

# Positive Discipline for Toddlers 1-3 years

The key to disciplining your toddler involves understanding and quick thinking.

## Developmental Awareness

- Toddlers may:**
- Insist on being independent as their skills develop
  - Begin to say “NO” and “MINE”
  - Only be able to think of themselves and see things from their own point of view
  - Copy actions of others
  - Have a short attention span
  - Be eager to explore everything and don't want to hold your hand or ride in the stroller



### What You Might Expect

### What Your Toddler May be Trying to Tell You

Busy

“I have lots of energy and I am growing. I am learning to walk, run, climb, throw and feed myself. I sometimes act without thinking. It's your job to teach me about safety, manners and feelings.”

Curious

“I want to explore everything in my environment and test how people will respond to my behaviour.”

Easily Frustrated

“I have a limited number of words and can't always do what I think I can.” “I cannot always tell you what is wrong and I may whine, cry, bite or throw myself on the ground.”

Biting

“I may not be able to tell you what I want - my teeth hurt and biting feels good.”  
“I am angry because I can't get your attention or get my way.”

Tantrums

“Sometimes I may build up to have a temper tantrum. It's your job to keep me safe and to help me calm down”.

Independent

“I want to do things by myself.” “It's your job to be patient and allow enough time for me to practice everyday tasks such as getting dressed or feeding myself and to help me to be successful.”

## Planning for Positive Discipline

### Set up a safe environment

A safe place to play and appropriate toys to play with will save you from saying “NO” and can make your job as a parent much easier.

### Establish a routine

Toddlers need reasonable naps and bedtimes and can act out when tired or hungry. They need regular, healthy snacks and meals. Growing bodies need time to run, jump and play everyday. Taking care of basic needs can go a long way.

### Catch your toddler doing something good

Let your toddler know you're pleased when he behaves well.

### Be realistic about your expectations

Remember, your child may not have the ability to do what you ask of them. For example, asking your 3 year old to clean her bedroom may be an unrealistic expectation.

### Try to understand your toddler's behaviours

If your toddler is biting or having tantrums, is there a pattern to the behaviour? Do they bite you when you don't pay attention to them? Does he have a tantrum every day before dinner? These patterns may help you to understand why and prevent the behaviour in the future.

### Build a positive relationship

Spend time with your toddler and have fun together. If you promise something to your toddler, follow through. Respect your toddler's feelings and apologize when you are wrong.

## What to do when...

Your toddler is doing something you don't want them to do

Toddlers have short attention spans. Distract your toddler by calling attention to another activity or toy. Or, you can model for your toddler what he should be doing.

Your toddler is biting

Safely stop the behaviour and state “no biting”. Offer safe teething choices such as a teething ring. Model a better way to interact.

Your toddler is having a temper tantrum

Remain calm. Don't worry about what others are thinking. You can make sure they are safe and let them tantrum. Or, you can pick your toddler up and gently move them to a safe place. When they are calm, offer comfort and talk to them about what they can do next time.



**Remember...** Your toddler learns by watching everything you do and say. Being a good role model is key to positive discipline.

**Nobody's Perfect...** Positive Discipline is not the only part of being a parent and caregiver. Try spending time with your child just having fun, playing together, reading together and modeling good behaviour.