and will be a demanding child.	It is impossible to spoil a baby of this age.

Ages 5 – 15 months

Playtime	Child should have structured playtime alone (in playpen and room when older), playtime with family members and free playtime. Free playtime is when child plays with toys at play center, not all over the house.	Baby-proof your home and provide maximum exploration opportunities. Offer your child lots of stimulating play experiences.
Playpens	Playpen time helps kids develop mental focusing skills, attention span, self play adeptness and creativity within their boundaries. Playpen time should be a planned, routine part of day, not all day. Put age-appropriate toys in playpen and occasionally rotate them. If child doesn't like playpen, stay with it and he will come to love it in time. Start with 10-20 minutes twice a day in baby's first few months and increase to 15-30 minutes twice a day for crawling babies and one hour for toddlers.	Don't keep in playpen for long periods of time or force playpen time. Once crawling, give baby the freedom to explore a safe environment outside playpen.
Blankets/ attachment objects	Limit a blanket's use in the crib or bed so that child doesn't become overly attached to one blanket. Don't let him drag it everywhere he goes. True security is tied to relationships, not objects.	Stuffed animals, blankets or pillows can provide your child with a sense of security.
Thumb-sucking	Between 6 to 18 months, limit thumb sucking to naps and bedtime only. Break the daytime habit by removing thumb and saying "not now."	Thumb-and-finger sucking is normal for young children. Most children suck their thumbs or fingers at some time in their early life. Many stop by age 6 or 7 months. It is not harmful until 6-8 years of age. Ignore habits and most will disappear on their own. Don't punish to get rid of bad habits.
Discipline	Verbal reprimands, revoking of privileges, swatting the hands of infants and toddlers or isolation to crib or playpen. Older children should be "chastised" with an instrument that is not too hard but flexible enough to cause a sting.	Do not use any corporal punishment. Use verbal reprimands and time-outs.
Highchair manners	Train children from infancy not to play with their food, throw food, bang on trays or rub food in hair. Babies and toddlers should hold their hands down while mom feeds them. If they disobey, swat hands or isolate to crib.	Playing with food is developmental and natural part of curiosity. Children learn through sensory-motor experiences.