

# 5 Tips for Encouraging Independence in Toddlers

## 1. Expect more

Most people have a tendency to live up (or down) to expectations - preschoolers included. Raise the bar and your child will probably stretch to meet it.

## 2. Resist doing for your child what they can do for themselves

While it certainly takes longer for your toddler to put on their own socks and shoes or to get themselves dressed, allow extra time so that they can do these things themselves. If you see they are getting frustrated or if the task is taking too long, resist the urge to take over. Instead, ask if they want help or try to coach them through doing it on their own.

## 3. Don't redo what they've already done

If your child make their bed, resist the urge to smooth the blankets. If they dress themselves in stripes and polka dots, compliment them. Unless absolutely necessary, don't fix what your child accomplishes.

## 4. Let them solve simple problems

If you see your child trying to assemble a toy or get a book from a shelf that they can reach if they stand on a step stool, pause before racing over to help. It's natural to want to make everything perfect, but if we do, we cheat kids out of the chance to experience success.

## 5. Assign age-appropriate tasks

Putting your preschooler in charge of a regular, simple task will build their confidence and sense of competency. Just be sure the choose you assign is manageable, the goal is to make your child feel like a capable, contributing member of the family. Most toddlers can put their dirty clothes in the hamper, help sort laundry, put away toys and put their dirty dishes on the counter or in the sink.

***While toddlers want to act like big kids, and in many ways they are, they still have a need to be the baby and to be reassured that mom and dad are there to pick them up when they fall down, to cheer them on when they are tackling a new challenge, and to love them to the moon and back.***