

## upcoming presentations

All presentations are held in our San Francisco office. For more information visit our website: [www.symbiosf.com](http://www.symbiosf.com)

### Transition to Parenthood

Wednesday 21 May @ 7pm

This is a workshop for couples and single parents. We will share what research has taught us about this major transition and how to cope with it. The focus of the evening will be on individual experience of participants. Due to format of the evening, enrollment is limited.

### Parenting Toddlers

Thursday 29 May @ 7pm

This presentation will describe the inner world and developmental tasks of the average toddler and detail the most effective parenting strategies for this age. Areas of focus include clarifying a timeline for acquisition of basic skills and managing opposition, separation and discipline.

### 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 things 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.

**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](mailto:symbio@symbiosf.com).**



## symbio

psychological services for families  
with young children

noelle cochran psyd  
lele diamond, mft license # 40325  
[www.symbiosf.com](http://www.symbiosf.com)  
[symbio@symbiosf.com](mailto:symbio@symbiosf.com)

# faq's

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

*My son is 10 months old. He's a delight and I love him but I must confess that I still struggle with him much more than I expected to at this point. On good days I am really happy being a mom and everything feels manageable. But on days after he wakes a few times in the night, fusses about eating, and screams every time I take something from him, I find myself missing my old life. Sometimes I wonder if I've made a mistake. The two moms I met in my birthing class have none of these feelings and they seem like naturals. I feel guilty for feeling this way, and alone.*

You are far from alone; our practice is filled with moms and dads who feel like you do. Regardless of what your friends are telling you, research (and a lot of years in this field) tells us that your experience is quite normal. While some lucky folks do slip effortlessly into parenthood, they are much more the exception than the rule (and they are usually those blessed with temperamentally easy children). Few things can upend every major area of your life as quickly and completely as the arrival of a child, and yet there is so much pressure on parents to remain unflappable in the face of it all. The transition to parenthood usually takes about 18 months. This doesn't mean things are all smooth sailing after that. It means that during the first year and a half of parenthood, in addition to figuring out how to redistribute resources in terms of time, energy and money, most people have to come to know themselves in a whole different way. Up until a person becomes a parent, that person's own parents create his or her strongest image of parenthood. For some, this is a lot to live up to; for others, it is a challenge to overcome. As men and women come to know themselves as mothers and fathers, they begin to face the same tasks with growing levels of confidence, and greater knowledge. One of the most important resources for navigating this transition well is sharing your experience with others; feeling alone will only undermine your process of growing into parenthood. So, seek out contact with other parents who share your experience, and are willing to say so. This can happen at the playground or a parenting forum; even reading books on the subject can lessen the sense of isolation. We also find that most parents feel better equipped to deal with the day-to-day when they have an understanding of what usually comes next. This is why knowledge regarding childhood development can be so helpful. Remember, it is not just your child who is moving from one developmental milestone to the next; your whole family will grow and change with every new turn your child takes.

*My two-and-half-year-old has always been fairly easy to handle. So far the "terrible twos" have not been too bad. However, lately she has been acting out more than usual. I am afraid that saying "no" too much or getting very upset with her will make her feel like a bad kid and lead to more acting out, so I try to keep my discipline upbeat and encourage her with positive reinforcement. My husband feels that I am encouraging her to continue to misbehave and spoiling her. Any thoughts?*

Toddlerhood is all about a child coming to understand and experience power and control; and all toddlers will need to feel some resistance from the environment around them in order to know that they are having an impact. The type and quantity of resistance needed varies from toddler to toddler as it is largely based on temperament. It sounds like you have an easy-going child who has not needed to test you much in the process to date. However, limits are one of the most important aspects of power that toddlers will learn about during this part of life. Limits will frustrate your toddler and she will access the power of her own protest to cope with frustration when you limit her. But consistent limits also help toddlers to feel safe; without them the environment becomes unpredictable and this creates anxiety. Counterintuitive as it may seem, a firm "no" will actually help your daughter to feel safe in the long run. What you want to avoid are inconsistent responses based on the strength of her protest. This does not mean that you cannot be upbeat and positive, or that you have to harp or every indiscretion, just don't avoid letting her know clearly when she has committed a serious infraction. When you do have to be stern in your discipline, always go back to the experience later and talk about it. No more fussing needs to be done at this point, just let her know that you remember (because she will) that you had a hard moment together and that you are glad it's over now. This is called repairing the relationship; it helps kids understand how to get out of trouble rather than just into it. This will be your most effective safeguard against your daughter internalizing your discipline as disapproval of her character rather than her actions.