DEFINITION
Rx: WebIP
Web-based Information Prescriptions (WebIP) are
prescriptions doctors write directing parents to reliable
Web sites that address a specific diagnosis, says
researcher Lee M. Ritterband, Ph.D., of the University
of Virginia in Charlottesville. By requesting a WebIP
from their child’s doctor, parents avoid misinformation
on other sites, and can learn more about their child’s
health issues and help take part in his healthcare. A
pediatrician or specialist can direct you to a reputable
Web site with details about your child’s condition. For
general medical information, Ritterband recommends
sites such as those for the American Academy of
Pediatrics (aap.org), MedlinePlus, a service of the U.S.
National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes
of Health (medlineplus.gov), and the American Academy
of Family Physicians (familydoctor.org).

EMOTIONS
How Dads Play
Q
A
I try to be a modern dad—both approachable
and playful with my kids. Still, sometimes it
feels like my kids are why grounded—or even
afraid of—me. Why would this be?
Balancing the many responsibilities of being a
dad—such as setting limits for your kids while
also encouraging open communication—can be
challenging. Furthermore, research has shown
that preadolescents tend to perceive their fathers as
people with whom to have fun and roughhouse. But
by being unaware of your strength or size, you may
accidentally be too boisterous as a playmate, says
Richard Gallagher, Ph.D., director of the Parenting
Institute at the NYU Child Study Center, in New
York. Of course, this doesn’t mean you shouldn’t
play with your kids. When you notice them looking
frightened, however, ask if they’re afraid you’re going
to hurt them, then calmly assure them that you won’t.
This might be a cue for you that the play is getting too
rough, or that your kids are getting too wound up or
overstimulated. During those times, it’s best to take
the play level down a notch, and read a book, play a
quiet game, or cuddle up together to tell jokes or
funny stories.

BEHAVIOR
Not a Party Animal?
While some kids seem to socialize easily and rush into
the mix of kids at school or parties, others are more hesitant,
needing to ease into new situations slowly or watch the
action from the sidelines before jumping in. These children
—as many as one in four—are probably introverts. A
recent book, The Hidden Gifts of the Introspective Child: Help-
ning Your Child Thrive in an Extraverted World, by Marli Olsen
Lansky, Psy.D. (Workman, 2003), offers parents tips for helping
“shy” enjoy super-stimulating events that may seem
overwhelming at first. Here are the author’s tips on preparing
an introvert for a friend’s birthday party:
• When a birthday-party invitation arrives, talk about it with
your child.
• When you call to RSVP, find out how many kids will be
there and what activities are planned. Tell your child in
distance so she can mentally prepare.
• Make sure your child is both well rested and well fed
before leaving for the party. Hunger is a common cause of
meltdowns, especially among introverted kids.
• Get to the birthday bash a few minutes early, so your child
can get acclimated before other guests arrive.
• Let her ease into the party at her own pace, by watching
with you from the sidelines. Don’t push your child to
interact before she feels ready.

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