

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

As your young child is growing and developing, they will show some behaviours that may be challenging.

- Babies will push the boundaries as they become mobile.
- Toddlers only follow parents' requests about half the time and about 20% will have tantrums on a daily basis.

There are ways you can manage these **normal** challenging behaviours:

- Make and keep a daily routine for your young child.
- Respect daily sleep or quiet times. Prevent your child from becoming over tired.
- "Toddler proof" the house to allow your young child to explore freely. Toddler proofing the house is not just for safety, it also reduces conflict between you and the toddler, as you don't need to be saying "No!" all the time.
- Create a list of safe, fun, engaging activities to offer to your child. Toddlers that are engaged in an interesting activity are less likely to misbehave. A few examples of inexpensive engaging activities for toddlers are:
 - scrunching garden leaves,
 - cardboard boxes to climb in,
 - blowing bubbles,
 - sliding ice cubes on a plate,
 - going to the park to play on the equipment.

- Young children often enjoy a reward system to help them learn 'good' behaviours. This can be as simple as:
 - stamps or stickers for young children (under 2 years),
 - star charts, with rewards at set points for older children (over 2 years). For example 5 stars = a special treat.

Don't take away a reward for misbehaviour. You are rewarding 'good' behaviour, not punishing misbehaviour.

- Spend quality time each day doing what your child enjoys. It may help to take the approach of 'watch, wait, and wonder' at your young child's interests and activities, and then share in this interest or activity. It only has to be a few minutes.
- Talk to your child about how they are feeling. This helps them to understand why they behave in particular ways, for example feeling angry and throwing the book.
- Praise and cuddle your child every day. Take the time to tell your child what they have done that has been 'good' and then give them a cuddle. For example "You were so good to be quiet while I was on the phone", and give them a cuddle. It helps to get down to their level when praising your child.

Remember when you notice and praise 'good' behaviours in your child, they will show you these 'good' behaviours more often.

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