

Positive Interactions: Helping Toddlers Succeed



Toddlers develop within the context of **RELATIONSHIPS** and the **INTERACTIONS** we have with them **EVERY** day greatly influence their growth and development. **ALL** children, including those with developmental delays or learning differences, have unique interests and unique needs – and positive, nurturing interactions can help **ALL** toddlers be successful.

Interactions include our words, facial expressions, body language, and gestures – anything we use for communication. Toddlers are still learning language and they often rely on **cues** – such as **visual actions**, **verbal comments**, and **gentle physical touch** – to find meaning in the words they hear. Positive and supportive interactions provide cues to create understanding and to promote success.

It is **IMPORTANT** that our interactions **ALWAYS** communicate and promote these four concepts:

EVERY child wants to be successful.

- ♥ I see you.
- ♥ I care about you.
- ♥ You are important.
- ♥ I am here for you.



Positive Phrasing is an important technique to help toddlers be successful. It is one of the most effective and encouraging strategies that supports success because it helps children know what our expectations are – what they can **DO** to be successful. When our communication is clear and not confusing, children benefit by knowing what “to do” rather than what “not” to do.

It is often helpful if we show toddlers what our words mean. **Pairing positive phrasing** with a **visual** or **physical cue** – showing them **how** to be successful – is a very helpful technique.

Here are some examples of how we can change typical “don’t” phrases into **CLEAR** messages.

- Don’t run = Please walk, like this.
- Don’t yell = Use a quiet voice, like this.
- Don’t hit = Please use gentle touches, like this.
- Don’t touch = Use your eyes to look at...
- Don’t stand on the chair = Sit on the chair, like this.
- Don’t jump on the couch = Please sit on the couch and, when you want to jump, you can jump on the floor.
- Don’t forget to wash your hands = Remember to wash your hands.

Through positive interactions, we can help toddlers feel valued, build confidence, and be successful.

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