

Shyness

A common occurrence in parenthood is a concern about shyness. At one time or another, it is likely that you have wondered about whether or not your child is "too shy". Below is a list of characteristics often associated with shy children:

- Becomes agitated in noisy environments
- Withdraws from new toys or new environments
- Is initially quiet with new people
- Is a picky eater
- Toilet trained late
- Is reluctant to stray far from parents or caretakers
- Prefers to wear old, comfortable clothing
- Has unusual fears or anxious dreams
- Has sensitive skin or allergies
- Is overly sensitive to criticism
- Resists changes in routine
- Stands on the sidelines of play areas
- Shows interest in other children but is reluctant to join them

If some of these characteristics sound familiar when thinking about your child, you may find that you exhibited some of these same qualities as a child. This is not uncommon! So what can be done to help a shy child? There is no cure for shyness, but below are some suggestions that you may find helpful:

- *Make sure you are involved with your child's acquaintances and their parents:* This will help make your child feel as comfortable and supported as possible. Perhaps you will find that your child's friend shares a common interest that you can encourage them to do together.
- *Develop your child's talents and sense of mastery:* Success builds on success! Encourage your child to try new things, and praise him for his accomplishments.
- *Develop your child's sense of social interest by helping her find new ways to share her talents.*

- *Expose your child to new experiences.*
- *Prepare your child for new challenges, but remind her of what's still in her comfort zone, and what she's mastered along the way.*
- *Give feedback.* If your child has a good experience, praise your child for the effort it took to overcome his feelings of shyness! If the experience did not go well, sort out what happened, and what can be done differently the next time.
- *Add to your own social circle.* Be a model for your child. Seeing you make new friends can be a great motivator and resource for your child.

Adapted from:

The Shyness Breakthrough: A No-Stress Guide to Help Your Shy Child
Warm Up, Open UP, and Join the Fun.

By Bernardo J. Carducci, Ph.D.

If you continue to have concerns about your child's shyness, and ability to make friends and enjoy experiences, you may want to consult with an outside resource. Feel free to call me at 410-887-3455. I will be happy to help in any way I can!

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