

Tips for Toddlers Guidance Techniques

Toddlers need your support and guidance as they learn to navigate through new social, physical, and language skills. Your best guidance tools are consistency and anticipation.

- Childproof your home. Keep the floors clean and safe from hazards. Put away breakable objects. Make sure that all freestanding furniture is durable and sturdy enough for a child to pull up on. You'll spend less time saying "NO".
- Stay close and supervise carefully. Toddlers are quick and curious.
- Redirect. When your child starts an undesirable behavior, point the child to a different toy or activity. If your child plays with the water in the toilet, for example, provide a dishpan of water on the back porch.
- Be consistent. Make sure your rules and your responses to behaviors are the same all of the time and for everyone. For example the couch is for sitting not standing.
- Model desired behaviors. Say please and thank you. Toddlers will imitate what you do.
- Respond quickly when your child cries or calls you. If you cannot get there immediately say you're coming and use your voice to reassure.
- Give your child choices whenever possible. "Do you want to wear the red or the green socks?" If the child doesn't have a choice, be firm in your statement. "It's time to go now" not "Do you want to go now?"
- Encourage self-help skills. Toddlers like to do things for themselves like eating and dressing, but may need your help when they get tired or frustrated.
- Give your child words for things "Those are boots." Label feelings " Sounds like you're angry."
- Understand that when your child says NO it is not disrespect or disobedience. This is a normal part of developing independence.
- Respect your child's fears or that your child may not be ready for something yet.

