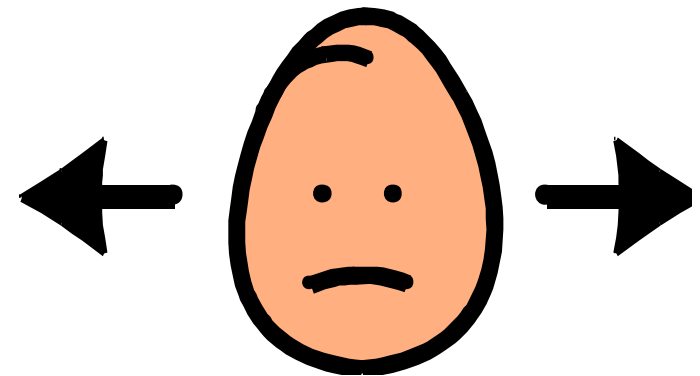
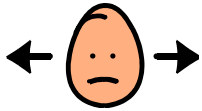


# Specific challenging behaviour

No! No! No!





## Saying no - what is really happening?

Where?			
Who was there?			
When?			
What happened before?			
What did everyone do afterwards?			
Why do you think the behaviour is happening?			

## NO! NO! NO!

Some toddlers' constant use of the word "no" stems from their strong desire to be independent. It can drive you to distraction, but there are ways to deal with this phase in a positive manner.

A toddler's desire for independence can mean she displays a lot of unreasonable negative behaviour that's puzzling or, at worst, irritating. Common examples include turning down food she enjoyed last week and insisting you carry out an impossible task, such as finding a favourite toy that's been left at home.

This difficult phase may not last long in some toddlers, but for others it can go on for many months or even continue into later childhood. This can be hard to handle.

It helps to realise that this behaviour is a normal developmental stage - toddlers are just trying their new-found will as they make a bid for independence.

Some toddlers may say "no, no, no" over and over to themselves, about nothing in particular. They're demonstrating the negative streak that's at its peak during these years.

### What to do to avoid 'No!' ~ positive steps ~

- You'll keep your sanity if you make an effort at the beginning of the toddler stage to **'toddler-proof' the setting** - this cuts down the need for unnecessary battles.
- It helps if she doesn't get too tired or hungry - **regular mealtimes and sleep-times make a big difference.**

- Make a determined effort to **keep your use of the word "no" to a minimum**. As far as possible, **make your requests positive**: "Keep your bike on the pavement" rather than "Don't go on the road," for example. If you have to refuse a request, use phrases such as, "Great idea, we'll play that later" instead of "No, I'm too busy to play with you."
- If the toddler is strong-willed and often challenges you - **do your best to be patient** and remember this stage won't last forever.
- Toddlers need to try out things for themselves as often as possible - so **try not to be too controlling**. For example, it can help to let the child collect their own apron before meal time
- **When it has to be "no"**, for safety reasons perhaps, make it calm and firm. Show the toddler you mean it, but don't get angry. For younger toddlers you may have to add actions to your words - move them away from the item, and offer a toy to take their mind off it.
- **Use clever tactics** - "I bet I can race you to get your shoes on" often works better than "Get your shoes on now."
- **Offer the toddler choices** - within limits - to keep battles to a minimum, so that "no" is a less likely response. "Would you like an apple or orange?" for example.
- One of the most useful techniques with toddlers is **distraction**, and you should use it for as long as it works. Saying thing such as, "I think I can see a...." or suddenly starting a song such as *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* often makes toddlers forget they were about to start a battle.

### What to do when the child does not say 'No!

- **Use lots of praise** to encourage good behaviour: "Good boy,

you tidied away your toys when I asked," for example. This will help to make him want to repeat the behaviour.

### What to do when the child says 'No!

- **Try not to laugh at the toddler when they say "no"** - it can be tempting when it's amusing, but this is likely to upset a small child who takes their independence seriously, or can help to reaffirm the behaviour and encourage the child to do it more!
- **Don't waste time arguing with a very young toddler**. Moving them away from the soil works better than saying "Don't eat that!"

### Tips on avoiding saying "no"

- Divert and distract ~ these work best on children under two
- Give limited choices ~ "would you like ham or cheese in your sandwich?"
- Explain why things have to be ~ this works best with two and three year olds
- Use delaying words such as 'later perhaps' or 'Not until after lunch'
- Offer alternatives ~ 'you can't write on the wall but you can write on this piece of paper'
- Lighten up! ~ Remember your sense of humour and think does this really matter?
- Keep a positive attitude ~ look for good behaviour and praise the child for it.