



*When adults
lose control, a
child is learning
that it is okay to
be out of control
when they are
angry.*

Your donation helps provide
needed programs. Contact
Child Abuse Prevention Fund
MS 3085
PO Box 1997
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 266-6300
www.capfund.org

Preventing physical abuse

Parent education can prevent physical abuse

In the vast majority of physical abuse cases, a parent or caregiver strikes a child or engages in other types of abusive behavior in a moment of anger and frustration. The parent does not know what else to do to discipline the child and in the heat of the moment, chooses an inappropriate way to deal with the situation.

There are many parent education programs and classes available to teach parents how to control their anger and impulsive behavior before it becomes abusive. A study released in 1998 in the *Journal of Genetic Psychology* indicated the strongest predictor of continued behavior problems in young children was the parents' use of corporal and verbal punishment.

STAR parenting program

The STAR acronym is a memory tool that prompts parents to regain control of the situation when they begin to feel angry and frustrated. STAR stands for:

1. Stop.
2. Think before responding to a challenging behavior.
3. Ask about the fairness of the expectation.
4. Respond using both nurturing and limit-setting techniques proven to be effective.

It uses a visual aid, a stop sign, to help remind parents of the STAR strategy. This strategy coupled with child development information helps parents effectively and non-abusively parent their children.

In the first part of the program, parents focus on their role and how the child's behaviors influence the parent's thoughts and feelings. For example, a parent might explore how they feel when their child talks back. Talking back might make the parent angry and worry that the child is becoming disrespectful.

In the second part of the program, parents focus on their expectations for their child. Parents learn about basic

One such program that helps parents prevent physical abuse is the STAR parenting program. It was conceived, developed and studied at Marquette University's Parenting Center headed by Bob Fox, PhD. Funding to train parent educators in the implementation of program was provided with donor support through the Child Abuse Prevention Fund. The STAR parenting program is specifically designed for parents with children ages 1 to 5. The program helps parents better understand and manage the normal challenging behaviors of young children. It is a cognitive strategy used to teach parents to be more thoughtful in their parenting style.

child development and what kinds of expectations are appropriate for children of different ages.

Once the parents understand the fairness and reasonableness of their expectations of their child, they can then respond to the child in a more thoughtful, loving, nurturing way. Specific strategies are shared with the parent including planning ahead to head off tantrums, giving good, clear, age-appropriate instructions, positive reinforcement and modeling.

The STAR parenting program is available several times a year at the following locations:

- The Family Center
555 W. Capital Drive, Milwaukee
(414) 449-8685
- COA Sampson Family Center
909 E. North Avenue, Milwaukee
(414) 263-8383, Ext. 126

To learn whether the STAR program is available in your area, call the Child Abuse Prevention Fund at (414) 266-3645.