



Tips for Parents of Young Toddlers (12-24 months)

DANGER – (TOUCHING STOVE/ELECTRICITY/ RUNNING INTO STREET/LEAVING WITHOUT AN ADULT)

Toddlers are very curious and learn by touching and exploring. Toddlers are too young to understand danger. Baby-proof home by keeping valuables and dangers such as cords, toys with small parts, medicines, cleaning supplies away from the toddler. Identify a safe location in your house where toddler can safely explore.

WHINING

Toddlers whine for a variety of reasons. Whining is an attempt to self soothe. A toddler may be bored, hungry or tired or may just want to connect with you.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY ...

“I can’t understand you when you talk like this”
“Don’t make me give you something to cry about.”

- “I would like to hear you. Come, sit next to me.”
- Try distraction: “Look at this, we have [object, snack]!” OR
- “You would like for me to listen, and you sound very frustrated.”

SAYING “NO” WHEN YOU ASK THEM TO DO SOMETHING

It is normal for toddlers to say “no” a lot, even if child means “yes”. It is still important to have rules and set limits.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY ...

“Clean up this mess right now!”
“Don’t disobey me!”

- “Let’s see how fast you can put all the [toys] away!” OR Let’s clean this mess up together!
- “Let’s put all the [toys] away so we can [watch a movie].” I can tell you are feeling impatient. We’ve been waiting a long time.

TEMPER TANTRUMS

Toddlers often have temper tantrums when they are hungry or tired. Sometimes they have tantrums out of frustration when they cannot use words to say what they want. Your child needs your help to calm down and to feel heard.

INSTEAD OF SAYING...

TRY ...

“Stop crying right now!”

“You are so bad!”

“I really hate when you act like this.”

- “I know it’s hard to leave [the playground] when you’re having fun.” Or, I know you really want that [toy]. Let play with it later” OR Let’s try again. Take a deep breath.
- “I see that you are really mad because [...]” OR I hear how really angry you are.
- “Let’s go over here where it’s quieter.” OR
- “Those words and actions don’t help us find a solution. Would you be willing to...”

Sometimes the best option is to just quietly and calmly stay with your child as your child is not hurting herself or anyone else.

BEING AGGRESSIVE

Toddlers commonly bite, hit and grab things from others. Praise good behavior.

INSTEAD OF SAYING ...

TRY ...

“You are so mean, don’t hit!”

“You are a bad boy/girl!”

- “When you [hit, bite] your [brother], it hurts him and he feels sad.” Saying, “It’s OK to be angry, but I won’t let you hit. We need to keep everyone safe.” OR
- “You had something important you wanted to say.”
- “Let’s find something else to play with.”
- “It’s your [sister]’s turn with the [train]. Or, I will help you wait until it’s your turn.”

GETS INTO THINGS

A toddler learns by exploring and touching. Prevention is best. Place temptations out of sight and reach. Child-proof using cabinet latches or use distractions.