

Behavioral Problems Of Toddlers

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Abstract: A toddler is a child between the ages of one and three. Toddlerhood is an extremely important period for developmental achievement and intellectual growth. It is a normal part of growth and development cycle for toddlers to portray behavioral problems. Parental, family and socio-economic environment significantly contributes to the occurrence of behavioral problems. Common behavioral problems exhibited are hair pulling, head banging, hitting, nail biting, negativity and tantrums. There are different ways to manage these behavioral problems. So the parents should be aware of the various strategies to deal with these behavioral problems without interrupting the normal development of toddlers.

Keywords: Toddler, Behavioral problems

I. INTRODUCTION

A toddler is a child between the ages of one and three. The term toddler comes from the way children first walk, which is at first unsteady and more like toddle than actual walking. This age is sometimes referred to as ‘terrible twos’, because of the temper tantrums for which they are famous.

II. IMPORTANCE TO KNOW ABOUT TODDLER PERIOD

Toddlerhood is the time of intense exploration of the environment as the children attempt to find out how things work and how to control others through temper tantrums, negativism and obstinacy. Although it can be challenging time for parents and child as each learns to know the other better. It is an extremely important period for developmental achievement and intellectual growth. It is a normal part of growth and development cycle for toddlers to portray behavioral problems. Temper tantrums occurs because toddlers have not learned to accept frustration. When they want to do some thing but cannot they are overwhelmed by a sense of helplessness and dissatisfaction. Tantrum behaviors are simply the release of those feelings. Though they are normal part of the toddler period, temper tantrums can be

distressing to parents. Parenting practices have been shown to be strongly associated with their development. When they become regular and intense parents need to look into what causing them and find ways to stop them. Temper tantrum in young children can be an early signal of mental health problems but the parents should able to differentiate when disruptive behaviors are typical or a sign of serious problem. Early identification and treatment of emerging mental health problems in children are keys to prevent serious mental health problems in future.

III. DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TODDLER WHICH LEADS TO BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

- ✓ Toddlers can't express themselves very well. Two or three year old may know a lot of words, but he does not yet have the ability to construct complex sentences or put words to all the emotions he is feeling.
- ✓ They are easily overwhelmed. Toddlers thrive on routine, and a change can really throw them off.
- ✓ They want to do more than they can handle. Toddlers are naturally very curious and are thrilled to discover they can suddenly do so many things on their own.
- ✓ They do not understand delayed gratification.

- ✓ They think they are the center of the universe.
- ✓ Toddlers generally understand more than they can express. A frustrating experience that may precipitate a tantrum.
- ✓ Another task toddlers are faced with is an increasing need for autonomy. Toddlers want a sense of independence and control over the environment more than they may be capable of handling.

IV. CAUSES OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

There can be many causes of behavioral problems. Some of the causes are indicators of family problems: inconsistent discipline, criticizing too much, parents being too protective or neglectful, children not having enough love and attention from their mother and father, problems with the marriage, interference with play, emotional problems for either parent, meeting a stranger, rivalry with brothers or sisters, having problems with speech, and illness. Other common cause of behavioral problems include being hungry or tired.

V. RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

There is a range of risk factors for behavioral problems in children that relate to the parent, family or social or economic environment. The following factors have the potential to negatively influence children's behavior.

PARENTAL FACTORS

- ✓ Marital conflict
- ✓ Parental mental illness
- ✓ Poor communication between parents or parent and child
- ✓ Poor parenting skills

FAMILY FACTORS

- ✓ Parental rejection of child
- ✓ Inconsistent management including harsh discipline
- ✓ Large family size
- ✓ Absent father
- ✓ Parent with anti-social personality disorder and alcohol dependence
- ✓ Aggressive behavior of parents and siblings

SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ Poor quality and quantity of maternal social contacts with relatives or friends outside the
- ✓ Socio-economic disadvantage

VI. COMMON BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS IN TODDLERS

A. HAIR PULLING

Whenever the child doesn't get his way, he grabs a handful of hair on the head closest to him especially of the mother and gives it a fierce tug. The reason for this is they have got a limited vocabulary and poor social skills, so it's difficult for them to use words to express their frustration and anger.

B. HEAD BANGING

At bedtime, your toddler goes through a disturbing ritual. He bangs his head against the crib or the wall next to his bed until, finally exhausted, he falls asleep. It is a way for your toddler to release pent-up energy and tension at the end of the day.

C. HITTING & KICKING

At around age two when walking is no longer a novelty, children often regress and want to be carried a lot. Toddler may be torn between her independent impulses and her very compelling desire to be attached to mother.

D. NAIL BITING

Child is constantly munching on his nails; it is become so ingrained he does not even seem to be aware he is doing it. Toddlers usually bite their nails when they are stressed or bored.

E. NEGATIVITY

When the toddlers are offered with their favorite story, best-loved dress, or most favorite food item they will respond by saying no to everything. "No" is actually a toddler's declaration of independence.

F. SCREAMING

Toddler has discovered the joys of flexing his vocal muscles. It may look like mischief, but children this age are just having fun experimenting with yet another thing they have discovered they can do in this case, create sound.

G. SIBLING RIVALRY

One minute, the toddler and sibling happily hanging out together, the next they are at each other's throats. In the blink of an eye, family fun erupts into a sibling slugfest. This is because children are subconsciously competing for the same big prize the mothers' love and attention.

H. TANTRUMS

One minute the toddler is as happy as can be; the next he is a ball of rage -howling, flailing, thrashing, and out of control. The most common reasons include an inability to express feelings and desires through words; the need to assert one's independence; feeling a lack of control; having either too few or too many limits; and hunger, fatigue, overstimulation, and boredom.

VII. STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR

- ✓ Ignore mild behavior: If a child does not get attention for a behavior, he will often stop doing it.
- ✓ Use distraction: Try redirecting your child to another behavior, toy, or activity. You can also use humor as a distraction tool.
- ✓ Give warnings then follow through: For example, "Food stays on our plate. If it goes on the floor, I will take it away" (the warning). If the warning needs to be repeated more than twice, take the plate away and end the meal (the consequence).
- ✓ Time-out: Some parents feel that brief 10-second time-outs can be effective for toddlers. Lift the child out of the situation, face the child away from the parent, and count aloud to 10. This removes the child from an activity, distracts them with counting, and introduces them to the concept of time-out.
- ✓ Calming time: Giving your child a quiet activity (drawing, coloring, puzzle pieces, etc) can calm her better than simply sitting
- ✓ Stay in control: Be emotionally neutral and matter-of-fact. Avoid spanking, shouting, or pleading for cooperation.

Trial and error: Remember that each child is different and your strategies may need to change for each child or as your child grows through different phases. Find what works specifically for you and your child.

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