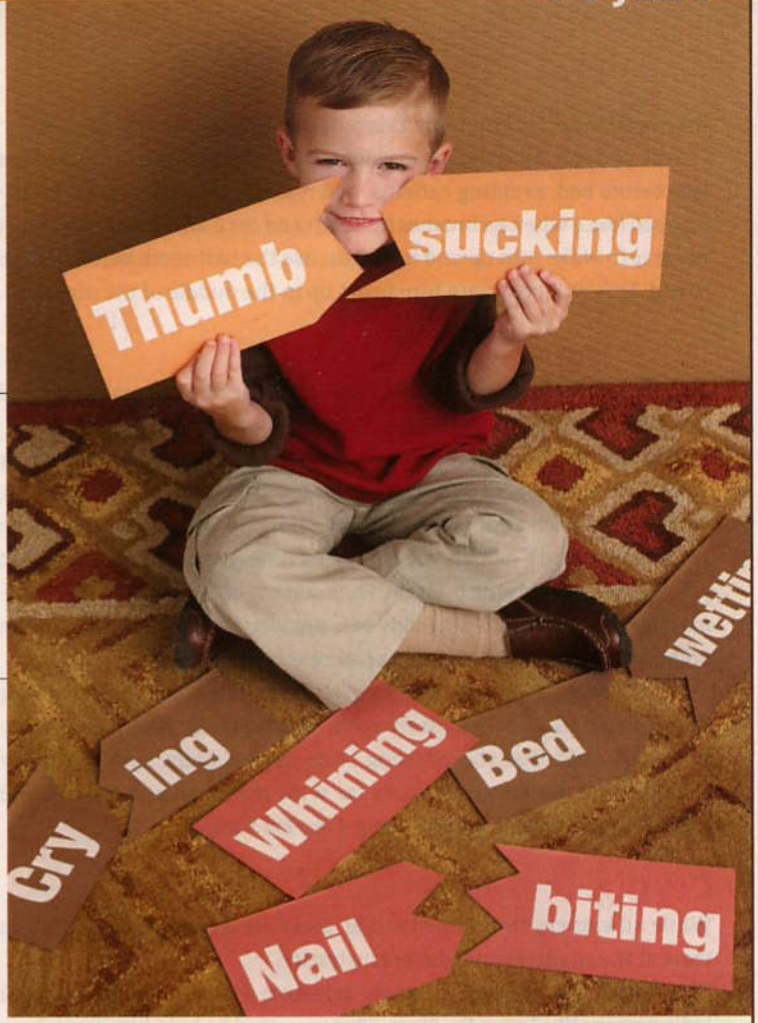


as they grow

as they grow



Don't overdo it.

Pushing your child to play alone for long periods may cause her to resist the next time, says Jan Faull, a child-development specialist and author of *Unplugging Power Struggles*. Your child might play independently for five to ten minutes at first. By her second birthday, she may play for as long as 20 minutes. But be patient and realistic: With a toddler, there will almost certainly be days when she needs your constant attention, such as when she's sick, tired, or extra cranky.

Limit his toys.

Your child is likely to feel overwhelmed if he's confronted with a lot of playthings at once. Leave out just a few of his favorites and hand them to him one at a time. Try toys that he can manipulate safely and easily on his own, such as nesting blocks and shape sorters. You can also try rotating the toys, as Elizabeth Betts does with her son. "Ryan is a lot

en't quite te behav- or even ch as hav- ks to help his confi- is.

her feel tense and want to suck her thumb even more.

Instead, encourage your kid to keep her hands busy (doodling on paper, say) or out of the way (in her pockets) when she's tempted. Reward systems can also help. "At this age, kids really respond to sticker charts or the promise of a bigger prize—like a toy—for going a period of time without doing it," says Dr. Storo. If all else fails, bandaging her thumb may be just enough to help her fight the urge.

Bedwetting

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This can do a number on your kid's self-esteem, probably even more than the other habits. And for that reason he—and you—may be eager to put an end to it right away.

The Quick Fix Experts agree that you shouldn't make a big deal out of bedwetting now, since many preschoolers don't yet have the bladder control necessary to hold it all night or the ability to wake themselves up from a deep sleep when

al. Children are most comfortable playing their own when they're well fed and rested.

craves your attention, and by now he's smart now that babies get more of it than big kids do.