

june @ symbio

upcoming presentations

All presentations are held in our San Francisco office. Fees are \$40/person or \$60/couple. For more information visit our website: www.symbiosf.com.

Separations and Loss

Wednesday 11 June @ 7pm

Whether it's a preschool drop off, goodbye to a visiting grandparent, a move to a new house, or even just saying goodnight, separation and loss are important and sometimes difficult themes for young children. We will talk about how best to plan for and respond to these transitions based on your child's specific temperament.

Potty Training

Wednesday 25 June @ 7pm

This is a topic for which we've had many requests. We will look at common techniques, present research findings and address some of the myths parents often encounter. This presentation will clarify why what works for one child often does not work for the next and help you determine what techniques and expectations are best suited to your child.

Getting Your Baby To Sleep

Wednesday 09 July @ 7pm

This presentation will cover basic sleep theory and techniques and include a step-by-step "how to" for a simple sleep training program. We will also address the most frequent pitfalls and stumbling blocks encountered by would-be sleepers. The evening will be geared toward providing information for those wanting to get a sleep program in place, within the parameters of each family's preferred approach (e.g.: co-sleeping, cry-it-out, no-cry). We will also troubleshoot with parents who have hit snags and road blocks in an established program.

Parental Anger and Conflict In The Home

Wednesday 23 July @ 7pm

This is topic has come up so often in our individual consultations. Parents regularly struggle with feelings about their kids and experience of parenting that they would rather not have. The stress of parenting and managing the demands of life and relationship can lead to conflict and expressions of anger or frustration that parents regret and do not know how to address. This seminar will focus on taking an honest look at the harder moments of parenting, exploring the best ways of responding to them and addressing the hidden opportunities they provide for healthy child-rearing.

In-home presentations on the topic of your choice can be arranged for groups of eight or more.

For details and rates, please contact us at: symbio@symbiosf.com.



faq's

Each month we will share some of the most common (or most interesting) questions we've been asked related to upcoming topics. If you have a question you'd like us to answer here, please send it to us at symbio@symbiosf.com.

Dropping our daughter off at daycare has become a dreaded nightmare. I took over the job from her mom two months ago because Anna generally has an easier time saying goodbye to me. This helped at first but not for long. Our trip to daycare now includes a painful goodbye to Mom at home, and a long process of getting Anna to the point where she is ready for me to leave her. Sometimes, I am not able to wait as long as she wants me to and I have to leave despite her cries and screams of protest. It's brutal and only seems to be getting worse. Help. You would probably like to know that Anna is 21-months-old.

There are reoccurring periods during infancy and early childhood when separation anxiety rises to the top of the developmental docket. The timing of these periods vary from child to child but, for almost all kids, they tend to come in waves between 7 months and 3 years of age. The time between 18 – 22 months is often a difficult period so at 21 months, Anna is right on track. Although it is certain to be cold comfort to you in the midst of an agonizing goodbye, her daily struggles are all opportunities for her to master the emotional experience of separation. The key to helping her do this successfully is to help decrease the general level of anxiety related to separations, without alleviating it altogether. Anna will have to experience some distress over goodbyes in order to figure out for herself how to resolve that distress, and move through the experience. However, like all of us, she will not be able to learn these new skills if she is too anxious. There are two keys to reducing anxiety around separations: The first is predictability - routines and rituals do much to create this. Have the same sequence of events that lead up to separations and be consistent. The second is giving kids a way to organize the distress they feel at separation. Transitional objects can help with this. Many kids make good use of photobooks (of mom, dad, teddybear, the dog, etc.) to maintain a feeling of emotional connection during separations from important people and comfortable places. You can help Anna learn to manage her distress by empathizing with her protest while proceeding forth in a way that conveys your confidence that she will be okay. Talking about difficult separations later in the day is also critical. Doing this will give Anna a way to explore the situation in the comfort of your presence when she has more emotional resources at hand. Games like hide-and-seek that allow her to practice separation and reconnecting will help. Simple role-playing can also be a great way to review separations – one parent can play Anna, the other can play Mom or Dad, let Anna join in as she will – the experience often provides empathy, humor and connection, all great aids in reducing and managing anxiety.

Our son will start preschool in just a couple of months and shows no signs of being ready to potty train. His older sister was potty trained at 27 months when we went cold-turkey on diapers and spent the weekend pantless in our house. It worked like a charm. We tried the same thing with our son last month and the results were less charming. Although he had some success over that weekend, he has not been able to generalize it. We don't want to pressure him, but we cannot understand why things are just not working when we are doing all the same things that worked so well with our daughter.

One of the first things to keep in mind about potty training is that the process will be very different from child to child. Fortunately, there are a number of developmentally sound and generally effective approaches to potty training available for parents to choose from; but no one approach will work for every child. Temperamental factors like how aware a child is of bodily sensations, how active he is, and how he adapts to change will play a very large part in determining when and how potty training will be effective with your child. Some kids will have to stand back and wait until they are sure they can master the process of using the toilet before they will be ready to try. Other kids will be hard to train because they will be more interested in continuing with what they are doing than switching tracks and making a trip to the bathroom (diapers are a time-saving invention to the busy two-year-old). Honing in on what factors will condition potty training for your child will help to give you a sense of what methods to use and when to use them. This is important because we don't want the process of potty training to become a source of shame or anxiety for kids. If that happens, a child is likely to resist the process in order to avoid the uncomfortable feelings associated with it.

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psychological services for families with young children
www.symbiosf.com

noelle cochran psyd lele diamond, mft license # 40325