

# AP EUUnion



## AP EUUnion Newsletter

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### Welcome

Would you like to get news from APEU?

Sign up for the news by email or news feed on the website

Archived news is at [www.attachmentparenting.eu/news](http://www.attachmentparenting.eu/news)

- The web site is up and running and can be visited at [www.attachmentparenting.eu](http://www.attachmentparenting.eu). There is a great discussion forum in English, German and Dutch at this stage and we hope to be adding French, Danish and Italian in the near future.
- Please email me with any comments or news to include in our next edition. [Kate@attachmentparenting.eu](mailto:Kate@attachmentparenting.eu)
- AP EU is holding monthly On-Line Support Meetings in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday night of every month at 8.30pm GMT.
- At this stage the meetings are held in English but as time goes by we should be hosting meetings in other languages too.
- To connect to the meeting, go to <http://chat.xs4all.nl>, choose a nickname, enter channel: #apeuchat and join in.
- You are all welcome to join the new mail group for support and discussion at <http://www.yahogroups.com/groups/apeu>
- You can subscribe by sending a blank email to [apeu-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:apeu-subscribe@yahogroups.com)

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## **Toddlers and Tantrums by Melissa Dietrick, AP EU Italy**

It is that time again! Gioele, ds7 (2years 5months) since late January, has had his first\*real\* tantrums, of the kind where nothing will help: he kicks and kicks the ground, he cries and won't meet eyes, and anything except me being there quietly to hold or be available causes extreme escalation.

As a few of you may know, I have also had six 2 year olds before Gioele. I think frustration at not being understood plays a large part of these tantrums. The child knows what he wants yet cannot express it...and often, there may be some discomfort that is being disregarded by the little one that in the end is the real cause yet the anxiety comes out triggered by some other issue. This could be needing to use the potty, or a pain in the shoe or some other physical issue like tiredness or sugar or other things, but these are usually pretty obvious if you take the time to think back.

I notice that our son often needs to wee, and this need is ignored in his quest for more and more of what ever he is experiencing, and the anxiety caused by his needing to wee (yet unacknowledged by him) will cause the tantrum if I do not continue to offer him the potty repeatedly...but this sort of obvious underlying physical discomfort is not always the case.

Often there will be some major change that will cause a general unease for the child... For us, a major change was having Lorenzo, my husband, gone for almost 5 weeks in January and February. I know I was surely missing him, I am just positive that the intensity of Gioele's tantrums in those days were due to the fact that our routines, our very lives had changed. I think that he, as well as the rest of us, was really beginning to feel the wear and tear of not having another parent at home. So for sure any situation of change will take a toll on our little ones--if it has been causing me, the parent, distress, why should it not be causing him any? Indeed, it is our own distress that is most likely a piece of the puzzle.

In a recent email exchange, a friend and mother of a 2 year old daughter (who sparked this whole discussion!) shared that she was convinced that tantrums are not "normal" behaviour. She pondered that because continuum cultures apparently do not experience the "terrible twos", this phenomenon must be due to our inability to fully meet a 2 year olds needs.

I am totally convinced of this myself. And I am further convinced that in terms of The Continuum Concept, that the basic continuum lack or need here for all children under 8 or 10 is lack of tribe (is it ever not lack of tribe, I ask??? heave big sigh)

I have noticed that in the summer months, as well as during vacations, and even on Sundays, once we have fallen back into the "whole tribe groove," my 3 youngest are totally different children. I don't know if you all know this, but we are not always together during the school year, as my fourth and third sons both attend school mornings as well as Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and Lidia (17yrs) and Lucia (20.5yrs) are down in Alba with Grandma Nonna during the week, returning home only on Saturdays. Lidia returns to Alba on Monday morning and Lucia on Tuesday around lunchtime. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, can be really prickly here with the 3 youngest - especially if the weather is foul and they don't venture out of doors so willingly.

I've really come to see in observing my own children, that a lot (if not all) of the calm and happy children of the Yequana is due to the fact there are so many older people (I'm talking 7 years and up) in ratio to the little ones. There is never a lack for something interesting happening, or finding a playmate if someone else is not interested, or finding a cuddle or a story or someone to work with or help, or even just watch. And not only that, there is never a gap in how others will respond to a little one. Everyone has the same method or strategy for interpersonal relations from the babies and on upwards. This is just something our culture can not offer our children. There is absolutely NO continuity. So this must cause no small inner stress for a little one. Especially as they are so very tuned into the subtle energies of the people around them.

Sometimes a child will want something, something seemingly impossible. Our culture expects us to limit this, say NO! to any such nonsense...

If a child wants some pink milk, and none is to be had, whatever can one do? If one "gives in" to the child's tantrum, wont we be teaching her that tantrums get ones way? I don't believe there is a problem if one is trying to work out a "yes" solution to a seemingly impossible situation. The key is to be carrying the "yes" within you -cultivating acceptance within ...because as soon as my little one is asking for what seems impossible, I need to watch that I am not going down the road of "this is ridiculous, absolutely impossible," or even more dangerous, "uh oh, this is going to be a tantrum, "--- It's really incredible to be looking for a positive way to frame things *\*before\** the frustration starts...to say "yes, okay, let's see" and repeat the child's request..."so you want some pink milk, do you?" And really get the child to talk about what she likes about the milk...that it is pink...what does pink remind you of? That it may be sweet, like strawberry ice cream...etc

To really engage the child in what it is that *makes her want it*. And this dialogue (or monologue!) gives you time to start thinking creatively about what you can do to give her this pleasure of pink milk. And as she explores what is wonderful about pink milk, this may be enough to satisfy her, and accept that there is no pink milk in the house. IF you can intuit that this will not be enough, then great, add a little beet juice or some other pink substance to get it that way if it is possible. and if it is not, then, yes...now it is time to support your child's disappointment with no judgements either towards you or dd. Supporting it and allowing it to come to a natural end.

And it seems to me so obvious now, after so many two year olds, that if I can support my child in satisfying her wants, or at least exploring creatively these wants and desires that the child *\*feels\** deep within his bones, (a willingness of mine)... when I do say firmly "there is no pink milk in the house" and quickly move on, it will be okay. Not just because I am firm but rather, because my little one *\*knows\** I will support his ideas: he trusts that it is not always necessary. The whole idea is the less no-s at this early age, the more a child is able to accept a no when it is necessary.

There may be a lull in our little one's tantrums, only to find ourselves face to face with another "full blaster"...and often it will be for something that just Cannot Be Had. For example my children love to go out with their papa. Yet often they just cannot go! He leaves home for work every ten days or so for 4 day stretches and this is hard to accept. So there is nothing left for me to do but offer my support and acceptance of their disappointment...*\*and\** a change of scene. It can be really important to change environment when there is a tantrum happening. Often just a move from indoors to out doors or from one room to another, or from sitting to looking out the window will ease the bump.

I find that many parents will debate whether it is okay for them to try and "fix" things for their little one, to try to stop the tantrum as quickly as possible. Yet my feeling is that we should avoid seeing it as "fixing". I see it as supporting their search and thirst for learning. Yet if it is done with that "shoot I don't want to be doing this" energy, then a negative "child centeredness" will happen.What is needed is the shift to "yes! Lets see what we can do" energy. And if there is nothing we can do to help them, there is still attending to their distress in acceptance.And even when we instinctively help our children in this way, another common fear comes up for parents...they wonder `am I teaching my child that if she screams she will get what she wants? And that she can have *\*everything\** she wants?'

I don't agree. Yet first of all, as a mother, I usually *\*know\** intuitively when something is important to my child. IF we are able to keep those feelers open and clear so that the message sent is registered *\*and\** noticed, then we will be stepping into the situation with "yes, lets see what we can do...what is it that you like about x, is it fun to see it pink? (Explore her desire with her)" and there will not be any screaming, not yet, and maybe not at all. If the situation triggers a tantrum no matter how much support and yes energy given her, then she will be learning in these

far between moments to arrive at acceptance. IF she is supported as much as possible in acceptance and patience to the end.



This takes a lot of energy! It's not easy, but I will say, from my own experiences that it is the only way. As you some of you may know, with my fourth son and fifth child, we moved more towards a mainstream attitude, mainly due to all the medical issues and physical pain we had happening in our home. And it was mostly the sort of subtle mainstream thinking that makes decisions rather arbitrarily, and uses this sort of arguments to support my lack of creativity, really. This sort of thinking I find, will sneak up on me when I least expect it, and when it is least needed. And it can be very convincing... --I began to convince myself I was "teaching" them "for their own good"...yet now I am seeing my children recuperating still from this approach. It was not always used but it was definitely there...It was definitely coercion and not supporting their needs.It is only done to avoid a hassle... to prove a point.... to be the "boss".As the child grows

developmentally, the way of dealing with these issues will change and while these issues will continue to happen for different and complex reasons because they are getting older, the child will slowly move towards a capacity to accept adverse situations with amazing ease.

My sixth boy, who will be five in May, was from about 2.5 years a very volatile boy...he was already capable of flying off into tears for no known reason since birth but up until 2.5 years he was easily calmed as well. Yet after 2.5 and coinciding with our seventh child's birth, there were many situations where he wanted the impossible. It was so exhausting at times...yet the more I stayed in tune with him, keeping within me a sort of "yes!" energy, and looking for creative solutions to make everyone happy, these huge uncontrollable tantrums have become the exception not the rule.And the exceptions even for all the anger and screaming, are (almost) always a \*positive\* experience for both of us. (I feel compelled to write "almost", as I am no super mamma and have my off days as well...)

When one talks about "giving in", the situation becomes one of one winning and the other losing... and that there is indeed something "wrong" that needs "fixing"...yet really, if you say yes, and search for a solution, THIS is great learning...THIS is showing real creativity and a desire to find a win-win solution. One that will make everybody happy.

The problem is that so very often, we get caught up in our litany of complaints and judgements. This takes away the fun from life. Children are so incredibly curious, and they just WANT to explore everything, every idea they meet up with. They are EMBRACING life while we are limiting life to just the acceptable, the known.

How sad.



## **The Start of Infinity by Kate Byrne, AP EU - Ireland**

Infinity starts when we suspect we may be pregnant, planned or unplanned the positive pregnancy test makes our heart leap. A misty moment of positivity or fear attacks our emotions and we are a for away. Having travelled this path seven times I always remember that feeling of absolute shock, it numbs me with the enormity of the result, sometimes heart stopping no matter how much I knew I was pregnant due to symptoms and feelings the confirmation of that test always stunned me. Many a mother has gone out and bought a few tests, of different brands just to make 100% sure. The moment of realisation has occurred. I remember many years ago a friend asking me 'when do you become a responsible adult?'. Now I have an answer, the moment you become a mother. I have often wondered if this is chemical, neurological and emotional all in one. Maybe pregnancy and birth are the catalyst for the final connections in our brain to happen.

The first trimester of pregnancy is an emotional rollercoaster of concerns, fears and jubilation with a light (or not so light) serving of nausea, exhaustion and a lot of wind.

We wait for the magic moment when we can tell everyone. Some tell straight away, others wait for a time when they feel less fearful to break the news.

I remember my last son, the test was done in the school staff bathroom. My face was grey in shock from the result, The school secretary was the first to know, followed by the principal and then all my 'car park' friends. My husband was about the 25<sup>th</sup> to know! It always amazes me that my symptoms worsen as soon as I have done a pregnancy test!

Here is a time of deep thought, a lot of impatience and a huge amount of self control.

Hats off to infinite motherhood. If we had a stomach bug, flu or ME we would take to bed but as newly pregnant mothers we stoically keep on doing all that we normally do with exhaustion and nausea as part of our daily lives. A male friend once asked what morning sickness was like, I described it as having been on the Rosslare to Pembroke slow ferry after a gale. You feel sick and there is no real escape. Smells that you might have enjoyed become overwhelming (I had to avoid the bakery at the supermarket for 4 months).

Exhaustion often hits in the mid afternoon and if we haven't told anyone about the pregnancy it's very hard to keep the tiredness at bay. It is sometimes so overwhelming to feel that tired that you literally fall asleep sitting up. A big giveaway to early impending motherhood is the constant toilet trips, day and night. Our toilet roll usage triples in our home when I am pregnant. Not only due to bladder irritation but also the fear of finding blood – we check and check again.



That's so instinctive to protect what is going on inside our body. In Ireland our childbirth choices are possibly more limited than in other countries, but slowly we move on. We have the Maternity hospitals (in institution in their own right), homebirths through hospital midwives in a few areas and private homebirths with private midwives. These are decisions we have to make pretty early on in the pregnancy as getting the option you want is quite time dependant. The midwives are very busy as are the hospitals. Book early to avoid disappointment!!!! (Sounds like a package holiday deal!).

I am not going to speak about birth choices as there are so many books out there as well as expert opinions, I have only my own experiences to call upon in that sphere of motherhood. As time passes and the nausea fades we move on towards the heartbeat phase. We can feel no movement, see no huge changes so the only reality of motherhood is hearing a heartbeat or trusting another to hear a heartbeat. We are again reassured that there is actually a baby there. I wonder how many of us stroke our stomachs imagining the baby, talk to the baby in our mind and out aloud in these early days. Many I am sure. My 'bump' was not baby but too many maltesers. I found somehow that chocolate helped my nausea (which stayed until week 23). If our nausea stays after the magical 12 weeks do we feel angry, cheated, lied to? No, in our infinity we just keep going. Many women have ultrasound scans at the end of the first 3 month. What a thrill to see that a small person is forming inside. The excitement of reality is there. It's a living being – our baby. For myself, this is when reality has hit – I AM HAVING A BABY!!!! It's so overwhelming a thought that until our baby is big enough for their movements to be felt, it doesn't always seem real. We wait for movement, the book says up to 20 weeks. I hate that book! Most of my babies were felt moving at around 16 weeks, then along came number 7. Nothing, no feeling of movement even at 22 weeks. Oh my gosh, something must be wrong with my baby, Not so, the placenta was at the front so I couldn't feel him due to this barrier. The little flutters sometimes stop you and make you smile – this is my baby moving.

As the baby grows we start thinking about the little person, describing them as dancers and rugby players. Worrying if they don't kick enough, complaining as they kick so much! Playing a game of spot the parts, was that an elbow? A knee? I always loved being in the bath and watching the baby move around, I would then lie and relax and wonder about this little person, their eyes, their face.

One of my pregnancies (number 3 I think) my baby would kick through me to the mattress I was lying on – very maddening when I was trying to sleep. Although at the end, resembling a whale, turning over was always a challenge and my son would turn with me and kick the mattress on the other side. I have often wondered if their personality on the inside resembles their personality on the outside. Will an active kicker be an active baby? Will a kindly kicker be a relaxed baby? Certainly some traits seem to follow on the outside. My fourth child was a very gentle pregnancy and he pushed and rolled but never kicked, he is now and has always been a lovely, kind and gentle soul. My mattress kicker has a great sense of humour and fun.

As our stomach starts to be more noticeable it appears to become public property. Anyone has the right to rub or pat it (like a genie will appear and grant few wishes). I have always found this an invasion but never had the guts to say 'excuse me, hands off the bump!'

Yes Days

**by Ginger Carlson**

"This way, Mommy. Do you hear the rocks crunching under my feet?"

My son Zeal darts past me on the walking trails near our home. We spend the morning snooping in the bushes, snacking on the plump berries that practically fall into our palms, and sprinkling "fish food" (crumbled autumn leaves) into the creek. Today is a "yes day," a day in which I consciously choose to say yes to my child, to honor his spirit, his desires, his choices. Today there is no, "We need to...", "Time to go...", or "One more minute...", and (practically) anything goes.

Regardless of whether you are a stay-at-home parent, work out of the home or some combination of the two, days can often be run by places we "should be." Many of these places we actually need to be. Many are common "parent-have-to's," outings we go on for the benefit of the child: the library, playgroups, music classes and community activities.

*Days can often be run by places we "should be."*

We find ourselves running into power struggles and negative interactions in order to get to the places we feel we should be. Professor Charles Smith of Kansas State University says, "Although saying 'no' tells children what not to do, only by being affirmative do we actually teach them the skills that will be important to them throughout their lives. Learning to make choices - and take responsibility for their consequences - is an important element in developing a courageous spirit and a healthy conscience."

Families can work towards getting past power struggles by building connections and trying to understand each other better. Consider the following when planning your own yes days.

### **Question your agenda**

Questioning your agenda can serve as an extended exercise in being a more mindful parent. Getting past reflexively saying "It's time to go" or "One more minute" can create an environment in which we can say yes more often.

*When we listen to our children, we gain the opportunity to stay connected with them.*

I've often found myself entering into a power struggle with my own child as we are getting dressed, getting buckled in or just plain trying to get out the door in the morning so we can go somewhere that he will enjoy. But if I impose my agenda, that only trains him to look to others for direction, rather than himself.

Consider holding a yes day or even a yes moment on the spot if there is nowhere you really have to be. Then you can pay attention to the quality of each experience as it comes.

### **Honor sovereignty**

Sovereignty for a child means gaining autonomy - a lifelong goal for anyone. Children deserve to live in a world in which their ideas and desires are not seen as "childish," but are taken seriously. Like all people, children are entitled to be loved and to find strength in that love.

### **Listen**

Yes days can give children the space and time they need to develop fully. When we consciously choose to listen to our children, we gain the opportunity to stay connected with them. If our child imagines that a mouse lives in every clock turning the hands, we can consider it an opportunity to gain insight into her exploration of the world, rather than always correcting her observation. This can be difficult if we are in the habit of "seizing the teachable moment."

### **Free yourself from "have-to's"**

Home is a haven, one in which we can be sheltered from the barrage of outside stimuli. If at all practical, give yourself permission to be free from your schedule every now and then. Follow your child's lead, and spend the afternoon curled up in bed reading books. Cancel your meeting and spend some one-on-one time sipping cocoa in your pyjamas. Remember that the world we are creating for our children will directly affect the world they will create as they grow into adulthood. Being pulled away from something a child deems important is a direct instruction that teaches him to run his own agenda on others as he grows up.

### **You can't please everyone all the time**

If you are a parent of siblings, surely you know that the adage "you can't please everyone all of the time" rings true. Consider what my friend and her husband do every year. While juggling the schedules of their two children, they plan what their family calls "yes trips." These trips offer one-on-one time with mom or dad, without a sibling to compete with. They spend the specified date doing only what the child wants to do: going to the beach, stopping for a hike or at a lookout on the way, eating when and where their child wants to.

My friend says, "These 'yes days' have been a reminder that even though we are a unit, we are all individuals. We need to take the time to work on each individual relationship, because the pieces add up to more than the whole."

### **Consider the ripples**

Saying yes and affirming our children as human beings is a gift to everyone involved. So go ahead, say yes to your kids. As we learn to say yes to each other and to the ebb and flow of the world, yes days are in fact training for us to live yes lives. And perhaps our yes lives will inspire our children to create a yes world.

Kind reprinted with permission of Ginger Carlson, MA Ed. speaker, education consultant, and author of *Child of Wonder: Nurturing Creative and Naturally Curious Children*

This article is an excerpt from the book.

<http://www.gingercarlson.com>

<http://thinkingoutsidetherecipe.blogspot.com>

<http://wondershop.blogspot.com>

## **An Unusual Finding by Hilary Diouf, AP EU – Switzerland**

My kids have unusual tastes. Their likes and dislikes change all the time. They never eat large quantities they really are grazers. They are both feather weights, but then their father was at that age too. Here is a recipe I tried but didn't have much faith in as it includes raw broccoli. But hey I'll try anything once. I was amazed they both loved it and had fun eating it.

### Broccoli Heads

first wash **broccoli** and cut off the florets into bite sizes.

Then make dipping sauce - blend together until smooth;  
one **avocado**  
one **date** (soaked for a while to soften it)  
teaspoon of **apple cider vinegar**

serve broccoli florets with sauce on side and seeds ( sesame, poppy, sunflower, pumpkin - any you like)

then tell the kids to make heads by dipping the head (broccoli) into the gouey glue (avocado dip) and roll in the Hair (Seeds). Then the not so pc part, bite the head off!!

My two found this great fun and i have never seen kids devour raw broccoli so quick. It has to be said that the dip is quite sweet so you taste it mainly. Have a go you might be surprised.



Research, Links and Interesting Things...

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Michel Odent speaks out on men in the delivery room

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/femail/article.html?in\\_article\\_id=559913&in\\_page\\_id=1879](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/femail/article.html?in_article_id=559913&in_page_id=1879)

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Interesting article on children and mobile phones.

<http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/news/local/general/mobiles-may-be-death-sentence/1210628.html>

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What Causes Crybabies?

[http://www.salon.com/mwt/broadsheet/2008/04/03/rhesus\\_monkeys/index.html?source=rss&aim=/mwt/broadsheet](http://www.salon.com/mwt/broadsheet/2008/04/03/rhesus_monkeys/index.html?source=rss&aim=/mwt/broadsheet)

interesting research

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16-page booklet, "Plain Talk About Spanking," [www.nospank.net/pt2008.htm](http://www.nospank.net/pt2008.htm) ,  
Here's what some experts have written to us about Plain Talk:

**Alice Miller**, Psychotherapist and internationally renowned author of (among other books) the best-selling *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* --  
"Thank you so much for your clear, true, brave and convincing booklet. It should be offered free to every parent immediately after the birth of EACH of their children."

**Janice Christenson**, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist --" 'Plain Talk' is my #1 tool in helping parents make the decision to stop spanking. I can't tell you how many have come in after reading it and said, 'I'll never spank my child (children) again!' "

**Katherine Bensinger**, M.S., LCPC, Program Director, Parenting Education Program, Community Counseling Centers of Chicago -- "This is the most articulately written argument against spanking I have ever seen. A free resource like this is invaluable as we serve a low income population out of a Community Mental Health Center. If every pediatrician in this country gives this booklet to their patient's parents on the first visit and recommends a short discussion on the second visit, we will have a reduction in child abuse."

**James A. Deutch**, DSW, LCSW, Lecturer, Family and Consumer Sciences, U. Of Hawaii; Past President, Family Education Centers of Hawaii -- "I have made 'Plain Talk About Spanking' required reading for my parenting classes at the University of Hawaii and for parents at our Family Education Training Center. Thank you for helping me teach that discipline and spanking are not the same. As an Adlerian family counselor, your booklet is congruent with my professional and

personal beliefs. Both of my now grown children were successfully parented without ever being spanked."

**Janelle Kaye**, M.A., Instructor of Speech Communication, South Central College, Minnesota --  
"Students report to me that they have changed their views on spanking and discipline as a result of reading this booklet. I hope to be able to continue ordering this wonderful booklet for as long as I teach."

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