



HOW TO GET YOUR TODDLER TO COOPERATE

Without shouting,
nagging and bribing.

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2. How to get your toddler to COOPERATE?

Toddlers just about to develop and begin to use their cooperative skills, so it is not surprising if they often do whatever they want and don't help you or do things the way you want them to do.

They still have little control over their impulses and they will do more things for their own pleasure, for example, jumping on the bed or pouring water all over the floor then listening to you.

Even adults find being cooperative hard sometimes, so imagine a toddler... because to be cooperative, you need to have some certain level of social, problem solving and communication skills, too.

It is not easy, but there are lots of benefit of being cooperative.

Just to mention a few: being cooperative can boost self-confidence, strengthen the bond between people, it can make a person better in decision making and in creative problem solving.

So, if you want to improve your toddler's cooperative skills, try to come up with plays that involve sharing, waiting for turns, teamwork and communication.

Here are some easy activity ideas to improve cooperation skills:

- **Role plays:** Toddlers love pretending to be somebody or something else. They love playing doctors, chefs or taking care of dollies, acting out stories etc.
- **Helping at home:** Toddlers really enjoy helping and having little responsibilities. They can help you with: stirring, mixing, mopping, sweeping, washing vegetables, setting the table etc.
- **Building together:** you can use blocks, sand, boxes etc.

- **Working on an artwork**

I know, you are wondering: “but how can I get my child to listen and do what I asked him to do?”

If you need to ask your toddler to cooperate with you, here are **two very easy but effective techniques that give you instant result:**

1. You give him two empowering choices within the boundary you set

or

2. You say what you need instead of saying “no” all the time

Let's see why these two tactics will work:

1. Set the boundary and give him two empowering choices within the boundary.

For example, when it is time to go home from the nursery, you could say:

- *“We are going home now, so you need to get dressed. Would you like to put your shoes on or your jacket first?”*

In this way, you set the boundary (he needs to get dressed) and gave him two choices within the boundary (he either puts his shoes on or jacket first).

Bear in mind, that the two empowering choices you give must fall within the boundary you set, otherwise it is confusing for a child.

An example for this:

- *“We are going home now, so you need to get dressed. Would you like to put your shoes on or say goodbye to your teachers?”*

It would only confuse your child and she may choose whatever is the easiest for her and forget about your other “request”.

It is more successful if you ask like this:

- *“We are going home now, so you need to get dressed. Would you like to put your shoes on or your jacket first?” After he dressed up, you can ask him: “You are ready, well done! Now we need to say goodbye to your friends and teachers.”*

The trick with this empowering choice is, that it gives power to your children. They will feel empowered, that they have a choice, and they can decide what they want to do (but still they will do what you want them to do).

If you give them choices, they will spend more time on deciding which one they want to do, then thinking on losing their authority.

But if you don't give your child empowering choices, it can sound like an ultimatum.

An example when the choices are not empowering:

“Katy, it's tidy up time. You either pack away your blocks or I will take them away for a week.”

It sounds like an ultimatum, which can make your child upset, because she is actually forced to do something.

The other way of making your children to cooperate is:

2. When you SHARE what you need instead of saying “no”.

When you say “no” to your children, they may feel restricted, upset and think that they are under control.

However, if you tell them WHAT TO DO instead of what not to do, you might be more successful.

For example:

When your child is running in the room, you could say:

- *"Honey, we walk in the room."*

But if you say:

- *"Honey, stop running. (or) No running in the room"*

It probably won't work.

Why? Because one, children will immediately think of running when you say, "no running".

They picture it and they may keep doing it or start doing something else, maybe an even more annoying thing.

Two, because you didn't say what you want them to do, you only said "no running" that doesn't tell them too much. Just say what they can do, because it will be easier for them to understand you.

Another example:

Your child is jumping on the sofa. You can say:

"The sofa is for sitting. We can go outside later to jump and run a little bit."

Thank you and speak to you later!

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