

Letter to Parents of Toddlers



FAQ on Teaching Toddlers Kindness

Dear Parents of Toddlers,

We are so glad that you are joining us for this adventure in learning how to teach your toddlers kindness! We know that you probably are sleep deprived most of the time, juggling many aspects of life, and may even have younger and older siblings in your home.

We have designed this course to address the developmental needs of toddlers and provide strategies for busy parents to use to infuse kindness into their home by teaching their toddlers to be kind. Along with the curriculum, you have instructors ready to answer your emails, a Facebook Support Group to provide a community of support through the course, and downloadable printables you can use now and in the future.

As you begin this course, we wanted to address a couple of frequently asked questions. You'll see them below.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for being thoughtful parents; parents that see kindness as an important aspect of their child's development.

My best,

Sheila

Sheila Sjolseth
Course Instructor at the Kindness Academy
President and Founder of Pennies of Time

Frequently Asked Questions for Teaching Toddlers Kindness

What if my toddler is shy?

Modeling and practicing at home are two ways that will increase your toddler's skills and confidence. If your toddler doesn't want to give a fist bump or a high five to someone, don't force her to do it. Model the behavior yourself and provide a chance to practice at home.

If you have a shyer toddler, make sure that the stress of being "on display" or meeting someone new doesn't overpower the chance to be kind. Also, it is okay for quiet acts of kindness to occur. Maybe, instead of verbally giving someone a compliment or thank you, your shyer child can write a note or draw a picture. Your children will each approach helping someone in different ways. That is the way it should be, and we encourage you to embrace that.

What if my toddler isn't speaking or nonverbal?

That is okay. The materials in this course were specifically designed to help the range of toddler skills, from a very young toddler that have low verbal skills to the older toddler that is quite verbal. This course will provide information on how you can model and provide opportunities for language development through modeling, reading, and play scenarios.

- 2-3 minutes at a time of you verbally processing your thoughts and modeling behavior will be the perfect amount as you consistently use the strategies in the course. Small experiences are impactful.
- Be open to using physical cues, like sign language, with your toddler. Many parents have experienced a high level of success by using sign language to help their toddler communicate.

You don't need to spend a long time on this, which is good to know because some parents feel like they are talking to themselves if their toddler is nonverbal. Although your toddler may not be verbal, your toddler is watching and learning.

What do I do when MY toddler is the one that is unkind?

It is going to happen. And, it happens to all of us. None of us want the toddler that bites or takes away toys. The flipside to this: This course will bolster what you know about how to negotiate when your toddler is unkind and provide tools to increase language development, which is one of the biggest reasons why a toddler behaves inappropriately.

What do I do when my kid is upset?

One of the things we find is that parents want their kids to be happy all the time. We know as adults that there are times when kids will not be happy just as there are times when we, as adults, are not happy. As parents, we don't need to solve all the problems to make our kids happy.

Whether they are experiencing a negative emotion because of their own actions or the actions of another, we do our part by helping them understand the emotion, comfort them when needed, and provide guidance on how to navigate how they are feeling. The more we guide our children through the process of understanding their emotions and what options there are to take, the better equipped they will be to problem solve on their own. The more they go through the problem solving process and understand how their actions affect others, the stronger their skills will be to be kind and treat others nicely.

When your child is upset:

1. Listen to what is going on.
2. Help them label what is happening and what they are feeling.
3. Offer suggestions on what to do. You may need to verbalize why a particular suggestion is helpful.
4. Guide them through the process of deciding what step to take next.
5. Resist taking the situation personally and resist solving the problem for them.

What is my child is a young preschooler? Will I get much out of this course for toddlers?

Maybe. We focus on strategies used to develop the skills to see need and ways to help. These skills are ones that cross “age” boundaries. The course provides strategies to develop:

- emotional recognition (correctly recognizing emotions in himself and those around him),
- kind language (ability to use the cues in faces/body language and words to determine what is going on around him and how to react appropriately), and
- exposure to acts of kindness.

If your young preschooler needs help in any of those areas, then this course will be helpful for you.

I am concerned with my toddler’s developmental progress. I think he is progressing too slowly. Will this course help?

This course is not intended as a diagnostic process. At the same time, the tools and strategies used are ones that will help with developmental progress, whether your toddler is delayed or not. The instructors, for the purpose of this course, will not be able to diagnose delays. If you are concerned with your toddlers physical or language development, please discuss your concerns with your pediatrician.