

BABY BYTES

For families with infants and young children

Teaching Self-control

Babies are born with virtually no self-control. They have little to no ability to control their emotional states or behaviour. The process of developing self-control begins in a baby's earliest month and continues across the first three years and beyond.



DID YOU KNOW???

- When discipline is taught in a *nurturing, loving, and consistent* way, children learn how the world works and how to regulate their own behavior.
- When your child is "testing the limits", they are learning what is and what is not allowed. Set the limit in a clear, firm voice without anger.
- What your child first learns about 'limit setting' is the cornerstone of their moral development.
- Being able to set limits is a parent's 'second most important gift to a child', after love.

Source: Paediatrician, T.B. Brazelton, M.D.



'Toddlers have not yet learned to wait, share and take turns. They need us to follow through with action – that helps them understand what we mean.' For example: If they are throwing sand remove them from the sand box. If pulling on your hair, hold out a toy instead.

Source: Zero to Three 2009

TIPS TO ENCOURAGE SELF-CONTROL

- **Babyproof.** This keeps your toddler safe and reduces frustration for both of you.
- **Practice prevention.** Think ahead, anticipate; challenges and difficulties can be prevented.
- **Communicate Simply.** Be at your child's level. Get eye contact. Use touch to focus attention. Speak clearly, calmly and simply, and give positive instructions.
- **Redirect.** Once you've interrupted the misbehaviour, help your child get involved in something acceptable.
- **Catch them being good.** Young children love parent's approval. Don't forget to reward the positive.
- **Use Routines.** There's a lot toddlers are still learning about the world. Routines give a sense of security and competence by helping them know what to expect and help children anticipate what is expected.
- **Offer safe, easy choices.** Opportunities to choose gives children confidence.
- **Make it a game.** Compliance doesn't have to be unpleasant.
- **Rescue your child when they can't cope.** Tired, hungry, bored, overstimulated or anxious toddlers can't control their behaviour. What they really need is a cuddle, a snack or a nap - not discipline.
- **Set a good example.** Toddlers imitate us. Behave the way you expect your child to behave.
- **Be Consistent** in regard to what is allowed and what isn't. Children tend to be better learners when the disciplinary approach is structured.

Sources: Zero to Three 2009

Just a little reminder...

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, she learns to find love in the world.

Source: Families are Forever.