

Behaviour

nobody's perfect

Ways to Guide Your Child's Behaviour

- **Remember your child's age.** It is hard for very young children to control themselves, even when they know the rules. As children grow, they understand rules and can remember them better. When you choose how to guide your child's behaviour, think about what he is able to do at his age.
- **Direct attention to another activity.** When your baby wants something dangerous, try showing her another toy. Take her attention away from the dangerous object. Does your toddler want to do something that is against the rules? You can get her busy with another activity. Take her hand and say, "I want to show you something over here."
- **Offer choices.** If your child is 1½ to 2½ years old, he probably likes to say "no" a lot. Try not to ask questions that require a "yes" or "no" answer. For example, if you have to go to the store, do not say, "Do you want to go to the store now?" Instead, try, "We're going to the store now." Then right away offer a choice between two things that you can accept. "Would you like to wear your jacket or your sweater?"
- **Follow up with consequences.** Children age 3 years and older can understand the link between what they do and the results that follow. You can set consequences for their behaviour to help them learn from their mistakes. For example, if your child throws food on the floor, she must help clean it up. Be sure that any consequences are fair, realistic, safe, and right for

your child's age. Be kind and firm when your child does something she is not supposed to do. You need to follow through with the consequences you said would happen.

i No matter how well you teach your child, no child can behave the way you want all the time.



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Fun & Easy Activities

What would happen if...

- Play a game of “What would happen if...” with your preschooler. For example, you could ask, “What would happen if we forgot your backpack?” Together, think of all the consequences of forgetting the backpack. When it is your child’s turn, he may ask, “What would happen if we met a dinosaur on the next street?!” Let your imagination run loose and have fun. Silly answers are okay.
- This game gives your preschooler practice thinking about the consequences of his actions.

A Puppet for your Pocket

- Children’s behaviour often gets worse when they are bored. They need something interesting to do. Try using a puppet to distract your child. When you change the mood, their behaviour may improve.
- You can make a simple puppet out of a sock that fits on your hand. Open your hand so your fingers are facing your thumb. Now slide your hand into the sock. To make the puppet’s mouth, bring your thumb up to meet your fingers. To make a nose, push your middle finger forward. Ask your child where to put the puppet’s eyes. You can draw the eyes with a marker pen. If your child is old enough, let her do it.
- Your puppet can be very simple. Children have a good imagination. If you want, you can sew on coloured wool for the eyes and add more wool for hair.
- Begin moving the puppet’s mouth and talking in a different voice. How long does it take for your child to start talking to the puppet instead of to you? You can carry your puppet in your pocket and bring him out at the right moment. Is your child bored waiting in line at the grocery store? When your puppet starts telling funny stories, it could turn into a fun time.

