

Connecting with your Toddler

As a parent of a toddler, you are on a journey to explore the world through your toddler's eyes. Having a secure relationship is important. You can achieve this by being consistently attentive and sensitive to their needs. As your toddler becomes independent, they will watch and learn from how you react and respond to the world around you.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Toddlers have big emotions and often express them.
- Toddlers want to be independent.
- Toddlers can be stubborn and want their own way.
- Toddlers' moods can escalate quickly as they learn how to manage emotions.
- Toddlers need your help, but may not always be willing to accept your guidance.
- Toddlers can use the word 'no' even though they mean 'yes'.
- Toddlers can show aggression when they are frustrated or anxious.

REALITIES

- It can be difficult to balance family and other commitments, and to find time to connect with your toddler.
- Toddlers are still developing their communication skills.
- Toddlers' emotions can be big and overwhelming.

SAFETY

- Always step in and help your toddler if the situation is dangerous or you have any safety concerns.



TIPS FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

- Try to see the world through your toddler's eyes.
- Notice what they do well and comment on it, for example, "great building" or "thank you for sharing".
- Spend quality time with your toddler – just 5 minutes of concentrated attention per day can make a positive difference to your relationship. (See the PRIDE diagram below).
- Develop strategies to stay calm in challenging situations.
- Keep expectations realistic.
- Always allow plenty of time so you aren't rushing your toddler.

BUILD YOUR RELATIONSHIP – PRIDE SKILLS



Praise



Reflect



Imitation



Description



Enjoyment

BENEFITS		EXAMPLE
Praise Behaviour	Increases behaviour you like. Brings connection to your relationship. Models positive social skills Increases self-esteem.	While clapping hands say: 'Great sharing!' 'Beautiful music!' 'Awesome talking!'
Reflect Speech	Shows your child you're paying attention. Allows for word pronunciation. Increases the chance for your child to add more.	Child: 'Ba-ba.' Parent: 'Ba-ba-ball.' Child: 'Lello one.' Parent: 'Yellow block.'
Imitate Play	Gives your approval of child's play. Encourages child to model your behaviour. Teaches your child how to interact Helps child feel important.	Copy their physical movements – child puts arms up, parent puts arms up.
Describe Behaviour	Describes your child's body in action. Teaches organisation and ideas. Increases child's focus on task. Slows down an active child.	'You're making music.'
Enjoy Time	Providing physical affection adds warmth in the relationship. Using animated facial expressions and tone of voice keeps play fun. Models positive emotions.	Smiling and laughing together. Making eye contact and clapping. Giving a pat on the back or a hug.

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