

Parenting Together

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How to Spot Credible Parenting News or Advice

THE DILEMMA:

Should you trust what you've just read or heard about kids? Maybe it was a doctor on the radio or a podcast talking about temper tantrums or puberty. Maybe an article about childhood obesity. Can you believe it? How trustworthy is it? For a quick sense of the credibility of parenting or child health information, consider the following QUESTIONS.

Where?

Consider the source. Is it credible? Information that comes from universities or national non-profit organizations is often research-based. This means that the information comes from studies that have helped us learn about strategies that are helpful for large numbers of children or families.

Great options include: Zero to Three, The National Association for the Education of Young Children, American Academy of Pediatrics, PBS, and the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative.

Who?

Carefully evaluate the person or organization behind the advice. Where does their knowledge and expertise come from? Hearing from other parents in person or on social media can help us feel like we're not alone in our parenting challenges and successes, but what works in one family may not always work in another. Talking with experts, including pediatricians, parenting educators, early childhood teachers who have knowledge of research and experience with lots of different children and families can give you ideas to help fill your parenting toolbox.



Why?

Ask yourself: Why was this information provided? Is the source trying to educate, inform, persuade, provoke, or entertain? Are they promoting a cause, lifestyle, product, or service? Are they earnestly reporting or filling space? These are all important questions to ask as you are evaluating the information you are reading.

Fact or Opinion?

Pay attention to whether the information is based in research or opinion. Information grounded in research tends to be more reliable than information based on an opinion or on anecdotal evidence. Touching stories can be meaningful, but one person's experience doesn't reflect truths about all kids.



Oregon State
University

Is There Any Scientific Evidence?

The best news and advice will be backed by solid research. Ideally, this research will have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Be cautious if there is no evidence or questionable research, such as: dated research, small, limited, or non-human test subjects.

What do the Experts Say?

Have the experts in the field been asked and/or talked to about the matter at hand? What do they think? The more they agree, the more reliable the advice. Stronger articles may cite a number of independent experts or studies. Tread carefully if there is little or no expert consensus or if most experts don't support it.

What Can You Do?

Be objective. Recognize if the news or advice appeals to your beliefs, opinions, and lifestyle. Consider your own preferences and your family's beliefs and values before accepting or dismissing advice. Make an effort to seek out quality news sources. Also consider whether the advice seems too good to be true. When it does, try looking for a second source to back it up!



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SAFE SITES

Here are some of our favorite sites to visit for parenting advice that we welcome you to explore!

- American Academy of Pediatrics:
www.AAP.org;
www.healthychildren.org
- Greater Good Magazine:
www.greatergood.berkeley.edu
- PBS Parents:
www.PBS.org/parents
- Zero to Three
www.zerotothree.org
- Center for Disease Control:
www.CDC.gov

The Book Nook

The Kissing Hand
By Audrey Penn

One Family
By George Shannon

All Around Us
*Eng. and Span. versions
By Xelena Gonzalez

A Final Word of Advice

When you are looking for advice regarding your children or parenting, it is important to seek out trustworthy news and advice. Remember to look for strategies based on research evidence and expert opinions. Consult a variety of quality sources. If you see conflicting advice or opinions, that may be a red flag. Ask a trusted expert in your life.

Join a Parenting Class!

Did you know that the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) offers free and low-cost parenting classes throughout Oregon and in Siskiyou County, California?

Visit parenting.org to find your OPEC Hub! Parenting classes provide an opportunity for parents to come together to share successes and challenges while learning strategies to enhance your parenting tool box.

Follow us on Facebook & Twitter @OPECParentingEd

References

- Online Parenting Advice—Who can you trust?
<http://www.bevip.org/uncategorized/online-parenting-advice-who-can-you-trust/>
In a world of overwhelming internet advice, here are 8 things parents should know
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2015/10/26/7-things-new-parents-should-know-before-you-searching-the-internet>
How to Spot Sound Parenting News & Advice
<http://www.momdata.org/parentsguide>
Advice for Parenting in the Digital Era
<https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/advice-parenting-digital-era/>

