

Setting Limits With Love



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Setting Limits With Toddlers

Toddlers have a lot of BIG feelings! But they haven't learned many ways of coping with these feelings yet. And, they love their independence! They no longer just do what you say. They have their own opinions and goals.

This can be a tough time for parents and caregivers. **Toddlers will need many repetitions of the same rule during this time.** They cannot control their impulses yet. They can remember rules, but might not be able to control their behavior well enough to follow them. This can be frustrating! But there is a lot you can do to make this time easier—for you and your child.

7 tips to *prevent* and *reduce* challenging behavior

1

Remember to explain rules so children learn what they are supposed to do. For example, “no running in the parking lot” doesn’t teach your child what you want them to do. Instead try: *“We have to walk in the parking lot.”*

2

Make sure children have regular meal- and snack-times. Hungry toddlers can lead to challenging behaviors.

3

Notice and label your child’s feelings. This helps toddlers feel understood and learn the words for how they are feeling.



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4

Teach coping skills. Help your child learn how to handle tough moments: *"I know it's hard to wait for the bus. Let's turn some music on and dance."*

5

Point out the positive. Notice and share all the things your child is doing right. This builds confidence. *"Thank you for hopping into your car seat. Now we're ready to roll!"*

6

Prepare your child for changes. Most kids get upset when they have to change activities. You can help by using a timer, special song, or reminder (*"bath-time after we finish dinner!"*) to prepare them for the upcoming change.

7

Plan ahead. If you know some moments are always hard, plan for them. Bring a book to share with your toddler while you wait for the doctor. Planning for tough moments can make your life (and your child's) much easier!

Setting limits with toddlers can be tiring.

It might feel like you're doing it over and over. And you are! But being **kind, calm, and consistent** helps your little one learn your family rules. That's one of the most important gifts you can give your child!

Have more questions? Talk to your child's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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