Holy Cannoli, Two Peds in a Pod® turns ten!



This little ten-month-old wishes Two Peds in a Pod® a happy ten-YEAR-old birthday!

Let’s take a stroll back ten years to 2009. Ten years ago

Facebook was just five years old. Back then there was no Instagram (2010), no Pinterest (2010), no Snapchat (2011). People were mesmerized by virtual vegetable picking (FarmVille) and taking care of Zhu Zhu pets. Bulky video gaming consoles ruled. The "New" Super Mario Bros. Wii really was "new." Apple's "pile of poo" emoji had just arrived the year before. And ten years ago, Two Peds in a Pod® was born. The idea that doctors would write advice on the internet was so novel that even NPR thought the concept worthy of a story. Today we take a Happy Birthday look back at our first five posts:

Then and now

Our blog's first five posts, from the summer of 2009, include the very same topics parents ask us about now in the summer of 2019.

Back then parents wondered about infant sleep, or lack thereof. Please note that we began our infant sleep podcast with the reminder that newborns are not meant to sleep through the night. Fisher Price should have listened to our podcast, because now in 2019 we are writing about rock' n play recalls.

Two posts tackled **Potty training** and **picky eating**. Spoiler to both posts: you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink!These days, we're still talking about both topics in the office. But now, people also ask about the need for probiotics to regulate bowels and digestive health in their child. Unfortunately, in 2019 probiotics have not panned out to be the hoped-for panacea for all gastrointestinal ailments. But they are helpful in some types of diarrhea.

In 2019 we talked about the tick borne illness **Lyme disease** and we're still talking about ticks now. As for the **mystery object** Dr. Lai found in a drawer, ten years later the models are kinder and sport a raised lip instead of a contraption

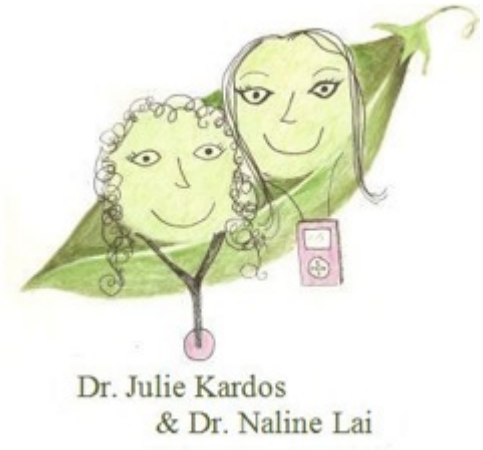
that can break off.

Blog writing a decade later

Internet traffic has grown exponentially. Possibly because of so many sources of misinformation, we see more and anxious parents who receive conflicting information about how to raise their kids. We depend on you to let your friends know about this site. We would rather spend more time on writing than on search engine optimization. Despite the congested writing climate, our mission (read our maiden voyage) remains the same, to bring you practical pediatric advice. What fuels us? Our intense and comprehensive pediatric training from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, our combined **over forty years** of practicing pediatrics, and our passion for helping children and their families, give us the experience and the motivation to continue to help all of you whether online or in our offices.

A last blast from the past

How many of you remember our initial logo penned by the combined efforts of Dr. Kardos's brother and her sister-in-law? That's an iPod dangling from Dr. Lai's neck-remember those?



It's good to be ten.

Julie Kardos, MD and Naline Lai, MD
©2019 Two Peds in a Pod®

Can’t fall asleep? Relaxation techniques to quell anxiety



I love kids who worry. If they didn’t worry, they wouldn’t care, and if they didn’t care, nothing would ever get done. But sometimes, those worries grow bigger than your child and threaten to engulf them. Like any skill, you can teach your child to calm their mind and settle their emotions. Helping them with relaxation techniques as they fall asleep will

translate into the ability for your child to calm themselves during the day.

When your child was a baby you would rock them, sing to them, and maybe give a pacifier. But now that they are older, other calming modalities are available.

Start with yourself. Your child looks to you to see how to act. If you constantly feel off balance yourself, you will find it difficult to convey reassurance and confidence. Therapist Dina Ricciardi reminds parents to incorporate mindfulness into our daily lives. She says, “Relaxation techniques should tap into one or more of our five senses. Tactile – doing something with our hands such as knitting, gardening or baking, or sitting in a warm bath; auditory – such as listening to music or nature sounds; olfactory – aromatherapy oils and diffusers, visual – looking at photos or art, a crackling fire, or visualizing a face or place that makes you happy; taste – sipping a cup of tea.” One app for meditation and mindfulness is found at headspace.com. For kids, Ricciardi suggests Mind Yeti. “Anxiety is easily projected, parents need to understand they are barometers,” says therapist and resilience expert Amy O’Neil.

Events in the day can affect your child’s ability to clear their head at bedtime. Generally, anything that disrupts routine is difficult for kids. Change, even good change, can cause stress. Also, don’t assume that your greatest concern is necessarily your kid’s greatest concern. You may be worried about mass shootings and your child might be worried that you will find out that they failed a math test that day. Understand where your child is developmentally—trying to explain negative news events and holding long discussions about future repercussions may only confuse your child if they are not developmentally ready to comprehend the news. This post gives you ideas of how to present tragic events to your kids.

Check to make sure that your children’s bedtime routine is conducive to sleep and feels secure and cozy at all ages. Instill healthy sleep habits and don’t rev up their minds just prior to sleep. Close to the targeted bedtime, avoid screen time and homework. Create a bedtime routine which includes a tuck in by you at any age. Convey that you are putting them in a safe place and that it’s okay to “let go.” For relaxation, as part of the bedtime routine, you can guide your child through deep, diaphragmatic breathing or a guided imagery exercise. Click here for more details from Dr. Sandy Barbos. Ricciardi is also a fan of the 4×4 breathing relaxation technique used by Navy Seals. In this technique, one inhales for four seconds, holds for 4 seconds, then exhales for 4 seconds. This pattern is repeated.

After guiding your child, allow them time to self-calm by themselves immediately before bed. This time, which some call meditation or prayer, becomes your child’s self-calming quiet time and allows them to drift off to sleep on their own.

Giving your child the ability to relax and fall asleep on their own, no matter what swirls around them, is a gift they will cherish into adulthood.

Naline Lai, MD and Julie Kardos, MD

©2018 Two Peds in a Pod®