

Navigating Challenging Behaviors: Biting, Defiance & Tantrums

Top Q&As from Dr. Lauren's Webinar

As young children grow, they will go through so many changes including behavioral challenges. The behaviors are often a normal part of children's development, and this webinar will help you understand the developmental reason behind the behaviors, how you can help guide your little ones through it and techniques that will work for different ages and stages!

Biting

Infants often bite when they are teething. Young toddlers bite out of excitement, exploration or in response to changes in their environment. Older toddlers and two-year-olds most frequently bite as a communication method to express their wants, needs or frustrations. It could also happen if your child doesn't get their own way. For children who are 3 years of age or older, biting is an aggressive behavior. Understanding the root cause can help tailor the response more appropriately to quickly curb the behavior. •

Defiance

Raising a young child means preparing to hear the word, "No!" One of the primary developmental milestones of early childhood is the emerging development of independence — motor, verbal, self-help skills, etc. This need for complete independence tends to peak at or around age 2, but it may continue at varying degrees of intensity depending on a child's personality. While defiance can be about independence, it's



also attention-seeking. All behavior is communication, and defiance may simply be a means of getting your attention or controlling a situation. Think about how you can give your child more independence through choices as a way toward harmony. •

Tantrums

Tantrums occur when children want the independence to make their own decisions but don't have the self-regulation skills to handle frustration when something doesn't go the way they imagined. Whether the tantrum is triggered by communication gaps, frustration or to control a situation, there are specific techniques that can be used to de-escalate the situation and help a child calm down. How you react to the tantrum will predict a child's tantrum intensity and may impact the likelihood that they'll repeat the behavior. Taking an opposite position to a child in terms of volume, speed of movement and pace of speech may be enough to imbalance the tantrum. Sportscasting is another technique we will explore to help curb a tantrum in action. •