

Good Parenting

By Rev. Paul Jetter, Pastor of Upper Valley Community Church, Piqua, Ohio
<http://www.uvcc.info>



Comedian Bill Cosby is reported to have once said, "Give me 200 active two-year-olds and I can conquer the world."

I once saw a cartoon in which a frazzled mother was holding a screaming toddler. The room was a mess, water was running over the sink, and childish drawings were all over the wall. The mother held a phone to her ear. The words under the cartoon said, "Forgive me, mother, for when I was two."

The "terrible two's" are not an invention of the mind. Child psychologist James Dobson notes in his book *Dare To Discipline*, "The toddler is the world's most hard-nosed opponent of law and order, and he can make life miserable for his harassed mom. In his own innocent way, he is vicious and selfish and demanding and cunning and destructive." Dobson goes on to say, "The child between fifteen and thirty months of age does not want to be restricted or inhibited in any manner and he is not inclined to conceal his viewpoint. Dr. Dobson says that a child will begin to regularly challenge the parent's authority by the time he is 15 months of age, if not sooner.

And that's why there's an urgency to child rearing. You cannot reason with a child of 15 months. All of your pleading to please Mommy or Daddy falls on deaf ears. He only wants to please himself.

The toddler is too young to understand the value of toys. He sees no reason not to tear up books or throw treasured heirlooms. He cannot understand why everything in his bright beautiful world is not his to possess.

If parents wait until the child is old enough to reason before applying discipline, the battle is sure to be long and painful for everyone involved. However, if the parents establishes their authority early there will be much less need for disciplining the child as he grows older.

It is wiser to teach a child to be courteous with his tricycle than it is to wait until he drives the family car. It is very difficult to restrict the movies he sees as a teen if he had no supervision of what he watched on television as a toddler.

Parents may laugh when their child hits back at them at two, but it's not so funny when he does it when he's twenty. The time to work with a child about picking up his toys is when he is a toddler, not once he is married and on his own.

Dr. Dobson says, "I cannot overemphasize the importance of taking charge of a strong-willed child during the early years of his life. This is not accomplished by being harsh, gruff or stern. Instead the relationship is produced by confident and steady leadership. You are the boss. You are in charge. If you believe it, the child will accept it also."

Jesus said, "*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline*" (Revelation 3:19). Loving parents instill discipline in their young children, not through anger, screaming or abuse, but by controlled loving firmness. Then their children can enjoy trust and respectability for a lifetime.