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Control and Dependency

The first half of the third year may remain difficult for you and your child as far as issues of control and dependency are concerned. Although your child's language and self-care skills are more advanced, in some ways your child continues to feel like a tightrope walker, occasionally teetering with uncertainty over what she can and cannot do. Try to recognize your child's need for independence. By promoting independence along with emotional support, parents can help their children through this stage. An extra cuddle or more lavish praise for the good things that the child is doing helps to counteract some of the normal negativism.

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One management technique that works quite well with toddlers is the use of praise to help your child develop a positive self image. You should encourage and delight in your child's new accomplishments and achievements. Praise ["That's good! I like that block tower"], hugs, and kisses are important ingredients in promoting a good self-image. At two and three, a child's self-esteem-how she feels about herself-is often a reflection of her perception of her parents' opinions of her. Interest in and enjoyment of your child's play set the tone for a healthy self-concept.

One of the most difficult jobs parents have is setting reasonable limits for their children. Letting your child know what's expected, what's tolerable, and what's unacceptable is a long term process that continues well into the teenage years. As early as in the first year, for

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

A new baby is a precious gift that should be celebrated. Every new child is unique and a product of the parents. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, there were over 4 million babies born in the US in 2005. The birth rate to teenage moms dropped, while there was a rise in mothers aged 35-44. The birth rate for twins also has risen, with an average of about 31 twin births out of every 1,000 pregnancies.

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example, you are setting some limits by not letting your child stick her fingers into the electrical outlets.

Some potential conflicts can be defused by rearranging the environment, so you don't have to worry about your child's hurting herself, breaking your valuable vase, or eating a poisonous plant. Childproofing the major living quarters in your house allows your child to safely explore many interesting and different objects.

Of course, changing the environment will not take care of those times when a direct confrontation is necessary. It helps to quickly and adeptly address the situation. Tell your child what you don't like about what she is doing. Give her a simple reason why, for example, pulling the tail on the cat hurts the cat. Parents don't need to use more than one or two sentences of explanation. Ask the child to stop, if that doesn't work, put the child on a chair for a few minutes either in the same room with you or in a different room. After the allotted time has elapsed, you can talk about what

happened. Later in the day, but not immediately afterward, be sure to let your child know that you still love her by giving her a hug and kiss. On a particularly bad day, you may even want to engage her in a very special time just for the two of you. The earlier you begin to set aside a special chair or place to be used for thinking about unacceptable behavior, the sooner your child will learn that some things just mustn't be done.

Sweet Baby Hamper Basket



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In the early years, parents take on the roles of caregiver, teacher, and playmate. Creating an emotionally supportive environment is essential for your child to become independent yet aware of her parents' love and acceptance. On occasion, behavioral extremes are acceptable for two year olds. As a regular pattern however, the child who is always out of control or overly compliant is telling you something. These are warning signals that suggest that you should take a good hard look at your disciplining techniques. Ask yourself: Are my methods so loose that the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are unclear? Am I so rigid in setting limits that my child is afraid to upset me by resisting my controls? Am I providing enough time for relaxed activities and play with my child?

By the end of the third year, with increased growth, maturity and confidence, your child will become willing to relinquish some of her insistence in being independent. She may even give up some of her executive independence ["I want to do it myself!"] for your love and affection. Great pleasure is obtained from praise and attention.

Participation in such body management activities such as feeding, toilet training, and dressing becomes a matter of routine. Although many three years olds continue to have high activity levels, their activity begins to be more directed, with a far less frenetic quality.

The secure three year old may be willing to allow you to help her set limits. This new stage has been called the stage of volitional dependence because the child's dependency needs can now be brought under her control. Your child will be less impulsive and more manageable; an occasional explanation of rules will be understood-and actually followed, too. For example, when you are working in one room, you may no longer have to worry about leaving your child to play in another, but instead may be able to trust her not to misbehave.