



SMART PARENTING *for* CHILD

Dr. Godbole's Chiranjeev Child Development Center

Thumb Sucking

Thumb sucking is a natural phenomenon in first year, as it is related to dental development, mouthing (a developmental milestone) and hand-mouth coordination skill (Important for eating and drinking).

If your child is 'thumb sucking', after first year of life, then it can be called as a habit.

"Thumb suckers are good artist;

Keep them busy in creative activity"

Tips to control Thumb Sucking:

- Most of the times Thumb sucking is an attention seeking behavior.
- Watchfully neglect the habit and give your precious time to the child
- Lonely child uses thumb sucking as a 'Pacifier'.
- Don't pester / force / shout at your child to remove his thumb from mouth. Instead, try to divert your child's attention in fine skill activities.
- Give your child activities like block games; paper folding, dot joining, coloring, object matching and sorting.
- Find out whether your child is feeling insecure.
- Then go to the root cause of the insecurity. Talk with the child; try to remove fears from his mind. Positive talk and reassuring the child are important.



Preventive Actions:-

Consult your doctor if thumb sucking is associated with dental misalignment, drooling and other developmental or behavioral problems.

Nail biting is also a hand-mouth habit with reasons similar to thumb-sucking, but it is related to infections, worms, anemia and anxieties. Do consult your doctor.

Pica (i.e. eating mud, clay, paper, wall-paint, chalk/crayons, chappals...so on and so forth) is a noteworthy habit as it is related to many diseases. Iron and calcium deficiency, worms are treatable reasons apart from attention seeking, anxiety and insecurity.

Early diagnosis, proper diet and medications are useful along with the above mentioned tips to control thumb-sucking.

All these habits are short lived! Be firm and keep patience!