

Positive Discipline for Preschoolers 3-5 years

You will need a lot of patience as you guide and teach your preschooler to follow rules and get along with others.



Developmental Awareness

Preschoolers may:

- Be able to do more for themselves and by themselves
- Take turns and share with friends
- Be able to follow directions and routines
- Speak in sentences and ask lots of questions
- Play with small toys, print, colour and cut
- Be more coordinated and be able to run, jump and ride a tricycle

What You Might Expect

Emotional

"I am developing an awareness of my feelings. I may be happy one minute, sad or angry the next. This is normal." "I am trying out new things and anger is one of them."

Energetic

"I have lots of energy that I want to use to explore the world around me." "I am developing my skills and abilities; I want to jump, run, climb and skip."

Talkative

"I want to know why, so please be patient with me when I ask lots of questions." "Sometimes I may say silly things and use 'bad' words."

Independent

"I want to do more on my own. I am not a toddler anymore." "I can tell you what I want and I can do more for myself."

Social

"Being with friends is important to me and I am learning to share with others."

Imaginative

"I like to dress up and play pretend since it provides me with a chance to work out my fears and fantasies." "I can tell stories and will use my imagination to make an empty box into something fun."

What Your Preschooler May Be Trying To Tell You

Planning for Positive Discipline

Make sure the environment is safe

Set clear limits as to where your child can go without supervision. Make sure they can't get into something you don't want them to.

Plan ahead

If your child has difficulty in specific situations, talk to your child about positive behaviour before he is in that situation.

Build a positive relationship

Spend time having fun with your preschooler. Have a special time with your child doing something that she has picked. This is a time for you to talk, laugh and have fun while following your child's lead.

Catch your child doing something good

Talk about your children's accomplishments and good acts. Be specific in your praise so they know what they did well.

Be a good communicator

Get down to your child's level and make sure you have their attention before speaking. Make sure your instructions are short and clear. Don't offer a choice if there isn't one. Remember, not everything in life is negotiable.

Offer choices if you can

Giving choices helps develop independence and builds skills. It is important to only offer choices if it is safe for the child to make the decision. If you give them a choice, follow through with what they choose.

Make sure your discipline matches the behaviour

Positive Discipline means that you respond immediately and use your discipline to teach the child how you want them to behave the next time.

What to do when...

Your child is doing something you don't want them to do

Preschoolers have longer attention spans and more language. The first step is to stop the behaviour and then you can talk to your preschooler. Review the rules and tell them what they can do. Model the behaviour that you want to see to help your preschooler understand what is expected of him.

If the behaviour continues

- remain calm
- state the expected behaviour, try to understand what he is feeling
- state the consequence of not behaving as expected, for example, safely removing the child from the activity, removing the toy or leaving the area.

If they do it again

You must follow through with the consequence that you stated. It is important that you can do what you say you are going to do and that it can happen quickly.

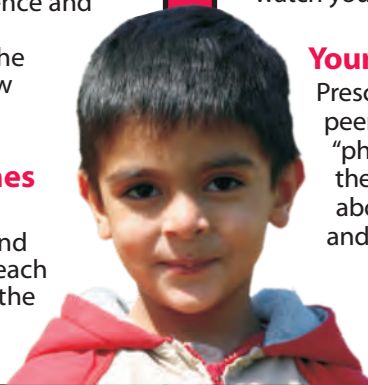
Your child uses a "bad" word

"Potty talk" is common at this age. It is important to stay calm and not overreact to this behaviour. If you can, ignore. If you cannot ignore, talk to your child about why "we don't use these words".

You can offer other words that they could use. Remember, kids are learning by watching so you have to watch your language too!

Your child is aggressive with his peers

Preschoolers are having more contact with their peers. When you see your preschooler getting "physical" with his friends, the first step is to stop the behaviour. Then talk to your preschooler about how his friend is feeling. Review the rules and talk about positive ways to play together.



Remember...

Consequences should teach your preschooler how you want them to behave and should not be physically or emotionally harmful. Positive Discipline for preschoolers involves setting clear rules and consistent expectations as well as being a good role model.