

Toddlers Must Learn Self-Control

A Yale study found that pre-schoolers were expelled 3 times more than K-12th graders. They were expelled for behavior problems. Many experts believe that today's kids are ruder than ever.

Toddlers, by nature, are self-centered. They also lack self-control. However, toddlers who learned self-control had more success as adults than those who had low self-control as a child.

Why is this important? Teens with low self-control tend to engage in risky behaviors. The Yale study also showed that kids whose self-control improved over time saw more success as adults than those who continued to have low self-control.

Self-control is a learned behavior. At age 2, toddlers begin to understand right from wrong. It is a parent's job to teach them good behavior.

Help your toddler learn self-control.

- **Watch her when she plays with other children.** When problems arise, gently take her aside. Simply tell her what she did wrong. Then return her to play.

- **Distract your toddler instead of punishing.**

Time outs are not very effective for toddlers. If he throws a toy at someone, tell him "No". Then change to a quiet activity. Read a book. Color. Play with stickers.

- **Set limits.** Always enforce simple rules. If she hits someone, take her aside. Say, "We do not hit". Do not ignore bad behavior. Always calmly, but firmly, let her know that you will not allow bad behavior.



- **Teach him patience.** He needs to learn to wait for what he wants. If he wants a snack, tell him he can have one in 10 minutes. When the time is up, give him the snack.

- **Eat meals at a table.**

Most 3 year olds can handle a 15-minute meal. She does not need to play or being entertained.

- **Teach him to not interrupt unless something is very wrong.**

When you talk to your spouse, make your toddler wait for a few minutes until you finish. Then give him your full attention.

Know childhood developmental milestones – the skills your toddler is able to do. Do not expect more. To review these skills, go to www.parenthelpline.org. Click onto our new *School Readiness* tab - coming soon.

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