Embracing Toddlerhood

What to Expect & How to Support Your Child's Development Along the Way



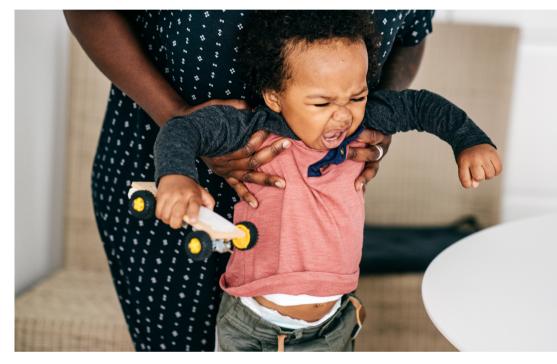


Domains of Development



Transitions & Boundaries

• The importance of consistency, expectations, and limitations.



Challenging Behaviors

• What triggers tantrums and meltdowns and how to navigate through them.









Toileting & "Potty Training"

• Understanding and respecting the true signs of readiness



Transitions & Boundaries

Transitions are EVERYWHERE!

- Transitions are when we switch from one event/place to another, e.g.:
 - These can be "small," everyday experiences or "big" life events:
 - Leaving the house to go to school, going down for nap after lunch, potty training, moving across the world, etc.
- confident transitions.
- Why children may struggle with transitions:

 - Power struggles

 - Lack of or boundaries

Establishing & Maintaining Reliable Boundaries

- If children are not provided with reliable boundaries, they will subconsciously seek them out, pushing or "testing" until they achieve them.

• The more routine & predictable (typically) results in smoother and more

Inconsistency and unpredictable routines and expectations

• Fearful of the next event/person (e.g. going to the doctor) • Hungry or Triple "O" (overwhelmed, overtired, overstimulated)

• Boundaries are the necessary limitations that every single person needs in order to feel psychologically and physically safe.

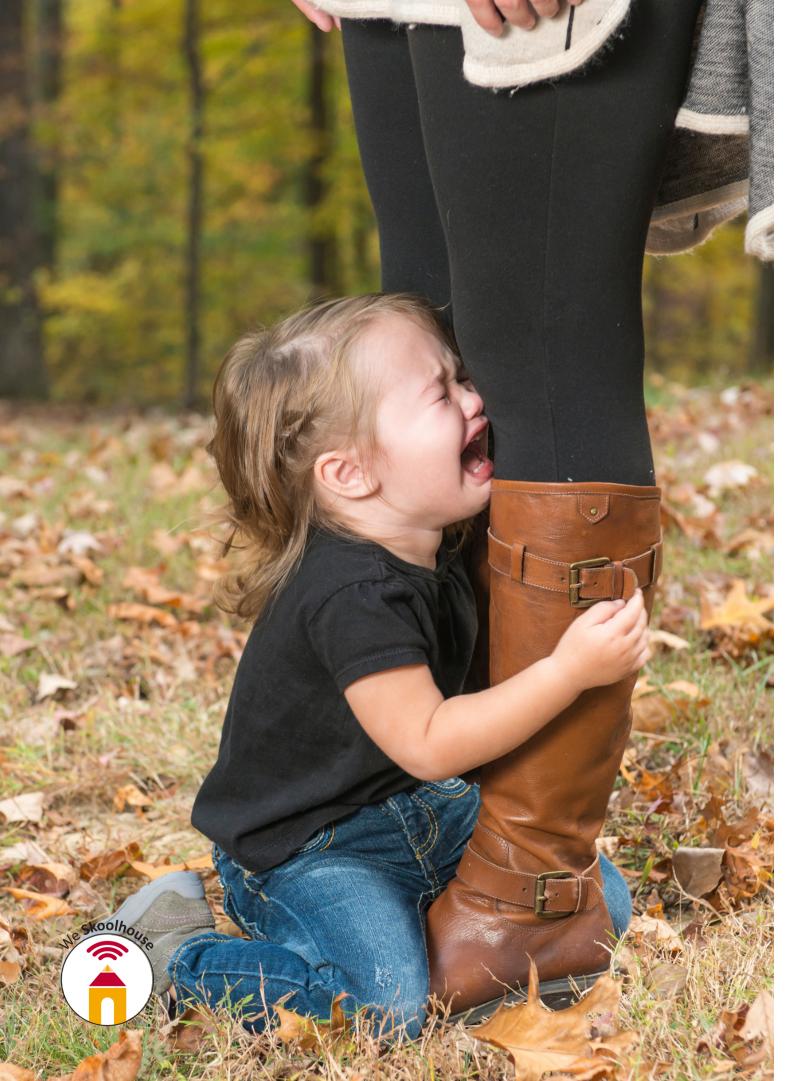
Tips to Support Transitions & Boundaries

- Give your child notice prior to the transition (Ideally 5 minutes, then 1 minute)
 - Let them know the amount of time left AND what's happening next.
 - If transitions are hard for your child, you may **consider a visual reminder** such as a timer, hour glass, or a visual daily schedule.
- For new experiences, describe to your child what they can expect:
 - Who they will see, what they will do, etc. a week prior to the new event. You can also role play, provide pictures and/or relative books.
- Mean what you say and say what you mean
 - "It's time for bed! Do you want to wear your dinosaur pajamas or your rainbow

 - Always follow through with the plan validity, reliability, sense of security, & trust. • **Do NOT "threat"** with something you're not prepared to follow through with. DO inform children of when they CAN engage with the desired behavior. DO provide developmentally appropriate choices & "jobs" when applicable:



pajamas?"



Challenging Behaviors

Tantrums & Meltdowns

- While challenging to navigate through, tantrums and meltdowns are healthy, developmental, biological states of dysregulation.
 - The ability to self-regulate is a developmental skill that takes time.
- Tantrums do not mean your child is "bad" or manipulating you, nor does it mean you are a parent that doesn't know what they're doing. • Tantrums may result from many things, including hunger and the "triple O":
- Overwhelmed, Overtired, Overstimulated

Physical Engagement as a Way to Communicate

- Toddlers have significantly greater receptive language skills, meaning **they** understand far more than they can say.
 - waving, pointing, signing, hitting, etc.) as it is easier and time efficient. impulsivity and underdeveloped decision–making skills often **results in**
 - This leads to toddlers favoring **nonverbal communication** (reaching, • The lack of more robust and intelligible, expressive language, paired with toddlers biting, hitting, grabbing from, & pushing others.

Tips to Support Challenging Behaviors

- Be cognizant of possible triggers (behaviors happening at a particular time of the day?)
- Tantrums are not a time for rationalizing, directing, shaming, or reasoning.
 - Instead, validate their feelings and reassure them you are not going anywhere. "You're feeling upset about _____ " or "you're disappointed that ____." "I love you, I am here for you, and I will help keep you safe." After a tantrum is the time to provide some tools:
 - Alternative: "I know you were feeling upset before." I feel upset when _____. Sometimes when I feel this way I take big, deep breaths like this... Want to try it with me?"

• Support expressive language development:

- Read books, sing songs, and describe daily observations
- Avoid the phrase "use your words!" or prompting with "say _____ ("please," "sorry," etc.)! instead, give children the language they need by broadcasting your observations and model language in your "day-to-day.
- Reframe from your child attention-seeking to connection-seeking!





Toileting & "Training"

An Introduction to Toilet Learning

- because there are many developmental factors.
- Signs of Readiness:
 - Hold-in urine for 2+ hours
 - Follow 2–step directions
 - Communicate (language or sign) about toileting events, e.g. they have to
 - go or have already soiled themselves
 - Your child is emotionally available & open to trying

Respecting their Process

- may not be using the potty.

• Many children will begin to show signs around 2-3 years old, however, there is a greater range. Some children may be 18 months while others may be closer to turning 4 years old before they're ready. There is a broad range

• There can be many **physical** (not able to hold in their urine), **emotional** (fear of the potty, big life event, pressure to go), and **medical reasons** why a child

• Forcing this prematurely may diminish confidence and self-esteem, drive a wedge in your relationship, and can even lead to your child getting UTI's, constipation, and bedwetting (withholding from stress).

Tips to Support Toilet Learning

Prep your child for this new transition (when they're truly ready!):

- Begin having conversations before they begin using the potty
- Welcome them into the bathroom with you so they can observe steps
- Buy relative and appropriate items: potty/seat, underwear, potty related books.

• Don't force the process:

- Forced "potty training" before physically and/or emotionally ready can result in physical and/or emotional repercussions.
 - If you have to place your child on the potty every 15 minutes and feel the need to keep them on the potty for several minutes, **they're not ready – and that's okay!**
 - Avoid giving them toys and reading them books ON the potty, as it will distract them from recognizing internal cues happening within their body.

Avoid rewards systems such as stickers, snacks, and toys:

Promotes extrinsic motivation over intrinsic motivation.

