



Inspiring *Terrific* Toddlers Part 1

Promoting Development to Reduce Challenging Behaviors



Course Objectives:

- Develop realistic expectations for toddler behavior
- Identify a method to promote optimal development

Toddler (n.)

"Emotionally unstable pint-sized dictator with the uncanny ability to know exactly how far to push you towards utter insanity before reverting to a lovable creature."

Key Points:

- There is fuel that starts the "fires" experienced in group settings
- You can prevent challenging behaviors by addressing the fuel (meeting the need behind the behavior)
- Much of the behavior you are experiencing is normal development and due to lack of skills
- Toddlers need a lot of attention, calm, and OODLES of understanding
- You can promote toddler development and positive outcomes by providing a secure base, incorporating novel and interesting routines, and making it fun!
- What you do will make a difference!



Why does a toddler throw food on the floor (and keep doing it even when you say "No")?



Toddler challenges can be fueled by:

- ✓ **Medical issues**
- ✓ **Sleep deprivation**
- ✓ **Temperament:** One piece of the puzzle—just the way the child is wired to respond to the world.
- ✓ **Stress hormone in the body:** Why would toddlers in childcare experience more stress than older children?
- ✓ **Lack communication skills**
- ✓ **Lack "Executive Functioning" skills:**

Stop or wait for very long
Understand everything you say
Use their word when upset
Consider how their behavior impacts others
Anticipate the results of their actions

**Toddlers
Cannot**

Control their impulses
Express strong emotions "appropriately"
Keep themselves safe
"Share" something they desire strongly
Get along well with others



Typical toddler development



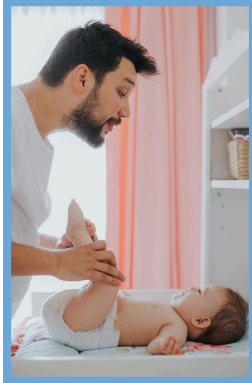
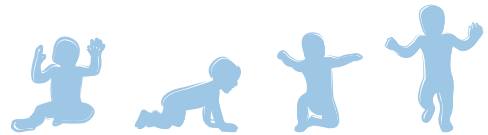
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Toddler Development:

Event - Happening - Occurrence - Change - Stage



6-12 Months

Starting to learn about object permanence - Can objects exist when I cannot see them?

- Separation anxiety is heightened so, if toddler cannot see you, they believe you have gone away
- Does not have concept of time so does not know when others will be back
- Cries and protests even when adult is just in the other room

Developing an awareness of self

- Feels and communicates more likes and dislikes
- May resist something they do not want to do
- Starts to fight diaper changes

Building affordances and what is possible with items in their environment

- Test their environment over and over
- Mouth, bang, and squish things



One Year

Driven to "do"

- Into everything
- Always busy and has trouble sitting still
- Protests being confined or strapped in

"Little scientists" who *must* explore the world and test cause and effect

- Drops food on the floor
- Dumps things out and puts things in
- Pokes and prods others
- Repeats behaviors that gain a strong reaction

Short attention span

- Switches frequently from one thing to another
- Demands things right now
- Resists sitting for long periods

Feels huge emotions but lacks the skills and experience to express "appropriately"

- Falls apart emotionally over little things
- Pushes, hits, bites, cries, or screams to communicate
- Throws things when frustrated or angry



Two Years

Curious and impulsive: Drive to explore independently and learn is insatiable

- May run into the street or sneak out of bedroom at night
- Will not start or stop from doing something just because it's dangerous
- Are not open to stop based on what someone else wants them to do

Advancing awareness of self as separate from caregiver

- Strongly resists directions by others
- Insists on own way (often contrary to an adult's suggestion)
- May demand to be held one minute and then "do it myself!" or "Me do it!" the next

Physical development increases to new level of strength & balance

- Seeks physical outlets and challenges such as getting on table/counter or jumping off the couch

Other words for development:

Growth - progress, advance, maturity, improvement

Training - education, advancement, expansion, enhancement





Basic Needs for Optimal Development

- 1) Security
- 2) Affection
- 3) Stimulation



How do you promote development and help toddlers find success?
What really works to help toddlers thrive in your care?



Developmental Need: Security

1) Be a "secure base"

- Maintain emotional stability
- Be understanding and supportive
 - Tune in to what is happening from the toddler's perspective
 - Help the child communicate
- Use "toddlerese" – switching to the toddler's "native language"
 - Use words emphasized with emotional expressions
 - Include gestures
 - Slightly mirror child's feelings
 - Repeat short phrases 5-10 times

Instead of:

- "I know you feel mad about it."
- "Did that doggie scare you?"
- "You really want that candy, don't you?"



Start with:

- "You're mad! Mad! Mad!"
- "Scared! Scared! Big doggie!"
- "Candy! Candy! You want it...now!"

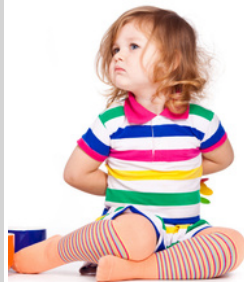


A toddler is sad she got the "wrong cup"

1. You want the cup – I know!
2. You feel sad. I am sorry.
3. Want cup.
4. You want that cup!
5. Sad - Cup.

A toddler cries when parent leaves:

1. You miss your mom!
2. Miss mom.
3. Oh, you miss your mom!
4. Miss her.
5. Love your mom.



Let's Practice Toddlerese:

Child does not want to give up a toy:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)



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Developmental Need: Affection

2) Catch the toddler behaving well

- Notice and get super excited about the behavior you want
- "Feed the meter" - Increase connection time during daily routines
- Be prepared
- Remain attentive to child's "little" signs of stress and meltdown so child does not need to escalate to be heard



What else could you do to fulfill toddlers' needs for affection?



Developmental Need: Stimulation

3) Provide novel and interesting experiences in set patterns



- **Set patterns to your day**
- **Make it interesting**
 - Use puppets
 - Rotate bins of toys
 - Keep a special bin for "those times"
- **Make it fun**
 - Be musical
 - Add variety
 - Add gestures



Coming to Circle

Come on over and clap your hands!....
Come on over and turn around!...
Come on over and stomp your feet!...
Come on over and sit right down...

Hand-Washing Magic

I'm going to wash that dirt right off of my hands
I'm going to wash that dirt right off of my hands
I'm going to wash that dirt right off of my hands
And send it down the drain!

The Miracle Goodbye Song!

Goodbye friends, goodbye friends, goodbye friends,
it's time to say goodbye!
Goodbye Audrey (insert puppet kiss here)
Goodbye Johnny, Goodbye Maggie...
It's time to say goodbye!

Circle-time Example: What do I do? What is the result?



Video analysis: What is the adult doing? What is the result?



What would you like to do to promote optimal development in the toddlers you care for?

- Prevent the challenge by addressing the "why" behind the behavior
- Maintain emotional stability
- Be understanding and supportive
- Use "Toddlerese"
- Get super excited about the behavior you want
- Regularly "Feed the Meter"
- Be prepared
- Remain attentive to little signs of meltdown
- Provide novel and interesting experiences
- Make it fun
 - Use puppets
 - Keep a special bin for "those times"
 - Be musical

Others you heard today?

What is one step you will take?



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