



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Top tips

**for parents of toddlers
and pre-school children**



**Magu plant.
Rhowch amser iddo.**

**Parenting.
Give it time.**

This advice promotes positive parenting - a parenting style that focuses on what your child is doing right and their strengths.

All children need boundaries and discipline. Positive parenting is based on creating this with warmth and respect between parent and child.



Potty training

Start by sitting your child on the potty or toilet after meals and drinks. They will need to feel comfortable and safe. Their feet should be flat on a firm surface and their knees should be higher than their hips. If using a toilet, they will need a step to achieve this. Their bottom should be well supported.

Build the time slowly, until your child is able to sit for two to three minutes. Give them lots of attention when they are practising sitting, try singing with them or reading a book. If you are lucky and they wee or poo while they are there give them lots of praise.

Make things familiar and put the potty where your child can see it and show them what it's for. You could let them sit their teddy on it. Let your child see you using the toilet and explain what you're doing.

Potty Training

You might notice that your child has a poo at a certain time of the day. They might jiggle, pass wind or hide behind the curtain when they need to go. Try encouraging your child to go on the potty or toilet at this time.

Encourage a healthy diet and fluid intake as drinking well helps your child's bladder and fruit and vegetables help to prevent constipation.



Dress your child in clothes that are easy to pull up and down. When your child is sitting happily on the potty or toilet use training or ordinary pants. Do not use a mixture of pants and pull ups or nappies – it will confuse your child.

Expect some accidents and setbacks. Some days your child will be happy using the potty or toilet. On other days they will have lots of accidents. This is normal.

For more tips on potty training and staying dry at night, visit [here](#).





Understanding and soothing a crying child

Just like babies, toddlers cry because they're hungry, tired, uncomfortable or need to feel connected with you and it will become easier once your toddler can talk and express why they're upset.

Firstly, check they're not unwell, have a high temperature, or in pain. Try and then work out why they are crying. Using **HALT** is good to remember – are they **Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?**

It's important that your toddler knows that you are close to them – give them a hug and make them feel safe and secure.

Tantrums

Why does my child have tantrums?

Sometimes, toddlers may become overwhelmed by big emotions. Tantrums are a normal part of growing up. As young children may not yet have the words or understanding to communicate their feelings and needs, tantrums are a way to convey this information through their behaviour.



Top tips

Plan ahead. Take some snacks and small toys when you go out and about.

Play every day. Go to the park, play in the garden or put some music on and dance so your child can let off steam.

Can I avoid tantrums?

Understanding the cause of the tantrums helps. Remember

HALT - is your child **Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?**

Help your child express their feelings. If they are happy, sad, cross, disappointed or frustrated, teach them the word for that emotion.

Give some simple choices.

Children crave independence and may get angry if they are never given any choice or control. Let them make small decisions for example “apple or banana?”

What should I do when my child has a tantrum?

Make sure they're safe. Stay nearby and move your child to somewhere safe, quiet and calm if needed.

Stay calm. Take a deep breath and count to ten. Don't try to reason with them or shout. Don't worry about what other people think.

When your child has calmed down, comfort them. Let them know you are proud of them for calming down.

Never smack your child. This is illegal in Wales and won't help you to understand what's caused the tantrum.

More top tips for parenting toddlers:

Bedtimes

- Have a consistent bedtime routine and find one that works for your family.
- Avoid too much stimulation and screen-based activity before bed.
- Leave a night light on or leave the door ajar and tuck them up and say goodnight.
- Check your toddler has done everything they need. Had a drink? Been to the toilet or used the potty? Got their favourite teddy?
- If your toddler keeps getting out of bed, return them gently and calmly to bed, and do this as many times as it takes.

Mealtimes

- Eat at similar times every day. Try to have meals before your child gets too hungry or too tired to eat.
- Let your child feed themselves. Offer finger foods (cut food into strips or fingers) and let your child use their hands rather than a spoon or fork. In the early days, your child will find this easier to manage.
- It's normal for toddlers to refuse to eat certain foods or to refuse to eat at all.
- Be positive and calm and praise them when trying new foods. Ignore the fussing as much as you can.



Be a role model

Toddlers won't understand if the behaviour they see from you is not allowed for them.

Routines

Simple routines help your child to feel more secure. Plan a simple, doable schedule for getting up, meals, bathtime, exercise and going to bed.

Where can I get support?

It's important to look after yourself too. It's ok to ask for help. More advice on that [here](#).

The Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L) call free on 0800 132 737 (confidential 24-hour service) or email call@helpline.wales. C.A.L.L offers emotional support on mental health and related matters.