

terrible twos or terrific toddlers?

You have probably heard warnings about a phase of your child's life called the "Terrible Twos." You may even feel you have already arrived at this phase. But this time is not terrible; it is a wonderful time when your little one begins to show his or her personality.

You may have witnessed other parents belittling or mistreating a child in public. Children are easily persuaded that they are worthless or bad when confronted by negative treatment and overly harsh discipline. Certainly,

it can be frustrating for parents when a child constantly pushes limits. But children need respect, instruction, and consistently firm but loving discipline instead of harsh punishments and negativity.

Treating your child with respect does not mean giving in to his or her every whim. Rules are necessary for safety, and they help your child function as part of your family and society. Respecting a child does mean regarding your child as a person of worth who has his or her own feelings and ideas.



"Parents, don't be hard on your children. Raise them properly. Teach them and instruct them about the Lord."

Ephesians

6:4, CEV

As you treat your child as an individual of worth, he or she will learn to do the same for others, including you. Here are some ways you can show respect to your terrific toddler:

- a Allow your toddler to make some choices, such as which game to play or which shirt to wear. Giving children choices in the little things lets them feel independent, and they may challenge you less frequently.
- a Listen to your child when he or she speaks. Get on his or her eye level, and do not interrupt your child. If you do not understand what your child says, ask him or her to repeat it. You are letting your child know you care what he or she thinks or feels.
- a Point out the positive more often than the negative. Thank your child for his or her obedience. If you "catch" your child doing good things, say so!
- a Instead of listing forbidden behaviors, list desired

behaviors whenever possible. Instead of starting every rule with "don't," such as "Don't pull the cat's tail," say, "Touch the cat gently."

- a Avoid labeling your child negatively. If you say your child is bad or stupid, he or she will believe it.
- a When possible, give a reason for the boundaries you set. This does not always guarantee compliance, but your child will be more likely to follow a rule if he or she understands why you gave it.
- a Make sure your child knows what the rule is before you discipline him or her for breaking it. Remind your child of the rule often, since toddlers still forget easily.
- a Make sure your expectations are age-appropriate. Is your child physically and mentally able to follow this rule?
- a Try not to shout. Shouting frightens young children and causes their emotions to escalate along with yours.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR TODDLER

You may begin to notice these characteristics in your child between 22 and 24 months of age.

Physical

Pushes a ride-on toy with feet, but cannot turn the pedals.
Can stand on one foot and kick a ball with the other.
Runs confidently and rarely falls, can navigate around furniture.
Throws and catches a ball from a sitting position.
Can adjust balance to stay on a swing.
Participates in some self-care and grooming.
Can use pincer grasp to manipulate small objects.
May begin potty training, but is not fully trained.
Enjoys the responsibility of carrying out small tasks.

Social/Emotional

Enjoys the company of other children, but has trouble sharing

toys and does not yet play cooperatively.

May cry when separated from you, but stops soon after you are out of sight.

Speech

Accurately identifies everyday objects placed in front of him or her.
Tackles most sounds, but often replaces difficult consonants with easier ones (w for l).
Names the main parts of the body.
May repeat random words without knowing their meanings. (Watch what you say!)
Has a vocabulary of at least 200 words, often combined in short sentences.





watch me grow!

22—24 months



Embracing Families
with Young Children



Cognitive/Intellectual

Looks at books for several minutes, studies pictures, and turns pages
Engages in elaborate, pretend play with stories and toys.
May ask questions about everything around him or her: ("What that?" or "Where doggie go?")
Will be able to remember and recount some past events.

Spiritual

Enjoys Bible songs and may be able to sing along or do motions.
Enjoys colorfully illustrated children's Bible story books.
May repeat elements of favorite Bible stories, asks to hear the same story again.

Try This at Home

Make books accessible to your child to promote a love for reading and learning.
Place books in a basket within your child's reach. Read to your child several times a day and whenever he or she requests it. Repeat favorite stories. Visit the library often to enjoy new books.
Teach your child reverence for the Bible by showing respect for it yourself. Tell your child, "The Bible is God's special book for us." Teach your child to treat the Bible gently and never throw it or walk on it. Keep the Bible in a special place within your child's reach, and read it to him or her often.

Say a Little Prayer

Dear God, please help us to see the opportunities to teach our child about You every day. Help us to see teachable moments and use them to talk about You. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.



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