






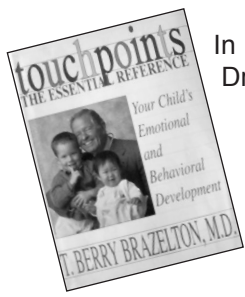
**Dear Baby TALK Parents,**

When you watch the incredible activity level of your fifteen-month-old, it may seem impossible to you that he was so recently a helpless infant! Sometime early in his second year, he has probably become a toddler, and his life is now a whirlwind of activity. His curiosity and success at walking keep him in perpetual motion as he seeks to move, to learn and to establish his independence.

Your toddler's capabilities for exploration will undoubtedly begin to take him beyond the bounds of safety or appropriate behavior. Some of his behavior will be his way of asking you to set limits. He may ask for limits in a variety of ways:

-  Your child may reach for something forbidden but first look back to make sure you are watching. This is a clear signal for you to step in and say, "Stop!"
-  When your toddler is tired or stressed, he may need you to help him set a limit on his activity. When you are on the phone, going to the grocery store, or otherwise preoccupied, he may build up to an out-of-control state. On these occasions, he may need for you to step in and set a limit for him.

 He may ask for limits by behavior which explores the question, "Who is in control here?" Every toddler needs the assurance that somebody bigger is **in control**. As much as he enjoys gaining independence, his safety and security depend on his knowing that you love him enough to provide limits for him. He needs to practice his independence, but not by crossing the street or climbing up to the medicine cabinet. You will have to choose when to let him have control, and when to require him to accept your limits for him.



In his book Touchpoints, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton states,

*"Next to love, a sense of discipline is a parent's second most important gift to a child."*  
 ~T. Berry Brazelton M.D.  
Touchpoints

Many issues, such as your child's need for limits, will bring changes in your role as parent. As your child develops, you will find that parenthood places different demands on you. For a further discussion of the relationship between parents and their toddlers, you may enjoy reading Toddlers and Parents by Dr. Brazelton, Delta 1989.





## TEMPER TANTRUMS

Toddlers experience inner conflict between their desire for independence and their dependence on others for help, safety and limits. When they experience this inner conflict, they lack the emotional maturity to deal well with it. The normal result of this conflict may be a temper tantrum.

Tantrums may be noisy and even alarming for parents. It is difficult to sit idly by while your child screams, pounds the floor and holds his breath! But the reality is this: Only your child can learn to control and contain this inner turmoil! It is not your business, really, that your child is experiencing this tantrum, and it really is best for you to have as little to do with it as possible.

If tantrums are a problem with your child, here are a couple of steps to try:

-  **Take time out.** Pick up your toddler and hold her quietly or put her somewhere safe to "throw" her tantrum.
-  **Walk away.** Walk out of sight until the tantrum lessens or has ended.

When the tantrum is over, your toddler will need reassurance and comfort about this inner turmoil she is learning to control. You may want to comfort her by saying, *"It's terrible being so upset, isn't it? I'm sorry I can't help you more. I love you, but controlling your temper is your job."* At this point, let the tantrum be over. Don't talk about it anymore. Let her have a fresh start by moving on to some new activity.

## WHAT A BUSY KID!

Your toddler spends much time being "busy." Once walking is underway, she will be moving on to **climbing, running** and other variations. Of course, she will explore any stairs she can, so only allow her to practice climbing when you are there to watch.

She will also be busy "helping" you around the house. Parents are still her favorite playmates and

she will enjoy **pretending** to do the same activities as you: talking on the telephone, folding laundry, reading the newspaper. Let her "help" you as much as possible: When you are cooking, give her a small pan and a spoon so that she can "cook," too!

She will enjoy repetitive play: building with blocks and knocking them down so she can build again, and filling a container to pour it out. Toddlers love these activities and are **learning important concepts** through this kind of play. **Bathtime** is about more than getting clean for toddlers. It can provide a wonderful opportunity to play if you provide a few small containers to be filled and emptied.

## COMMUNICATION

Your toddler is probably trying to communicate with you more all the time. She may understand many words that you say to her now, and can probably say a few words for the objects and people in her life. Certainly, she will soon be using the word **"NO!"** You may begin to notice frustration in your toddler when she is not able to get her message across to you. You may be able to understand her meaning by "listening" to her body language and considering her situation.

Children gain confidence and happiness when they learn enough language to be able to express themselves with words. You will see enormous growth in your child's ability to use words in the next two years. He will be adding to his vocabulary every day, and you will be his greatest resource for this learning.

In addition to your **conversations** with him, he will learn a great deal through your **reading** to him. Books may become an important part of your toddler's life as he grows in his interest in using language. He may toddle over to you with the same favorite book for you to read each time you sit down. He may enjoy cuddling with you as you share favorite books. Remember that his attention span may be very short at this stage, so that he may only be interested in a few pages before he is ready to toddle off again.

Read as much as your toddler wants to hear. **Never force a busy toddler to sit and read a book!** Keep offering books in a positive way. Your toddler is likely to be hooked on books soon!

## WHAT IS IT?



Books are a good way to teach your toddler new words. As you read, point to an object on the page and say its name. Soon your child will want to point and name it, too! Many books have been

written for toddlers for the purpose of introducing them to new words. Here are some excellent examples:

### My Car

Byron Barton, Greenwillow 2001

### Maisy's Big Flap Book

Lucy Cousins, Candlewick 2001

### The Everything Book

Denise Fleming,  
Henry Holt 2000



### It's a Baby's World

Amanda Haley,  
Little, Brown 2001

### Baby's Book of Animals

Roger Priddy, Dorling Kindersley 1993

### Show Me!

Tom Tracy,  
Illus. by Darcia Labrosse,  
Harper Collins 1999






### The Baby's Word Book

Sam Williams,  
Greenwillow 1999

## YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

Through her first year, your child grew in her understanding of who she is. Each time you held her in your arms, looked her in the eye and called her by name, you were giving her the message that she was **valuable**. She was beginning to develop esteem for herself, which led to her feeling esteem for you, and eventually for others in her life as well. As an active toddler, there will be times when she will displease you by her sometimes "challenging" behavior. This is a time when she is looking to you to set limits. But it will be important for you to continue to let her know that you think she is wonderful, even on days when her behavior is problematic. How can you help your child to grow in self-esteem?

-  Really listen when she tries to talk to you.
-  Give your child a little of your undivided attention each day.
-  Tell your child you think she's great.
-  "Catch her in the act" of being good.
-  When she misbehaves, tell her you don't like the behavior, but don't tell her she's a bad child.
-  Remember: You can never "spoil" a child with **hugs, kisses and smiles!**

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 **Baby TALK**

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