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NOBODY'S PERFECT

BEHAVIOUR



**VIETNAM HOLISTIC
PARENTING PROGRAMME**

NOBODY'S PERFECT Parenting Programme Viet Nam – Body Parent Handbook First Edition (Pilot): May 2019

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BEHAVIOUR

**This book is part of the
Nobody's Perfect Series**

INTRODUCTION

Parenting is about loving and caring for your children. Being a parent is not easy. Sometimes it is very frustrating! Along with the joys of parenting, many parents face problems, too. Tough times can give you the chance to learn and grow as a parent and as a person.

It is okay to ask for help. Nobody's perfect. There are no perfect parents, or perfect children, or perfect people. We can only do our best, and we all need help once in a while.

Nobody's Perfect is a programme for parents or caregivers of young children. Parents with children ages 0 to 8 years can participate in the programme. It is recommended that parenting programmes start as early as possible, before age 3 years to achieve best outcomes. The programme includes 3 booklets:

- **MIND:** thinking, feeling, learning and playing
- **BEHAVIOUR:** Helping children learn to behave and ideas for coping with some common behaviours
- **BODY:** Growth, health, illness and safety

These books are not perfect either. They cannot tell you everything you will ever need to know about being a parent. But the books can help you do your best.

Note:

The information in the Nobody's Perfect books applies to both boys and girls and it meant to be used by both men and women. When we use "he," we mean "he or she." When we use "she," we also mean "he or she." When we use "parent" we mean "Mom," "Dad" or any person in the parenting role. If you are responsible for the care of a child, you have a very important role.

This BEHAVIOUR book is about

- what to expect from a child at each age
- how to encourage positive parenting through praise and encouragement; setting a good example; effectively guiding a child's behavior; staying calm and connected; and making reasonable rules
- what to do when you get so mad and might hurt a child
- what's wrong with spanking
- how to handle common child behaviour problems



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ATTACHMENT

A baby's attachment to parents will influence how she or he thinks, learns, feels, and behaves.

- Attachment begins before birth and develops over time when you respond to your child's needs in a warm, loving, and dependable way. **This will not spoil your child**
- Showing your child that you love and care about him or her is the **first step in guiding your child's behavior**



Attachment is the deep emotional connection a baby forms with parents and caregivers.

EMPATHY

You can help your child develop empathy.

Empathy means being able to understand what other people are feeling. A young child can see that other people have feelings, but he or she is not always good at feeling what they feel.

Children learn how other people feel by talking about feelings. They learn to understand and respect other people's feelings when their own feelings are respected and understood.

- **Try to understand what your child is feeling.** When you try to understand your child's feelings, you show your child that feelings matter
- **Help your child put his or her feelings into words.**
 - Talk often with your child about common feelings like happiness, excitement, sadness, fear, anger, and jealousy
 - Give your child's feelings a name, for example "I see that you are sad." This will help your child to learn how to name his or her own feelings
 - Accept your child's feelings, even when he or she is upset or angry. Let him or her know that other people have those feelings too. There are no such things as 'good' or 'bad' feelings

- Be a good example. Let your child see you handle your own fears, frustrations, and anger in positive ways
- Take deep breaths
- Go to another place to calm down
- Take a break from a frustrating activity
- Help your child understand other people's feelings. Talk about the feelings of people in books or television. Talk about what facial expressions mean. Does that boy look happy? Does grandma look sad?



TEMPERAMENT

The way a child learns and responds his to or her world is called temperament.

Some babies are active and never stop wiggling. Some are quiet and hardly cry at all. Some are noisy and cry often. Some children are happy and excited by new things. Some are fearful or anxious in new situations. These are all signs of different kinds of temperaments.

Your child's temperament has a big effect on his or her behaviour. Temperament helps to explain why your child's reaction to something is different from another child's.

- **Your child's temperament is part of what makes your child special.** It is very difficult for your child to change his or her temperament
- **As a parent, it is your job to understand your child's temperament and find ways to work with it.** Whatever your child's temperament, accept your child for who he or she is

BEING A POSITIVE PARENT

To be a positive parent, you should learn to:

- Take care of yourself
- Know what your child is able to do at each age
- Create family routines, limits, and rules that everybody lives by
- Encourage your child to do things he or she is able to do at his or her age
- Say no to your child when you need to and stick to it. Be clear and direct when dealing with problems
- Help your child understand feelings

One way that you teach your child how to behave is by showing your child what you expect. **You also need to talk to your child and listen carefully when your child talks to you.**

When you talk to and listen to your child, you are helping your child learn how to behave.

What you say and do as a parent matters. When you are positive, polite, kind and firm, it is easier for your child to learn how to behave.



The best way to help your child to learn how to behave is by being a positive parent.

DO NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH

Children behave and think in different ways as they grow. Know what to expect at each age. This will give you a realistic idea of what your child is able to do. Expecting too much too soon can be frustrating for you and your child.



It takes time for a child to learn how to behave.

No one gets it right the first time.

BIRTH – 1 YEAR

- A baby cannot understand or follow rules
- Getting mad at a baby will not stop or change his or her behaviour
- Your baby can sense if you are happy, calm, or upset
- Respond to your baby with kindness, love, and patience
- Strengthen your attachment by helping your child to get what he or she needs



1- 2 YEARS

- A young toddler is beginning to understand more words and simple directions. **Even though your toddler may understand what you say, he or she is not old enough to do what you say**
- Your toddler can show and recognize many feelings such as happy, excited, sad, angry, and frustrated
- **Your toddler is learning to be his or her own person, separate from you.** This is a good sign. Encourage this independence when it is safe to do so
- Often, a toddler's favourite word is "No!" You need to be very patient. Expect to keep telling and showing your toddler the same things over and over again



2 – 3 YEARS

- **Your older toddler is getting better at speaking and at understanding what others say.** Your child still needs a lot of help to do what you ask and to follow directions
- Your child is still too young to be able to share, play fair or cooperate without help
- **At around 2½ years of age, a child shows a larger range of emotions.** Your child is learning how his or her moods affect others
- **At this age, your child likes routines and activities to stay the same.** Your child can have a hard time with change. Telling your child when a change is going to happen will help
- **Talking with your child works well at this age.** Talk to your child in a kind and firm tone. Get your child's attention when you are talking
- **It helps to get down to your child's eye level and talk face to face**



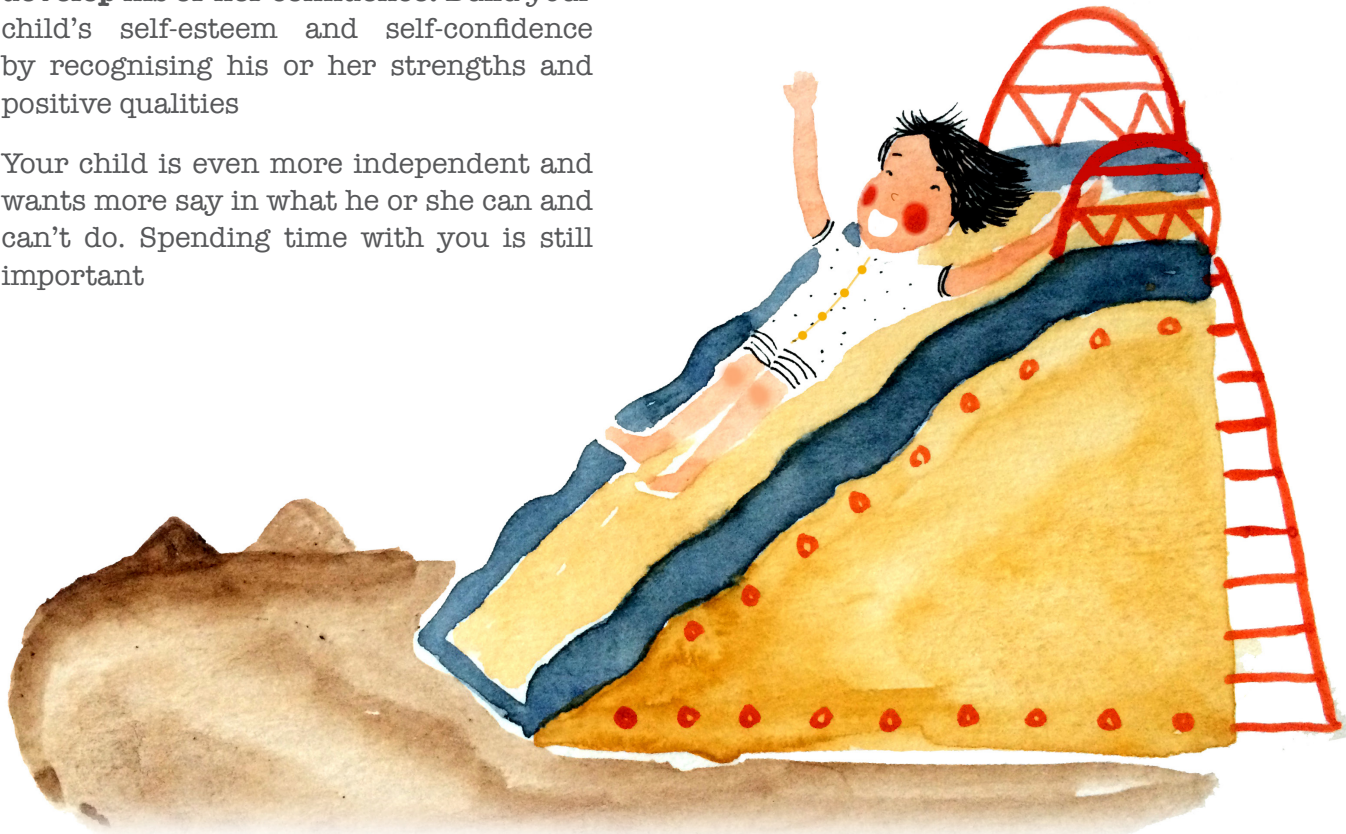
3 – 6 YEARS

- A preschooler is old enough to begin learning to follow simple rules although he may not always want to
- **Your child's behaviour changes a lot during this time.** Your child will go through periods when he or she is calm and gets along with you and times when he or she tests your patience
- **A preschooler is starting to be able to care about other people's feelings.** Your child wants to be fair and to do what is right. Your child needs you to tell him or her what is right
- **When your child does something wrong, he or she needs you to tell them what was wrong and why.** Your child needs you to help him or her think of a better way to do things next time. Your child will not know what you expect unless you tell them



6 – 8 YEAR

- **This age is a critical time for children to develop his or her confidence.** Build your child's self-esteem and self-confidence by recognising his or her strengths and positive qualities
- Your child is even more independent and wants more say in what he or she can and can't do. Spending time with you is still important



- Encourage your child to be aware of the consequences of behaviour and see things from other people's points of view. You can do this by asking questions like, 'How do you think Bao feels when you do that?'
- Your child's morals and values are developing, and she or he might share strong opinions about whether things are right or wrong. Your child is also becoming more aware of what others are doing
- Create an environment for children to step by step shape their self-learning and problem-solving abilities, increase their communication and cooperation capabilities.
- **Set aside some time for free play. Playing is still very important at this age**
- Share ideas and discuss important issues with your child. This helps you connect with your child and shows that you're interested. As your child gets older, allow him or her to join in family decision-making where appropriate
- **Never hit or verbally abuse a child. You risk harming your child, even if you don't mean to.**

PRAISE AND ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD

Your child wants your approval. Let your child know you notice when he or she behaves well.

Praise happens when you give positive attention – a kind word, smile or hug – to your child for something good. Praise your child when he or she does well or succeeds. For example, “You got dressed by yourself!” or “You listened very carefully.”

Encouragement happens when you give positive attention to your child for his or her efforts, even for the little things they do. “You worked really hard to clean up your mess” or “That’s your best effort yet!” Do not wait until your child does something perfectly before you pay attention.

- Be specific. Praise and encouragement work best when you tell the child very clearly what you like about what she has done. “You washed your hands with soap. That’s good!”
- Don’t criticize. Praise and encourage what you like instead of criticizing what you do not like. This will help your child understand what you expect

Praise and encourage your child's efforts and success.



BE A GOOD EXAMPLE

Your child learns almost everything by watching what other people do, **especially parents and other members of the household.** Be a role model and don't do things that you wouldn't want your child to do.

- If you want your child to be polite, make sure he or she hears you saying “with subject”, “please”, “thank you” and “sorry” and responding to other by saying “yes”
- If you want your child to be kind and share with others, make sure he or she sees you helping and sharing
- If you want your child to be honest, and not to lie, then make sure he or she sees and hears you being honest



Your child learns from what you do and what you say.

FUN & EASY ACTIVITY

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Young children learn almost everything by watching the people around them and imitating what they do. They will love a game of follow-the-leader. How to play:

- Your child imitates your actions while you move in different ways. For example, you can march around in a circle, hop, skip or crawl. Then let your child be the “leader” and move however he or she likes, while you follow
- You can play this game more quietly too. You move your hands or eyes in a pattern or make different facial expressions that your child imitates. Then your child makes up a pattern and you copy it



GUIDING YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR

- **Remember your child's age.** It is hard for very young children to control themselves, even when they know the rules. As children grow, they understand rules and can remember them better.
- **Offer choices.** Try not to ask questions that require a “yes” or “no” answer. For example, if you have to go to the store, do not say, “Do you want to go to the store now?” Instead, try, “We’re going to the store now.” Then right away offer a choice between two things that you can accept. “Would you like to wear your jacket or your sweater?”
- **Follow up with consequences.** Children age 3 years and older can understand the link between what they do and the results that follow. You can set consequences for their behaviour to help them learn from their mistakes. Be sure that any consequences are fair, realistic, safe, and right for your child's age
- **Direct attention to another activity.** Does your toddler want to do something that is against the rules? You can get your child busy with another activity. Take your child's hand and say, “I want to show you something over here.”



**No matter how well you teach your child, no child can
behave the way you want all the time.**

FUN AND EASY ACTIVITY

A PUPPET IN YOUR POCKET

- Children's behaviour often gets worse when they are bored. They need something interesting to do. Try using a puppet to distract your child. When you change the mood, their behaviour may improve
- You can make a simple puppet out of a sock that is on your hand. Open your hand so your fingers are facing your thumb. Now slide your hand into the sock. To make the puppet's mouth, bring your thumb up to meet your fingers. To make a nose, push your middle finger forward. Ask your child where to put the puppet's eyes. You can draw the eyes with a marker pen. Your puppet can be very simple
- Children have a good imagination. If you want, you can sew on coloured wool for the eyes and add more wool for hair
- Begin moving the puppet's mouth and talking in a different voice. How long does it take for your child to start talking to the puppet instead of to you? You can carry your puppet in your pocket and bring it out at the right moment. When your puppet starts telling funny stories, it could turn into a fun time



MAKE REASONABLE RULES

- **Set clear rules and limits.** When your rules are clear, your child is able to understand what you expect. Tell him or her the reasons for your rules. Your rules need to be the same every day
- **Give clear instructions.** Tell your child what he or she can do instead of what he or she cannot do. For example, instead of “Don’t run!” say “Walk!”. Instead of “Don’t hit the baby!” say “Touch the baby gently.” Both you and your child will be happier if you don’t have to keep saying “No!”
- **Limits grow with your child.** Your rules will change as your child gets older. As your child grows, involve him or her in setting limits
- **Remind often.** Young children may not always think of the rules when you want them to. They make a lot of mistakes. Be patient and calmly remind of the rules

Your child needs your guidance and for you to be consistent and patient.

STAY CALM AND CONNECTED

- **Help your child calm down.** Children can choose better behaviour when they are calm
- **Listen to feelings.** When you try to understand your child's feelings, you show your child that feelings matter
- **Help your child put her feelings into words.** Talk about common feelings, like happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Give your child's feelings a name. For example, you might say, "I see that you are sad." Children learn how other people feel by talking about feelings. They learn empathy when their own feelings are respected and understood
- **Accept your child's feelings.** Let your child know it is okay to be upset and angry. You can accept her negative feelings without accepting negative behaviour. It is okay to be angry, but it is not okay to hit other people
- **Stay calm.** Losing your temper will not help. Sometimes it can be very hard for a parent to be calm and reasonable. Be a good example. If you are so angry that you think you might say or do something you will be sorry for, take a moment for yourself. Be sure your child is in a safe place. Spend a few minutes alone until you feel calmer

FUN & EASY ACTIVITY

BLOWING BUBBLES

One of the best ways to calm down is to take slow deep breaths. This works for both adults and children. To make deep breathing fun, try blowing bubbles.

Here is a recipe to make a bubble mix at home.

1. Put about 1/2 inch (1 cm) of water in a pot or bowl
2. Add about 3 or 4 squirts of dishwashing detergent
3. Mix gently so you do not get a lot of suds

Bubbles can be blown through almost anything with a hole in it. You can use a small funnel or cut a hole in a plastic lid

Bubble blowing takes practice. Most children can control their breath enough to blow bubbles around age 2 years. Every child is different though



SOMETIMES I GET SO MAD

Parents do get angry. You are only human and sometimes your child's behaviour seems like more than you can handle.

- Aim your frustration at your child's action, not at your child. Make sure that your child understands that you do not like what he or she did, but that you still love and care about him or her
- If you do lose your temper, tell your child afterward that you are sorry. Your child has feelings too
- Never hit, hurt, or abuse your child

When you feel anger building up inside of you and you are afraid you might hurt your child:

- **Leave.** Place your child in a safe place such as a bassinet. Leave the room. It is better to leave your child alone for a short time than to risk hurting him or her
- **Calm down.** Do not spank, shake, or hit your child. Find a way to calm that will not hurt anyone
- **Call for help.** Call a friend, family member or anyone you trust who you think can help you
- Remember, how you deal with your strong emotions will show your child how adults handle these emotions. **Give your child a good example to follow**



WHAT ABOUT SPANKING?

It is normal for you to feel angry or frustrated but spanking does not work. Your child should not be afraid of what you might do.

If your child is afraid that you will spank him or her, he or she will do what you want out of fear and not because your child understands WHY the behaviour is wrong.

A child who is spanked is more likely to hit others and can have more behaviour problems.

Spanking teaches your child:

- that it is okay to hit people when they do something that you do not like
- that it is okay for someone big to hit someone little
- to be afraid of and dislike the person who hits him
- to be afraid of adults

**Spanking does not teach a child how to behave.
It only makes a child fearful or resentful.**



SOLVING BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

Handling your child's behaviour can be easier if you think about it as a problem to be solved.

Answering these questions can help you to figure out why your child acts the way he or she does and what you can do about it.

There are **four steps** to solving problems:

- What is happening here?
- Why is it happening?
- What can I do?
- What if it does not work?



AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

“My child is very aggressive. He hits and pushes other children. Whenever he’s around, children end up yelling, fighting, and crying.”

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

- A young child can get upset and frustrated when they do not get what they want
- The child might hit, push, or bite because he or she cannot think of anything else to do
- A child can act in aggressive ways when hungry, tired, or not feeling well
- A child can act aggressively because he or she sees people around them acting this way, or he or she sees this kind of behaviour on violent TV shows, movies, and computer games

WHAT CAN I DO?

- **Set a good example.** Do not yell at or hit your child. Show your child that there are ways to show feelings instead of hitting
- **Watch your aggressive child closely.** Do not leave an aggressive child alone with other children
- **Stay close and be ready to step in quickly.** It is your job as a parent to keep your child safe
- **Set limits and rules.** Be consistent

- **Remain calm.** Take a moment for yourself if you need to
- Show lots of love to help your child feel safe and secure
- Do not let your child watch violent TV shows, movies, or computer games



BITING

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

“My child bites people.”

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

A child may bite because he or she is angry, upset, or frustrated. He or she may bite to get attention. A child may also bite because of teething.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Be firm in your words and actions. Tell your child, “No biting. Biting hurts.”
- If your child is old enough to understand, ask your child to “switch places.” Help your child to imagine how painful biting feels
- Do not bite back. This only teaches your child that biting is okay

WHEN YOUR CHILD BITES

SOMEONE:

- Give the child who was bitten attention and comforting. This teaches your child about caring for others
- Gently get your child’s attention and say firmly and calmly, “Biting hurts. I can’t let you bite people. It hurts them.” or “Teeth are for eating.”
- If he or she is old enough, ask your child to suggest other actions. “Biting is not a good way to get what you want. Can you tell me another way?”

FIGHTING AND SIBLING RIVALRY

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

“My child seems to be fighting a lot with his brother and sister and with his friends.”

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

Sharing, cooperating and taking turns are hard lessons and take time to learn. A child may also be learning to fight by copying the actions of people he or she sees around him or her on television. A young child can become frustrated very easily. Brothers and sisters (siblings) often fight and compete with each other.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- When children are arguing but not hitting, **stay close by** so you can do something if needed
- **Separate children if they are hitting each other or using hurtful words**
- Have children take some time to calm down. Then suggest other ways of getting what they need. Help them find a way to solve their problems
- If they were fighting over a toy, book or other object, **make sure that neither child gets the object that they were fighting over**

CRYING (BABIES)

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

"I know that babies cry, but why? And what can I do about it?"

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

Crying is a way for your baby to tell you that he or she needs something. Sometimes it is hard to figure out what she needs, in case of colic. Common reasons for crying are:

- hunger
- fear
- pain
- cold
- too much noise or excitement

WHAT CAN I DO?

Picking up a baby does not "spoil" the child. It is best to go to your baby when he or she cries. Do not let your baby get so upset that he or she cannot calm down.

Try to figure out what the baby needs and do it. To calm a crying baby try:

- breastfeeding
- holding him or her against your shoulder
- walking
- rocking
- talking
- singing

WHAT IF IT DOES NOT WORK?

Sometimes it seems as if nothing will stop your baby's crying. Stay calm and keep trying. Take some time for yourself. If your baby's crying gets on your nerves, call a friend or relative for help. If you are so upset you think you might hurt your baby, put your baby in a bassinet or another safe place and leave the room. Take time to calm down before trying again. Never shake or hit your baby. When a baby is shaken, his or her brain becomes bruised and bleeds. This can kill a baby or cause brain damage.



FEARS

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

“My child seems to be afraid of things like other people, and the dark.”

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

Fears are very natural. Fears are emotions we were born with. They help us survive. Fears keep your child away from danger. A child's fears can change as he or she grows.

There are several reasons that a child might be afraid.

- Someone around your child is afraid
- Your child imagines something awful

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Take your child's fears seriously. A child's fear does not have to make sense. Do not make fun of your child or get upset at your child
- Do not force your child to be brave or to face what frightens him or her
- Talk about your child's fears. Tell your child that you understand that he or she is afraid. Try to figure out why your child is afraid
- Help your child feel safe and secure. Hold hands, hug, and be close
- Make sure that your child is not seeing things that could create fears or make them worse. For example, scary TV shows, movies, games



EATING PROBLEMS

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

“My child doesn’t eat!”

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

Your child may be getting more food than he needs. It is surprising how little some children need to eat to be healthy.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Stay calm. Your child will not starve. When your child is hungry, he or she will eat
- Serve small amounts of food
- Try serving a variety of foods: Sometimes a child may want to eat the same foods day after day. It is normal for a child to refuse new foods. You may have to serve a new food 20 times before your child will try it. This is normal. Keep trying!

- Encourage your toddler to feed themselves, even if it is messy
- Make meals a happy time by talking, telling stories and spending time together
- Let your child decide when he or she has had enough
- Do not use food as a reward or punishment. Encouragement and attention work much better

Talk to your health care provider if your child is losing weight, seems tired, or is not growing.



TANTRUMS

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

"If my child gets frustrated, or doesn't get his way, he has a tantrum."

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

A tantrum is a way of working off frustration. Tantrums usually start when a child is about 18 months old, an age when a child is starting to do and say more. During a tantrum a child may kick, scream, throw themselves on the ground, or hit things.



WHAT CAN I DO?

To prevent tantrums:

- Try to figure out why tantrums are happening. For example, is your child likely to have a tantrum when tired? Hungry? Very excited?
- Follow a daily routine. Make sure your child is getting regular food, rest and playtime
- Address the reasons why your child is becoming frustrated. For example, if your child is trying something new, ask if your child needs a little help
- Give your child lots of time for active play
- Help your child describe his or her feelings. This helps your child to feel understood and less frustrated. “I see you are mad. I don’t know what you want when you scream. If you use words to tell me what you need, I can try to do something.”

- If you see warning signs of a tantrum, try changing activities and doing something more calming. Try to stop the tantrum before it starts.

During a tantrum:

- Stay calm. Use a soft, reassuring voice
- Keep your child safe. Do not let your child hurt himself or anyone else. Stay quietly nearby until he calms down

Do not give in to your child’s wants or try to reason with your child during a tantrum

- Let it run its course
- After the tantrum is over, allow time for your child to calm down. Help your child to name his or her feelings. Offer support. Give a hug or say a few comforting words

SAYING “NO!”

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

“My child says “No!” to everything I say.”

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

Between 1 ½ to 2 ½ years of age, your child is beginning to want to decide things for themselves. By saying “No” your child is showing you he or she is learning to think on their own.

When your child says “No”, your child is not defying you or trying to make you mad.

For a toddler, the word “No!” can mean many things. It can mean:

- I want to do this myself!
- I don’t like it!
- I want to finish what I’m doing!
- I need to choose for myself!
- I’m scared!
- I don’t want to do that!

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Stay calm. Losing your temper will not help
- Avoid arguments with your child. Try not to ask things that require a “yes” or “no” answer. For example, if you have to go to the store, do not say, “Do you want to go to the store now?” The answer may be “No.” Instead, try, “We’re going to the store now.”
- Give choices between two things when you can. “Would you like to wear your jacket or your sweater?”
- Notice and say something when your child is cooperative. “Thank you for putting on your shoes . Now we can go out.”
- Use the ‘5 minute warning’ when your child is having fun and does not want to stop what he is doing. “In 5 minutes, we have to leave for the store.”



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