

***ESTABLISHING
TODDLERS
VALUE***

Learning the Basics

(2 training hours)

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ESTABLISHING TODDLERS VALUE

During the toddler years, the child will begin thinking of themselves as a separate being and asserting their individuality. It's not a smooth process. All teachers and caregivers have heard of the terrible two's. Yet this difficult adjustment, which happens to all toddlers to some degree, is absolutely essential.

The child's natural curiosity will shift into high gear, and will probably never be so open to learning. They are also becoming socialized--learning to deal routinely with others in ways that maximize the child's experiences and those of the people around them. You will continue to set limits and, and sometime around three years, begin his formal etiquette education. But by your example, you will teach good manners and positive behaviors throughout the child's toddler years.

The child will soak up your value, attitudes, private and social behaviors, use of language and nonverbal communication, interests, and likes and dislikes.

Conflicting Emotions

Between the first and second years, the toddler's attachment to you, their need for emotional security, and fear of separation will be at their peak. The child will experience a new range of emotions--from pride in their achievements to frustration and their failures to anger at the limitations you must impose. A toddler's newly independent spirit, dependence on primary caregiver, fears of separation, emotional range, and still immature verbal capabilities--all contribute to the behaviors characteristic of the terrible two's. It is critical to the toddler's long-term happiness and emotional security that you understand what is happening.

Often lasting six months to a year or longer, the terrible two's is a time when you may find yourself constantly confused. One minute your baby may scream to wear his socks over his shoes; the next minute he graces you with his most endearing smile. The child has learned the word "no" and uses it even when it means "yes". Beneath the mood changes and stubbornness, the child is struggling to understand himself, the world, and their place in it. Be assured that the terrible two's will end; meanwhile, you can blunt some of its effects with an abundance of love, tolerance, sensitivity, and consistent discipline. The child likes you fiercely and is counting on you to guide and support them through this often chaotic period.

CLARIFYING YOUR VALUES

The values you teach and model now will be central to the teaching of manners and

etiquette. It's worth taking a long, hard look at the values you want to pass on. When members of the same family or the staff define their values, their concepts can be contradictory. Parents and teachers often have differing ideas, and even some can disagree, leading to situations in which a child receives confusing and conflicting messages from the people they trust most.

If you haven't done so, parents and teachers, take the time to define and clarify your basic values. Make a complete list, and be honest with yourself. Here are a few values you might consider, though your list will doubtless exclude some and include others:

Consideration and kindness

Honesty and integrity

Self-discipline

Family

Hard work

Community Service

Religious beliefs

Good manners

Honorable behavior

Reliability and loyalty

Good sportsmanship

Leisure

Generosity

Respect for ethnic and cultural

What's Most Important?

Once you have your list, decide which of your values are most important and rank them in order of priority. If you have a spouse or another teacher, he or she should also list and prioritize personal values. When you compare your thinking, you will probably agree in many areas, but you may discover conflicts. Resolving these differences doesn't mean you must give up your own values; rather, you will aim for comfortable compromises and respect for differences.

TEACHING RIGHT FROM WRONG:

All major cultures and religions have their version of the Golden Rule-- the injunction to treat others as you wish to be treated. This is also the core of good etiquette. Following the Golden Rule in adulthood requires a finely tuned understanding of other people and their needs. But children must begin with the fundamentals. And what is more basic than the difference between doing right and wrong?

A toddler doesn't have the intellectual capacity to draw moral and ethical distinctions. But after sixteen months or so, they begin to acquire the rudimentary ability to understand alternatives, anticipate outcomes, and choose different ways of doing things. Through repeated trial and error, they learn that if they stack big blocks, the

Tower they are building is likely to fall. They begin to anticipate the outcome by stacking the bigger blocks first--distinguishing the right way from the wrong way to do something and achieve their objectives. They are at the start of a process that will (when they are much older) enable them to choose between right and wrong attitudes, motives, and actions.

The Golden Rule of Caregivers

For the time being, the child's behavioral choices depend on you. They won't understand why you act in certain ways, but they will imitate what you do. Their short-term memory is growing, so what they see and hear will stay with them for hours or even days. Their growing ability to think symbolically means that they understand more of what you say than you may expect.

Thus another Golden Rule comes to the forefront. It is the Golden Rule of Caregivers. It's crucial to remember that your actions speak louder than words; if you act one way but tell the child to act another, they will imitate your behavior. A caregiver can talk about consideration for others, but if they are consistently rude to salespeople and swears at other drivers, the child will assume that rudeness and swearing are the right way to deal with people. A caregiver with poor manners cannot expect to rear a child with good manners.

ENCOURAGING EMPATHY

Empathy is the capacity to understand how other feel, to be able to walk in someone else's shoes. Empathetic impulses seem to be innate--a one-year-old may try to comfort another child who is crying--but must be nurtured if empathy is to develop and mature.

When empathetic impulses are not encouraged, they can wither. A child who is abused or neglected loses trust in adults and has more difficulty learning to care about others. But there are less obvious ways of undermining a child's empathetic capabilities. Psychologists use the terms bounding and bridging to describe how children are taught to deal with differences among people. A bounded child is one who is only exposed to people like themselves. Their empathy is confined to the people they know; they learn to behave morally and ethically with their "own kind," but their moral sense may not extend beyond these boundaries. Bridging involves exposing a child to people of diverse backgrounds and characteristics. Children reared in a bridging environment are more likely to develop inclusive moral standards and behavior.

To promote the development of empathy, it's important to discuss feelings with the

child. Every experience doesn't call for deep analysis, but the toddler needs the language to talk about emotions. You can help by identifying their feelings---happy, sad, angry, confused, lonesome, bored, scared---and letting them know that you have the same feelings.

- **Encourage the toddler to see behavior from the point of view of others.** If the child pinches a playmate, talk to the child after you've stopped the behavior. Express your concern that the other child feels hurt, and ask the child how they feel if someone pinched them. Don't pinch the child to illustrate your point.
- **Look for opportunities to discuss concern for others.** Books and stories can provide excellent lessons in empathy. When you recount the tale of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," talk to the child about how they would feel if someone slept in their bed or ate their breakfast without asking. Would they be mad or sad? Toddlers are wrapped up in their own emotions and experiences, but caregivers can help them to relate to others by pointing out that others have feelings like their own.
- **Praise the child's early empathetic reactions.** Kind responses may be few during toddler hood, but they do occur. If you have a cold and the two-year-old pats your hand and seems worried, thank him for their concern and tell the child that caring helps you feel better. Praising the child's gesture begins to establish the value of kindness.
- **Model concern for others.** If, for example, you and the toddler find a toy on the playground, take it to director and ask the director to keep it in case the child who lost it returns. Then talk to the child about returning lost things. Discuss how the child lost the toy probably feels. The toy may never be claimed, but you will have given that child a priceless demonstration of concern for others.
- **Practice what you preach at school.** Behaviors at school set the pattern for the child's relationships beyond others. How you handle the normal conflicts and flare-ups of school life will have a powerful influence. Do staff members in the school forgive others easily? Do adults control their voices and language when there angry?

THE REAL MEANING OF DISCIPLINE

Don't let the word "discipline" scare you. The child has no way to know right from wrong behavior unless you make the difference clear, and words are not going to be enough. Effective discipline is a system of teaching that includes:

- Setting clear limits on behavior and enforcing the limits consistently.
- Using appropriate methods to enforce the limits: distraction, substitution, time-outs, and removing the young child from dangerous or difficult situations.
- Taking time to talk with the child to explain and reinforce lessons in behavior.
- Rewarding the child with praise for positive behaviors.
- Recognizing that a child's values can sometimes legitimately conflict with parental values and respecting these differences.
- Being flexible enough to adapt, when feasible, to a child's natural need for control.
- Tailoring restrictions and explanations to a child's developmental capabilities and level of understanding.
- Consistently following through with responses and consequences.
- Never punishing out of anger or demeaning the child for his behavior.
- Never abusing a child physically or emotionally.

Without consistent discipline, a toddler is denied the reference points for right and wrong. A two-year-old who has experienced lax or inconsistent discipline can become willful, thoughtless of others, and lacking in self-control. At the other extreme, excessively rigid discipline, especially when coupled with corporal punishment, can create a child who obeys out of fear and fails to internalize the concepts of right and wrong.

DISCIPLINE THAT WORKS:

What is the most effective way to discipline a toddler? There's no single answer, because each child is different and will respond differently. You will have to try various approaches and combinations of methods to see what works best.

Distraction and Substitution

If the child is doing something risky or troublesome, direct their attention to another area of interest or substitute a less hazardous object. Tell the child "no" and explain why, but don't make a big issue of minor infractions. You want the child to develop a sense of proportion in regard to theirs and others behavior.

Removal from the situation

Removing the child from situations where the child is in jeopardy is essential, and there is no need to waste precious time with explanations. If the child is heading for the street, grab him immediately; don't stop to explain or argue. Act just as quickly if the child is endangering another person. If the child smacks a child in the playgroup, even a firm "no" is not enough. Remove the child at once. Removal can also mean taking something away, which will often lead to crying and protests. Substituting something else may help, but the older the child, the less likely the child is to be distracted.

Time-outs

Time-outs are used to defuse a difficult situation and give a child a few minutes to calm down. Set the child in a quiet place without distractions and tell them to remain there. Time-outs shouldn't be protracted; the recommended length is one minute for each of a child's age. Depending on the toddler's temperament, time-outs may not always work, but they will contribute to eventual mastery of self control. Follow a time-out with some discussion of what happened and why you stopped the behavior.

Reinforcing Good Behavior

Consistent, positive reinforcement teaches a child what it means to do right. Teachers are usually quick to stop naughty and dangerous behaviors, yet may slow to praise. Use the toddler's good behavior to begin explaining concepts such as "kind" and "thoughtful" and "courteous." If the child puts some of the toys away without being asked or tries to comfort another child who is crying, acknowledge the action and tell the toddler why their behavior was good.

Following Through

Effective discipline requires follow-through. Explain why the behavior is wrong in language the child can understand and in a context to which they can relate. With toddlers, it's also important to pick your battles. There are situations when you can give in without compromising discipline. If the two-year-old demands to wear one purple sock and one yellow sock, let them; mismatched socks are really a matter of personal taste, not an issue of right and wrong.

MANAGING TANTRUMS:

It's critical to understand that toddlers' tantrums are not simply selfish, attention-seeking displays. Though often precipitated by something as minor as being denied a particular item on the toy shelf, tantrums are the product of built-up frustration and anger. The causes are myriad: A toddler doesn't yet have the physical capabilities to accomplish much of what a child wants to do. The child lacks the self-control to keep powerful emotions in check and doesn't have the verbal skills to express their feelings. A child's behavior is often restricted by the teacher, but doesn't understand the reasons for limits. When the pressures overwhelm the child, the child blows like a small volcano. Child psychologists agree that toddlers cannot control their tantrums and that the outpouring of pent-up rage is frightening for them.

Virtually all toddlers will have tantrums, some more frequently than others. Tantrums take a variety of forms. A child may scream wildly. Some run around; others fall on the floor, kicking and thrashing. Some children hold their breath until they turn ashen, and a few may even pass out from breath holding. Since tantrums can be disturbing, teachers should warn parents or caregivers of what may occur.

Think of a toddler's tantrum as a speeding car without brakes: You can't stop it, but you can steer its course to avoid a major collision.

- Stay calm and prevent the toddler from hurting themselves or anyone else.
- If the child tolerates being touched, cradle the child gently in your arms and soothe them until the anger dissolves.
- If the child won't be touched, stand back, watch closely, and step in only to stop them from doing anything. For example, flinging themselves against walls or furniture,

and throwing things, that can cause physical harm to themselves or others.

- Don't try to argue or reason with the child during a tantrum. It's pointless and will only increase your own frustration and fear.
- Don't show amusement if the child's antics look funny. Laughing at an angry child may encourage future tantrums if they think their behavior gets positive attention.
- Depending on the child's temperament, ignoring the tantrum may be the best course. Be watchful, but appear to go about your business.
- When the storm passes, you may want to try a brief time-out or simply leave the child to be quiet for a while. Then let the incident go: no lectures or punishments. If the child wants reassurance, embrace them in loving arms.
- Don't condemn the child for the behavior. Be tactful and considerate. The child isn't bad or a little monster because they had a tantrum. The child is just a frustrated child.

EARLY DECISION MAKING

Allowing the child to make some decisions on their own is a good way to promote thinking skills and teach mannerly behavior. You can begin by offering clear-cut choices whenever feasible. If you ask the toddler an open-ended question such as, "What do you want to do in playgroup today?" The child may be totally befuddled or come up with something preposterous. Instead, give the child two reasonable options---read a storybook or play with wood blocks---so that the child can make a choice that suits themselves and you.

Offering choices affirms to the child that you value their opinions and wants involvement in at least some of the decisions that effects them.

- **Be certain that you can make good on the choice.** If the child often makes choices only to be told you can't fulfill them, they will naturally be disappointed and may lose trust in you or come to distrust on their own decision making.

- **Don't give choices when you can't control the outcome.** For instance, an expectant parent should not ask a child whether he would like a baby brother or baby sister. A youngster must learn that there are some things no one can control. They need to realize that they can control their own reactions even when they can't control the situation itself.
- **Don't overwhelm the child with choices.** If you turn every little activity into a choice, the child will probably feel overwhelmed. Too many choices given too early may promote indecision rather than thoughtful decision making.
- **Give the child opportunities to make some wrong decisions.** Use your common sense about the circumstances, but there are times when a bad choice can be very instructive. When the two-year-old insists on wearing a heavy sweater for a field trip to the park on a warm day, don't fight about it. The child will soon enough complain about their discomfort. Change them into cooler clothes and talk about how people dress for the weather. Even if the child refuses to back down, they may remember the uncomfortable experience and learn not to repeat it.
- **Avoid "I told you so."** A child who is frequently subjected to "I-told-you-so" comments is likely to feel belittled, and their self-confidence can suffer. Do talk about and explain specific wrong choices. Toddlers are literal in their understanding, so choose your words carefully. A teacher may say that a choice was "dumb" or "stupid," but the child will hear that they are dumb or stupid.

In Conclusion:

A toddler's growing physical and intellectual abilities set the stage for genuine learning. Your example will remain the child's most influential teacher, but as they grow older, you will begin formal instruction in the fundamentals of etiquette. The first steps the toddler takes into the world of good manners during toddler hood will eventually translate into the ability to handle all social situations with confidence in themselves and respect for the needs and feelings of others.

ESTABLISHING TODDLERS VALUE**(2 Training Hours)****TEST**

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each of the following questions carefully and **CIRCLE** your best answer.**1. A toddler begins to learn values, attitudes, private and social behaviors between what ages?**

- A. 1 to 2 years of age
- B. 2 to 3 years of age
- C. 3 to 4 years of age

2. It's important for parents and teachers to define and clarify basic values to a child in order not to create confusion?

True or False

3. Empathetic impulses are not innate?

True or False

4. Between the first and second years, the toddler's attachment to you, their need for emotional security and fear of separation will be at their peak?

True or False

5. A caregiver can encourage empathy in a child by?

- A. Praise the child by empathetic reactions
- B. Model concerns for others
- C. Practice what you preach at school
- D. All of the above

6. A child will most likely?

- A. Respond to what you tell a child to do
- B. Imitate your behavior
- C. None of the above

7. After a tantrum should you?

- A. Let the incident go
- B. Embrace them in loving arms
- C. Be tactful and considerate
- D. All of the above

8. Children reared in a bridging environment are likely to develop inclusive moral standards and behavior?

True or False

9. What is an effective form of discipline?

- A. Setting clear limits on behavior
- B. Rewarding the child with praise for positive behavior
- C. Never punishing out of anger
- D. All of the above

10. Don't overwhelm the child with choices, avoid "I told you so" and be certain that you can make good on the choice are all samples of?

- A. Discipline that works
- B. Managing tantrums
- C. Early decision making

11. At what months do children begin to acquire the rudimentary ability to understand alternatives and choose different ways of doing things?

- A. 12 months of age
- B. 14 months of age
- C. 16 months of age
- D. 15 months of age

FILL OUT YOUR INFORMATION BELOW AND SEND YOUR COMPLETED TEST TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.

INCLUDE YOUR CHECK or MONEY ORDER for \$ 10.00 (PER TEST).

Once received we will send you a printed certificate of completion.

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