



**Jaden's
PlayDen**
Child Care Center

Present Parenting for the Early Years

A guidebook for parents
of children ages 1 to 5+

Understand children's behavior and discipline in each stage
Learn ways to connect with our child
Reflect on our discipline strategies

Prepared by
Liway Tayag

Founder of Present Parenting Solutions
and Jaden's Play Den



About Liway Tayag

Founder of Present Parenting Solutions
and Jaden's Play Den



As an early childhood educator and trainer, Liway has dedicated most years of her career studying how children's behavior is affected, changed, and sustained. Through her work, in the U.S.A. and a few parts in Asia, she was able to position herself with a good view of children's beautiful, often misunderstood world.

She has obtained experiences witnessing how behavior is actually a response, or a way of communication, and that discipline is NOT constrained to consequence-punishment, but it is, first, understanding the cause of the behavior, and more importantly teaching the appropriate responses or skills, and along the way, making the necessary arrangements or fixes to the environment and to oneself-paradigms, responses, and all.

Inspired by experiences and research, families' needs across cultural and economic backgrounds, and most strikingly, by children's innate goodness, Li pursued finding solutions to help families and their children who struggle with self-regulation, acknowledging and managing emotions, and using the right, positive communication. Graduate studies and formal trainings have enriched her practice greatly.

Li's main goal is to reach families and professionals so they can take part in making present, mindful practice a way of life. She began her advocacy 3 years ago, Present Parenting Solutions. She also runs a childcare center with her 5-year-old son (Jaden's Play Den). She does consultations for child-oriented businesses, and provides resource-speaking for trainings and classes, and material development.

 [@jadensplayden](#) • [@presentparentingsolutions](#)

 [@presentparentingsolutions_ph](#)

 Kalantas St., Northview 2, Q.C. 1126

 presentparentingsolutions@gmail.com

What is Present Parenting?

Intentional, mindful, deliberate, being in-the-moment- because we know times have brought about rapid changes. We barely have any time with our little one, let alone, time to think of how we respond to them.

We like to believe we are ruled by love, but we must admit, we have mixed “successful” and “happy” (when asked what we want our children to be); we’ve masked our fears with “We’re just doing what’s right and best for our child”.

We focus on nurturing meaningful connections, NOT just positive discipline. We don’t want you to get past tantrum after tantrum; we want you to live a life honoring your child for who he or she is, using positive, respectful communication and other tools for being emotionally responsive. We chase the WHYS and embrace the joy and exhaustion of parenting. By being present, we can be able to do all these. We acknowledge the fact that times are ever changing, but how children should be nurtured- and honored- remain the same.

Principles of Present Parenting

- Children thrive successfully given the right family support.
- Children need understanding, and not just training.
- The ability to care for one’s child relies on self-care.



Children's behavior is their way to communicate something.

To understand children's behavior,
we must take into consideration
child development.



Child
Development

1 to 2+

Children Development 1 to 2+

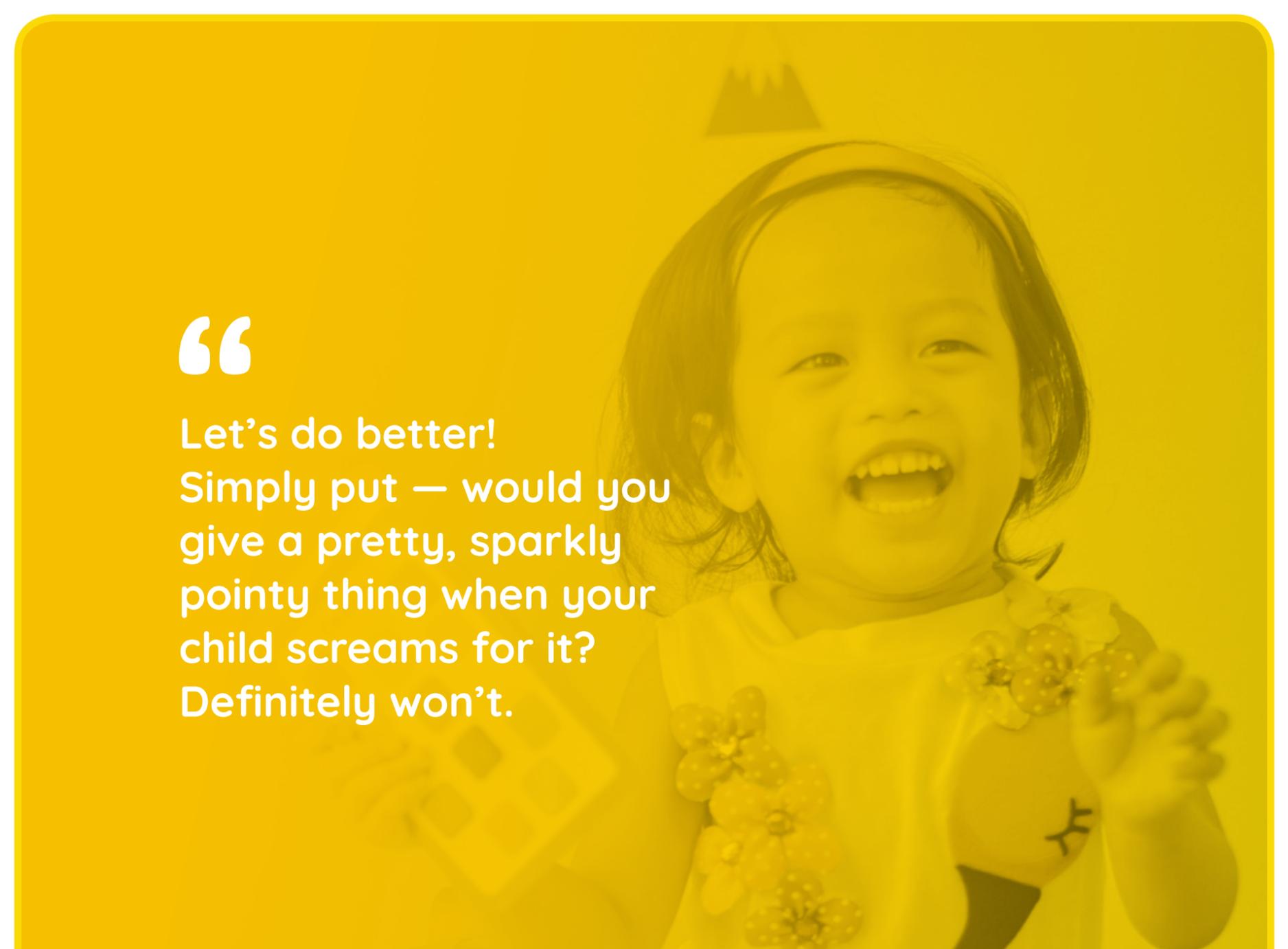
They have little hands and feet, and a big heart; all the emotions are new, and they don't have that skill of managing them. They smile when they are happy; they feel like throwing the nearest object when they get upset. They express in physical ways- yelling, biting, pushing, throwing objects, pulling hair, etc.

But here's the secret- they want to please the adults around them and they thrive in meaningful connections. They love physical affection, too, as much as your praises.

How about your child? Have you seen these in him/her? Write down your observations:

My children expresses his/her emotions by _____

My child loves to be _____



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Let's do better!
Simply put — would you
give a pretty, sparkly
pointy thing when your
child screams for it?
Definitely won't.

When Talking it Through is not yet Possible:

Understanding Children Ages 1 to 2+

We've broken our backs bending and carrying out every task for our little, needy one the day they were born—trying to build a home is another big story. We're tired and there seems to be no end to this.

You're right. Parenting does not have to be so hard, so let's just give what they want when they cry or demand for some little toy or chocolates, right? For all it's worth, just give it- that will be five minutes of peace- ten, if we're lucky.

No? Let's do better! Simply put — would you give a pretty, sparkly pointy thing when your child screams for it?
Definitely won't.

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They are growing less dependent, bursting with immeasurable energy, and they are just getting familiar with the limits or rules you start to set.

Children Development 1 to 2+

They are onto their second year of life and have so much to discover. They are growing less dependent, bursting with immeasurable energy, and they are just getting familiar with the limits or rules you start to set. They will do things despite several reminders.

They have developing understanding of cause-and-effect and the relationship between events- pressing the buttons on the curious little car keys, and beep, beep!, throwing toy in the toilet bowl, and splash! And because they have practiced their grasps, and are more mobile, they can start moving things and take bigger leaps; they explore their surroundings more independently. They do not have that sense of danger yet, and are impulsive to use newly learned skills inappropriately like doing something dangerous or touching some unsafe things.

They will disagree with you too. You say, ‘No touching!’ And they’ll do the exact opposite because they’re learning by exploring! Trust me- your reaction or the words you say is also one of the reasons why they do certain behaviors. At this critical stage where your child looks at you for reaction, make sure that you mean what you say and immediately implement it- Stop is stop, No is really a no, and last is really last!

Children & Tantrums

1. Young children go through tantrums when they can't get what they want or in expression of their frustration. They are encountering these feelings for the first times. They do not have enough words to express in a way that is acceptable and understandable to us adults. That's exactly our role- to provide them alternative ways to 'react'. Just make sure all needs are met- they are fed, diapers changed, are not overly stimulated or too sleepy, and are not feeling sick.
2. When children act out, they never mean to manipulate you. You need to remember that how you respond teaches them that their behavior will elicit that reaction. As young as 6- even 4 months, for example, when your baby throws his bottle, and you get it, you are establishing a 'game'; he keeps throwing and you keep getting it even if you want him to stop.
3. Children need our understanding first. So does their behavior. We need to know why your child is acting the way he is, then we can be more understanding when setting the limits and responding.

It's Not Always a No

There are times when just out of curiosity, your child will cry about something. Let him or her touch it or feel it and then divert the attention. Do the one-finger rule: for example, your child sees a breakable 'toy' or cute-looking figurine, simply model (pointer finger up) and say, 'Touch with one finger', or you can be the one to hold the object for your child to see.

Discipline at this stage

Acknowledge and Label.

Respond emotionally.

Expressing emotions are healthy for your little one. He may scream, lay on the ground, even slap you, bite or throw something or pull his hair. Let's look at this example. Your child suddenly spots a battery, you take it away and he screams. Just say...

“Are you upset?
Aw, J is getting upset, I know...
Mama is getting upset too that
you can't get the battery.
Battery is not a toy, I'm sorry.
Here, we can play with this (toy)”

“Aw... Naiinis ka ba? Mukhang
naiinis ikaw ano? Battery ito,
hindi natin pwede paglaruan eh.
Ito na lang paglaruan mo, Anak.”

Trust that your child understands more than he can talk. These small steps of acknowledging what your child feels can help him express and be clear on what he's feeling in the near future. This is responding emotionally.

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There are still instances where no matter how prepared we are, we just keep encountering tantrum-inducing ones.

Distract and Divert

We more or less know what our child dislikes and we can foresee instances when he is likely to act up (example: when a child is close to his sleeping time, he could be irritable or hyper), so let's be proactive- ease him into the routine and don't let him indulge anymore into a high-energy activity when you want him to settle soon.

There are still instances where no matter how prepared we are, we just keep encountering tantrum-inducing ones. One perfect example- inside a toy store!

Make it short and simple, "Sorry, we will not buy a toy today. We can touch it, here you go." Let your child spend some time with it. If your child cries some more, calmly carry him out, and divert his attention, "Look at that (something new)!" Or you can simply let him have the toy until you're close to the exit, then say that you'll get it, and hand it to a staff while you're on to diverting his attention.

Why these words won't work

- ✘ *“I’m getting upset, stop it! Stop crying now! Many people are looking at us!”*
- ✘ *“I’m gonna count now! If you don’t stop at 3, I will ..!”*
- ✘ *“Mommy will go away if you don’t stop!”*
- ✘ *“The guard will get you, go cry some more!”*
- ✘ *“Why are you even crying? Why did you do that? I told you many times to stop!”*

Words above may not curb your child’s behavior; they only express what you are feeling and are showing your child that it is NOT okay to express theirs. Threatening is not an option- it will only induce unnecessary fear or could be a way to cause your child to completely stop expressing his emotion. When they are crying, we do NOT have to talk and demand them to stop. Remember to acknowledge their feelings and be their safe space We can offer an acceptable way to express, or limited, realistic choices when our child can understand more words.

Children these age normally cannot answer Why-questions and they do not always understand their motives for their behavior.

More than words

Episodes like these can be so frustrating but do save that exasperated sigh or rolling of eyes, or banging the cabinets. Children read through our emotions and they will think those are acceptable too. Act and believe that you are in-charge.

Hitting is More Damaging than You Think

A lot of times you find yourself saying you can't help it and you hit your screaming child suddenly. Hitting or using force may immediately stop the tantrums but you are only showing your child that it IS okay to use force to make someone stop. It is NOT acceptable. We want them to manage their emotions but we need to manage ours first.

If you find yourself promising a lot of times to not hit again but still do it, please feel free to contact us. We can help you work out a solution.

Child Development Chunks

- Children aged 1 to 2+ are impulsive, are more independently exploring, and express their emotions in physical ways. They don't remember the rules or limits you set so they may keep doing something despite several reminders.
- Praising the behavior or action, with physical affection, will help your child sustain it.
- Tantrums are ways children express their frustration, and they are experiencing these emotions the first time. They cannot answer 'Why?', or even 'What do you want?' yet, so acknowledge, and then offer them visible choices. Because our child has limited words and understanding, and we cannot talk it through during tantrums, just acknowledge your child's emotion, label it, then divert or distract.
- As adults, we need to manage our emotions, reflect back calm, and be firm and consistent. Hitting is NOT acceptable nor threatening and raising our voice.

How has it been going so far?

Think about the times you have tried to teach your children, or stop them from doing something. (Remember the times when your child was behaving well, too!) Write down your thoughts in this Discipline Diary.

My child's actions	My response	How well my action/s worked	Things to change or try to learn
Pushed her plate so that her food fell; made a mess	Said, "We don't do that, keep the food close to you"	She listened, but she did it again after some time.	Maybe remind her again and ask her if she's full, and repeat it.

What does "discipline" mean for you?

What do you think should discipline do for you and your child?

Discipline does not exactly mean punishment

For very young children, discipline looks like stepping in to keep your child safe. For older ones, it is setting limits, teaching skills or appropriate ways to respond (instead of hitting, or pushing, etc.) We need to set limits because it will help children keep safe, and more importantly, let them understand that they cannot just do everything that they want.

Let's Look in

Think about where your ideas about discipline come from. This can help you decide how you want to teach positive, respectful discipline.

How would you describe the discipline you had as a child? _____

- 1 very strict (I was given no space to ask or explain)
- 2 firm but fair
- 3 permissive (I could have used more limits or guidance)
- 4 mixed (different styles were used at different times)
- 5 other: _____

How did this kind of discipline make you feel? If discipline was mixed, did it seem fair/ right for each situation? Did you feel confused? _____

Do you remember your parents/ guardians explaining why they do what they did? Was the discipline ever processed with you? Do you wish anything had been different? _____



Child
Development

3 to 4



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...it is best to encourage them to reflect about their actions, and involve them in conflict resolution.

Children Development 3 to 4

Children in this phase have lots of energy! They are gaining more and more new skills everyday, like climbing the stairs, hopping on one foot, driving a tricycle- they may also do risky things! They are getting more independence and are eager to try new things. They would show that they might want to have more freedom. They can also begin to be toilet trained (while some have this earlier on).

Children this time are little talkers! They love stories and enjoy telling, too. They enjoy playing with other children where they can learn to share and set boundaries (I'm still playing; please don't grab), take turns, resolve conflicts. This is also the time they may learn unwanted or inappropriate behaviors so best to keep watch. You don't need to take charge or step in every time.

They may still act on impulse too, but you'll see they are getting better at remembering your limits longer than they used to, and also understanding and generalizing them, and following instructions. They will also begin to empathize with others, so it is best to encourage them to reflect about their actions, and involve them in conflict resolution.

Discipline at this stage

Explain limits, expectations, and consequences

Ask your child to repeat the rules/limits, and explain in easy words what happens to him/her when the rule is not followed. Now is the best time to think about how we explain things. See which is better.

- a. Do (this), so we can keep safe. I don't want you to get hurt, or someone to get hurt, right?
- b. Do (this) or else... the guard will get you! Hala!
- c. Do (this), so you can get

Teach words to express, and teach peaceful ways to solve conflicts

Help your child know the different emotions and share, too, when you feel them. It would be good if you can also share why you're feeling that way using simple words. Help your child figure out what he or she feels, like:

“When you pinch baby brother, I wonder, do you want Mommy to hold you too? Yes? I see. Are you feeling jealous?”

“Anak, nagseselos ka ba? Parang nakikita ko na nagagalit ka kaya mo ginawa iyon? Gusto mo ba i-hug din kita?”

Use timeout when appropriate

Simply tell your child he/ she needs a timeout, say why.

“I think you are having a hard time to listen now. Let’s have a time out first so we can calm down and stop (hitting).”

When your child has calmed down, which may not always happen immediately, calmly say what you expect and assure him/ her that it is okay to feel these big, scary emotions and that you are there.

“We don’t hit anyone. It’s okay to get angry, and we can say, I’m so mad!, but we cannot hit, no matter what.”

If in these times, you are tempted to spank or hit, remember to calm yourself, and take control of your emotions to be the best example for your child. It helps so much to keep present with our little one so we don’t demand them to stop shouting or stop hitting, when we are the ones doing it.

How about your child? Write down your observations:

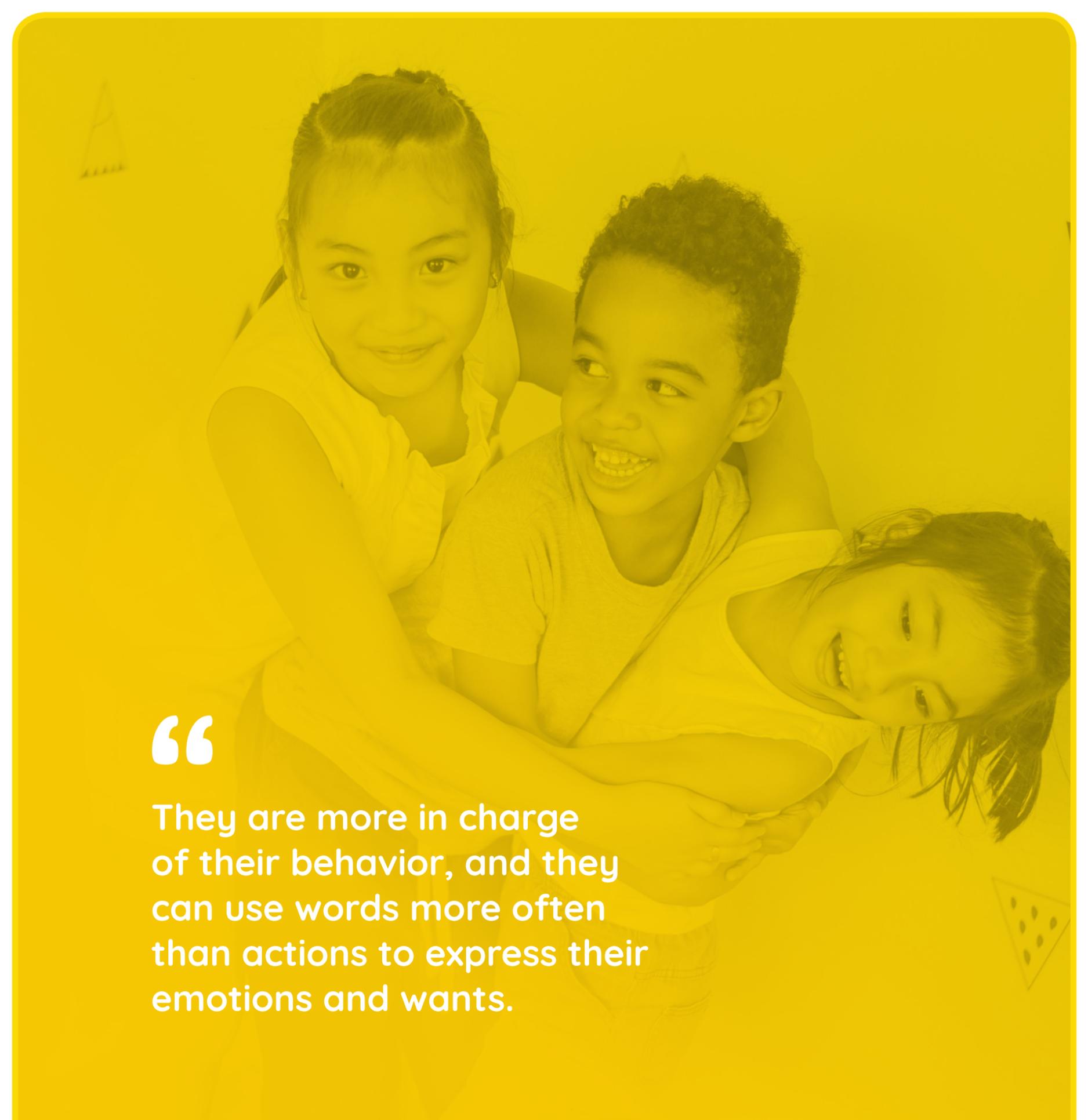
My children expresses his/her emotions by _____

My child loves to be _____



Child
Development

5+



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They are more in charge of their behavior, and they can use words more often than actions to express their emotions and wants.

Children Development 5+

Children at this stage have very active minds! They get better at doing a lot of things, growing their thinking and language skills (they ask many questions and try a lot of things), and physical abilities, too. They are more in charge of their behavior, and they can use words more often than actions to express their emotions and wants.

Here, they start to see others' point of views. They can put themselves in others' places through pretend play, and they notice others' feelings (like being upset or sad), and they also think about what others want and need.

Discipline at this stage

Praise the process and be specific

When we're specific with our praises (than saying Great job, Good girl/ boy), it will help our child learn about the appropriate behavior, and sustain it. Examples are:

"I like how you keep your toys after playing with them!"

"Ang galing mo naman mag-isip, nag-work hard ka talaga, ano?"

Keep helping your child express his/ her feelings and understand consequences

Consider your child's growing language skills. Give more reasons and explain the consequences of his/her behavior or action. Don't simply say, *"Because I said so"* or *"That's the right way!"*.

Keep talking about behaviors through role-playing, to stay safe with other people or in other places.
"Remember, that time in the restaurant, you were done eating and you wanted to run and run around? We cannot do that in places like that. You might get hurt. The people who carry our food might bump into you, and the hot food will spill."

Help your child accept responsibility and accountability for his/her behavior

It helps to talk about consequences ahead of time.

“Remember you did not want to take a bath yet? Then you will have little time to play already because we need to sleep.”

“I’m sorry you did that. Do you think your baby sister is happy when you did that? What do you think should we do next time?”

Unwanted Behaviors or Problem Behaviors

There are many reasons behind misbehaviors. When the environment feels too much and the child is overwhelmed, misbehaviors can come out. Parents’ temperament or mood, and daily stresses can affect how they interpret their child’s behavior. A lot overlook that children’s behaviors are responses and reactions; they don’t just come out because children want to “give us a hard time”. Instead, they are having a hard time. It is best to take time to understand why children behave the way they do.

Common Functions of Behavior

- for want to get an object
- to escape or avoid a task or situation
- to get attention
- to try to self-regulate or to feel good
- to block or stay away from something painful or bothersome
- to attempt to gain control of a situation

Things to Consider Before Thinking About Discipline

- Is this behavior just a phase? Is my child going through something right now, or does he maybe need attention? Is he overstimulated that's why he is having a hard time to listen?
- Did I give warnings? Or too many warnings without any follow-up? Or did I just snap and was I about to lose it?
- Do the words I'm about to use reflect my frustration or anger? Or can I consciously, sincerely offer help and say that I'm here as he goes through his big emotions?
- Can I wait patiently and talk to him when he's all calm and ready to listen?

Ways to Connect and Keep Present

- Start your day with intention. Spend at least 5 minutes with your child, many times, in a day to play or do something together. Meaningful connections matter- and this often means PLAY!
- Lean in on their behavior and let them lead during play. Go ahead, fill their love cup.
- Be emotionally responsive. Hold that safe space as your child expresses his emotions.
- Crouch down when you need to ask him, or when you want him to do something.
- Be available when your child wants to show you something. Keep present- full, undivided attention.

Got tips to add that work for you and your family?

Share them with us at www.presentparentingsolutions.com or message us through Facebook at @presentparentingsolutions or Instagram at @presentparentingsolutions_ph

References used and trainings taken

- Certified Mindfulness Parenting Practitioner
- Triple P: Positive Parenting Program
- The Conscious Parent
- Brain-based Strategies; The Whole-brain Child
- Love and Logic Parenting
- Behavior Management through Play
- 21st Century Learning by P21



Get in touch with us!



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