

JANUARY 2022

TIMELY TOPICS

JORDAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- Teaching Safety Skills to Toddlers & Preschoolers
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PARENT CLASSES:

1/20 Teaching Safety Skills to Toddlers and Preschoolers

1/20 Talk to Your Family and Friends about Your Child's Special Needs

*See last page for details regarding registration and logging in.

TEACHING SAFETY SKILLS TO TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

It can be difficult to know where to begin to teach your two year old how to be safe. It's even more difficult when your child has limited language and may not be understanding many words yet. Toddlers and preschoolers are also very impulsive! They are also not yet able to think about consequences. What could happen if I touch something that's sharp or hot? What might happen if I run into the street? What could happen if I don't stay with my mom in the store?

Even though our kids are young and may not be understanding everything we say, it's incredibly important that we begin teaching them the basics of safety. We need to teach them how to hold our hand. They need to learn where it's ok to play in the home and what's not safe to touch. We need to teach them how to stay in their car seat or stay seated in the grocery cart.

By setting up our home environment, using simple language and visuals, and practicing new skills, we can make sure that our toddlers and preschoolers stay safe! Learning these skills now allows them to participate in more activities at home, in the community, and at school.

Expectations

Parents, teachers, and caregivers need to make sure we keep appropriate expectations based on the age and abilities of our kids. We cannot assume they know to do something unless we've taught it, practiced it, and seen our child consistently do it. The same goes with safety expectations!



What does my child understand now?

In order to set appropriate expectations around safety and following directions, think about what your child understands right now.

Does he understand the word hot and that it's dangerous? Does she know what "hold my hand" means?

Are there certain situations in which your child can focus better?

The expectations for your child might be different than your other kids at the same age or what you see your neighbor kids doing. That's ok! We need to know what they understand now so we know where to start.



Use simple words and explanations.

It's important to keep our words and expectations simple and concrete. This matters even more when our kids are young and have limited language.

For example: Say, "Hot!" instead of "It's hot from being in the oven and we don't want to touch it because you can burn your hand."

Also, tell your child what you want them to do to stay safe instead of overusing "no," "stop," and "don't." For example, say "Hold my hand" instead of "No running in the parking lot."



Tone of voice and facial expressions match.

Our kids may not understand some of the words we are saying so we need to make sure that when it's a safety issue our tone of voice and facial expressions match our message.

If your child is about to touch something hot, your tone of voice and facial expression need to match that it's dangerous! Your child is much more likely to tune into you if your tone of voice changes. If we nicely say "No, no," it's very likely our child isn't going to respond.

Environmental Arrangement

A great way to teach your child what is safe and what is not is to use environmental arrangement. This provides structure to your home and prevents your child from getting into things that aren't safe. You may be doing some of these already! 😊



Child-proofing

Locks, gates, and outlet covers are simple and effective ways to teach your child what they are not allowed to get into and where they cannot go. You may have to try several types until you find the best one for your family.



Out of sight, out of mind

Keeping items hidden that are dangerous and off-limits is another example of environmental arrangement. Oftentimes, your child will focus on toys and other appropriate items, if you keep unsafe items out of sight and out of reach.



Safe places to play

We also want to focus on where it's safe for your child to be. Where are they supposed to play? Sleep? Eat? Watch shows? Teaching them where they should be during these activities will show your child where the safe spaces in your home are.



Appropriate toys

Keep your child safe by making sure they have appropriate toys. This often means limiting toys that have pieces that can come off and those that have a lot of little parts that can be swallowed.



Supervision

The best way to keep your child safe and teach them safety skills is to supervise them! You can redirect them to another activity, show them how to go up stairs safely, and model other safety skills. Our youngest kids need constant supervision throughout the day.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Whether it's holding your hand in a parking lot, staying seated in the grocery cart, walking with you on the sidewalk, or waiting for hot food to cool down, your child will need lots of opportunities to practice! Think of the last time you learned how to do something new -- you wanted to practice a lot before you felt comfortable doing it on your own!



Practice at home first before taking the show on the road.



Practice is the goal! Go to the store, on a walk, etc with the intent of practicing that safety skill.



Practice when you have the time - not when you're rushed.



Make it fun and encourage your child's efforts!



Bring extra motivation (candy, bubbles, etc) that you can give to your child as they walk with you, follow directions, etc.

Join Us!

Free Classes for Parents!

Date For All Classes:

- **Thursday, January 20, 2022**

Location:

- **ZOOM**
 - **Meeting ID: 663 934 6024**
 - **Password: 589035**

Teaching Your Toddler and Preschooler Safety Skills

- **9:30am - 10:30am OR 1:00pm - 2:00pm**

Talking to Friends and Family About Your Child's Special Needs

- **11:00am - 12:00pm**

Please RSVP by emailing or calling:

- **Lisa Cvetnich at lisa.cvetnich@jordandistrict.org**
- **801-567-8510**

We'll see you there!