

Dealing With 'No' At Day Care - Toddler Negativism

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How to handle toddler negativism and minimize the 'NO's at day care.
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We all know the scenario…. toddler hears the word 'no' many times, toddler ignores the word 'no', toddler learns the word 'no', toddler thinks saying the word 'no' is absolutely hilarious, the word 'no' becomes apparently ineffective and provider is at wits end! Enunciating the word 'no' is easier than saying 'yes', add that to the fact that kids tend to hear 'no' a lot more frequently and you get a perfect recipe for this seeming negativism.

{bot_wrgoogle}Toddlers are experimenting with their developing personalities, identities and emerging independence and tend to use this strong, simple yet popular word to demonstrate their individualism. 'No' becomes a declaration of separateness and will be directed at everything and everyone. How to counter this negativism? While rules and boundaries are necessary we should try to limit the authoritarian directives, redirect behaviors and save the 'no's for when they are absolutely essential. 'No's are vital for health and safety issues but too many can be stifling for a child and they will rebel or simply ignore all those overwhelming rules.

Avoid arbitrary rules - 'don't do that because I said so' instead offering a rationale - 'don't put your fingers in the door jam because they'll get chopped off!!'. Explaining the reasons for your rules to kids helps them to understand why they exist thus making it easier to follow them. Don't anticipate bad behavior (even though you have a fairly good idea that George is about to spill his juice), wait until it has happened before you yell 'no' otherwise you are simply filling your days with unnecessary 'no's. Try to offer positive suggestions - 'Let's paint this nice card for mom' is more likely to have a positive effect than 'Don't paint on the table'.

Offer alternatives to off limit items so that when a child reaches for the teacher's scissors you can say 'here, this curly straw is for you' or allow participation in certain things under supervision. When you say 'no' mean 'no'. You may be tired and wrung out but you must be firm and consistent - kids can spot a feeble, distracted 'no' from a mile off. Remember also, you are the adult, you are in charge you are in control. Remain calm, don't respond with anger and never plead. A calm 'no' is the most authoritative and effective. And finally, always praise good and positive behavior. In a sea of 'no' the tiniest ripple of compliance should be acknowledged and rewarded.

Fiona Lohrenz drew on her 10 years experience of running a day care to found ChildCareOnly.com and produce a 'How to Start a Day Care Business' DVD guide: www.startchildcare.com Fiona can be reached at her website: <http://www.childcareonly.com>