

Positive Parenting Tips: Babies, Toddlers & Preschoolers



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Having a baby is an exciting time for parents. Learning about each developmental stage can help prepare you for the challenges and opportunities of parenting young children.

Infants (0-1 years old)

When babies are first born, the world is a brand new adventure for them, and they will have to learn everything for the first time. Infants will begin cognitive development and start the process of learning language, memory, thinking and reasoning. During this stage, children will also learn how to focus their vision and remember the sound of their parents.

What You Can Do...

- Talk to your baby. It is soothing to hear your voice.
- When your baby makes sounds, answer him by repeating and adding words. This will help him learn to use language.
- Read to your baby. This helps her develop and understand language and sounds.
- Parenting can be hard work! Take care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally. It is easier to enjoy your new baby and be a positive, loving parent when you are feeling good yourself.

Toddlers (1-2 years old)

During this time, your toddler will become increasingly mobile, and aware of himself and his surroundings. Your toddler will show greater independence and show defiant behavior.

What You Can Do...

- Keep reading to your toddler daily.
- Ask your child to find objects for you or name body parts and objects.
- Play matching games with your toddler like shape sorting and simple puzzles.
- Encourage your child to explore.
- Encourage your toddler's curiosity by taking field trips together to the park or a bus ride.

Toddlers (2-3 years old)

During this exciting time, your toddler will be able to follow two- or three-phrase commands and sort objects by shape and color. Your toddler will be able to imitate the actions of adults and playmates, and express a wide range of emotions.

What You Can Do...

- Encourage your child to engage in pretend play like playing house or let her be in charge by playing follow the leader.
- Encourage your child to tell you his name and age.
- Set up a time to read books with your child.
- Help your child to explore her surroundings by taking her on a walk or wagon ride.
- Begin to teach your child simple songs such as the Itsy Bitsy Spider and other culture rhymes.

Preschoolers (3-5 years old)

The world will really open up as your child grows into early childhood. Your child will become more independent and will want to explore and ask about his or her surroundings. During this stage, children will show awareness of gender identity, help to dress and undress themselves, play with other children, and sing songs.

What You Can Do...

- Continue to read to your child.
- Let your child help with simple chores.
- Encourage your child to play with other children.
- Speak to your child in complete sentences. Help her use the correct words and phrases.
- Be clear and consistent when disciplining your child. Model the behavior that you expect.

For more information on parenting, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/parents/>