



Physical punishment is also physically dangerous. Even a little slap can catch a small child off balance. And shaking your toddler can do permanent damage to his brain – even kill him.

**Never hit or shake your child!**

**Rewards**

Punishing your toddler when she does wrong makes her feel bad. Try instead to reward her when she does right so that she feels good. Rewards don't have to be things like candy or toys. The best rewards of all are often smiles, praise, hugs, thanks and attention.



**Set Limits**

Limits help keep children safe and help them feel safe, too. But they only work if parents do whatever it takes to make those limits stick. Try not to say “no” if you mean, “not unless you make more fuss than I can stand.”

**Be a Good Enough Parent to Your Toddler!**

Of course you're not a perfect parent in your own eyes. Nobody is. But if you and your toddler love each other – and there's more positive than negative between you – you're good enough.

Good enough parenting is rather like a bank account. A bad day can put you in the red, but a good one can put things right again. Every “Don't” needs a matching “Do.” Every “No” needs a matching “Yes.” Every yell needs a making-up hug.

Every positive thought you have about your child should be said out loud. And every negative thought should be kept quiet.

Adapted from “Terrific Toddlers.” © 2000 Prevent Child Abuse America.

# Terrific Toddlers



– **Whoever Said**  
*Two-Year-Olds*  
**were that**  
*Terrible?*



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## Are Twos Always Terrible?

The answer is yes – and no. You learned how to parent an infant. Now, you need to “upgrade” your skills to parent a toddler. This is so that you can do a more difficult job equally well and feel good about doing it!

Over the next couple of years your toddler needs to learn to do all the things that kids do and that babies don’t, from walking and talking, to swimming and painting. It’s a lot to learn. He needs you to love and help him.



## Helping your terrific toddler get from baby to child.

### Your Toddler’s Brain

Toddlerhood is an important part of your child’s development. Your toddler’s brain has been developing very fast from the moment he was born. But he doesn’t process what he knows quite the way he will when he’s older.

### Memory

Your toddler’s memory doesn’t work like yours. She doesn’t always remember what happened last time. So don’t expect her to think ahead. If she hides in a closet, she’s not going to think about how she’ll get out. Keeping her safe isn’t her job yet – it’s yours.

## Understanding Other People’s Feelings

Most children can’t put themselves in other people’s shoes until they’re three or four. At the playground, a little girl pushes your toddler. He cries. Minutes later, he pushes her and she cries. He’s amazed. He truly doesn’t connect what he felt when he got pushed with what she felt when he pushed her.

## Talking & Doing

Adults say a lot and don’t do much. We say nice (and nasty) things to each other rather than hugging (or hitting). Toddlers do a lot and say very little. Just talking to them often isn’t enough. If you want your toddler to understand something, show her as well as explain. Do things with her instead of just telling her.

## Words & Meanings

Don’t expect your toddler to use words the way you do. Your toddler may be able to say the word “promise.” But that doesn’t mean she knows what it is. She just knows saying, “I promise” buys her time.

## Discipline

Making children do as they’re told isn’t the point of discipline. The only kind of discipline that’s worth having, and teaching, is self-discipline. That’s the kind that one day will keep your child doing as he should, even when there’s nobody looking.



## Help Your Child Understand Right & Wrong

Explain why she shouldn’t bite the child who takes her toy or push her way onto the jungle gym. By doing so you are teaching ideas like kindness and fairness. These will serve as the building blocks of her understanding of right and wrong as she gets older.

## Punishment

Don’t do anything to your toddler that you don’t want her to do to you or another person. Above all, don’t hurt her body or her feelings on purpose – ever.

Physical punishments are never okay:

- They teach a child that it’s OK to hit people.
- They make children much too angry to be sorry for what they’ve done.
- They don’t tell children what they should have done instead.
- They don’t show children how they can put things right.