

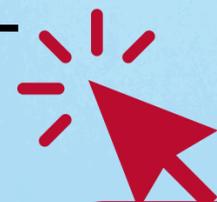
**LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:**

# Toddlers

**Watch Video Now**

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**Certification**



**CLICK HERE**



**Stephanie Seidler, Director of We Skoolhouse**

# Video

Please review the professional development training video; you will need approximately 60 minutes to complete the training.



# Certification

Please take a moment to complete the learning review provided. Upon submission, your certification will be sent to you immediately.

**Start**



# Intro: Let's Dive In!

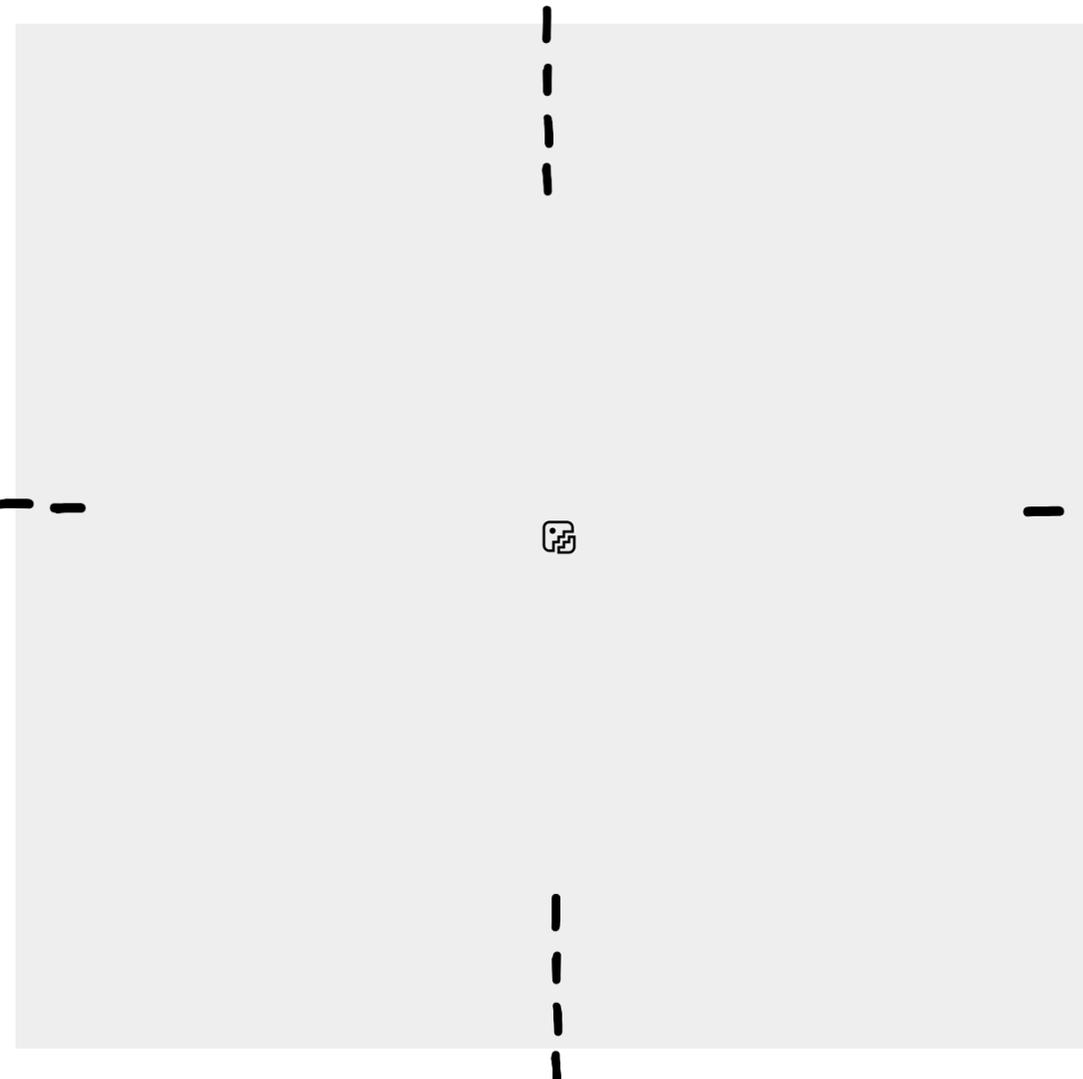
- Intro to Brain Science (Bare with Me...)
- The **DO's** of Communication & Language Development
- The **DON'TS** of Communication & Language Development
- Challenging Behaviors
- Time to Remove These Phrases...
- Questions - Let's Hear Them!

# Intro to Brain Science

# Brain Development: **First Five Years of Life**

**Compromised of billions of neurons**, in which experiences and interactions during this critical period determine how neurons wire and connect.

**Highly “plastic,”**  
meaning it can form new  
neural connections &  
adapt and rewire itself in  
response to experiences.



**Sensory Integration** is  
crucial for brain  
development, as it  
builds connections and  
associations.

**90% of the brain develops by age five, making these years the most critical.**

## Before age 5...

The brain is constantly forming new connections.



Think of the brain as the foundation of a house...



...or a machine you're building, like a car.

## After age 5...

The brain focuses on refining and consolidating existing skills & knowledge.



Think of this as the home or car's maintenance & updates.

# The Brain & Communication

## Verbal Communication:

Involves the use of spoken language to convey messages. Verbal communication includes conversations and storytelling.

## Nonverbal Communication (70-90%):

This refers to communication that occurs without the use of words. Includes facial expressions, body language, gestures, eye contact, and posture.



### Tactile Communication:

Involves the use of touch to convey messages and emotions. It includes gestures such as handshakes, and hugs.

### Visual Communication:

Involves the use of images, graphics, symbols, and visual aids to convey information and ideas. Examples include charts, graphs, diagrams, maps, and photos.

### Auditory Communication:

Involves the use of sounds, tones, and vocal cues to convey messages. This includes spoken language, music, and sound effects.

# The Do's of Communication

# The “DO’S” of Communication:

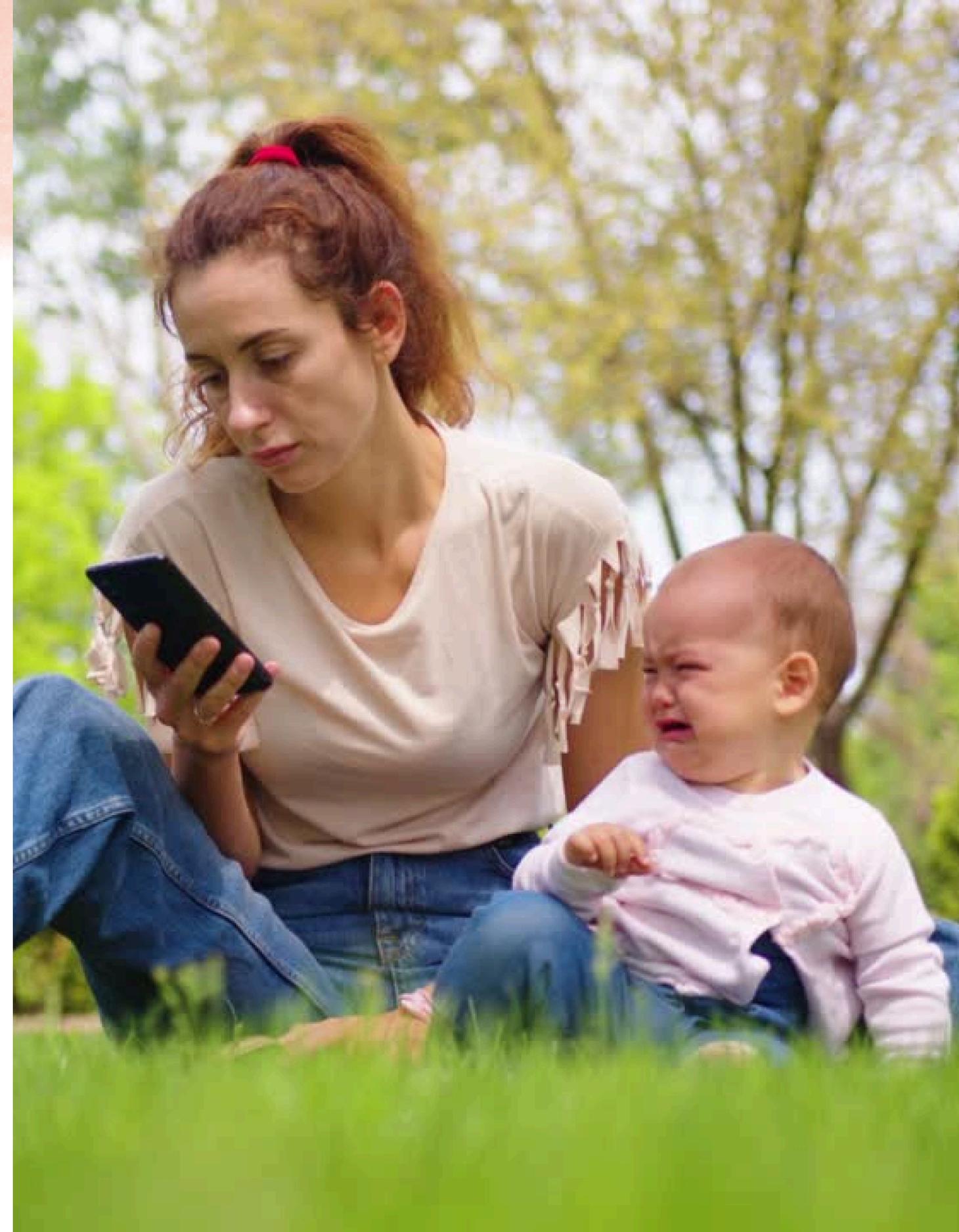
- **Do Model & Describe:** Shows your child how to communicate
- **Do Extend:** Add 1-2 words to what your child says
- **Do Wait:** Waiting gives your child an opportunity to talk
- **Do Respond:** Acknowledge, make eye contact, and get on their level, supporting connection and future conversations
- **Do Repeat:** Repeating confirms you heard your child and validates their communication
- **Do Revisit:** Read the same books and sing the same songs over and over again
- **Do Share:** Talk about yourself to connect & build reciprocity



# The don'ts of Communication

# The “Don’ts” of Communication:

- **Don't Ask for Labels:** Don't ask “what is this?” repeatedly
- **Don't Say “Say ....”:** Try modeling instead of saying “say,” - decreases spontaneous speech
- **Don't Pressure or Over Question:** Talking can be hard and too many questions is not natural/adds pressure
- **Don't Yell, Shame, or Ignore:** Making a child feel bad about themselves will never improve an outcome.
- **Don't Be On Your Cell Phone:** Conveys disinterest to the child and correlates to a more reactive than proactive relationship.
- **Don't Speak Negatively:** Discuss private matters away from the child.



**Challenging**

**Behaviors**



## Language & Challenging Behaviors

**Toddlers have significantly greater receptive language skills than expressive language.**

- This means more **nonverbal communication**
  - (Reaching, waving, pointing, signing, hitting, etc.)
    - Easier and more time efficient –Though you may begin hearing a word "no!" more often.
- The lack of more robust and intelligible, expressive language, paired with impulsivity and underdeveloped decision-making skills may **result in challenging behaviors toddlers biting, hitting, & pushing others.**

# Language & Challenging Behaviors

## Thing to Keep in Mind:

- **Tantrums & challenging behaviors are healthy, developmental, biological states of dysregulation.**
  - The ability to self-regulate is a developmental skill that takes time.
- Tantrums do not mean children are "bad" or manipulating.
- Tantrums may result from many things, including:
  - Quest for independence & more autonomy
  - Triple "O": Overwhelmed, Overtired, Overstimulated





# Tips for Challenging Behaviors

## Strengthen Expressive Language

- Read books, sing songs, highlight observations throughout the day, model language, & validate feelings.
- **Avoid quizzing or “testing” children,** and avoid saying "say \_\_\_\_\_!"
  - **Reduces likelihood of spontaneous speech,** while child becomes reliant on prompts. Adds pressure.
  - **Alternative:** Instead of saying "say water!" you may lead with "you're reaching for your water cup. You must be thirsty. Here's your water cup!"

**Time to Remove**

**These Phrases...**



## Time to Remove These Phrases:

- **“Use Your Words!”**
- **“You’re Okay!”**
- **“Say Sorry!”**
- **“We Don’t Do That” / “No Thank You!”**
- **“Good Job!”**



## Time to Remove These Phrases:

### “Use Your Words!”

- Toddlers don’t have the “words” yet.
- Toddlers lack emotional regulation skills. They’re not equipped to identify and/or manage themselves.
- “Use your words” does not provide the tools, language, or modeling toddler needs to learn alternative approaches.
- **Alternatives:** “You’re reaching for your water cup. You must be thirsty. Here’s your water cup.” OR “You’re angry because you want a turn with the truck. It’s John’s turn now, but you can have a turn after. Let’s find you another toy while you wait.”



## Time to Remove These Phrases:

### “You’re Okay!”

- Invalidates feelings, making them feel unheard and unimportant.
- It's important to empathize with toddlers' feelings and provide comfort instead of quickly dismissing their distress.
- Toddlers are still learning to manage their emotions, so simply saying "you're okay" does not help them navigate and cope.
- **Alternatives:** “It’s hard to say “bye-bye/”see you later” to mommy/daddy. Mommy/daddy will be back at the end of the day. I’m here for you. Let’s find something to play with/book to read, etc.?”



## Time to Remove These Phrases:

### “Say Sorry!”

- **Parroting a word does not convey meaning**
- You can't make a person say something – then what?
- Doesn't bring attention to the challenge or alternatives. Teaches a child you can say a phrase to avoid conflict.
- **Alternatives:** (John hit Sally) “John, you're excited to see Sally but hitting hurts. You can't hit Sally. But you can give her a hug.”
  - **The best way children learn what an apology is, is by seeing the adults practice it themselves!**



## Time to Remove These Phrases:

### “We Don’t Do That!”/ “No Thank You!”

- **This is a reactive phrase with no alternatives provided.**
- Toddlers don’t just know what to do or what the expectation is – They are not out to “get you.”
- **Alternatives:** Provide toddlers with expectations, alternatives, and the why to set them up for success.
  - “We’re going to head outside now! We can’t run down the hallway because we can crash into other people, but we can stomp together!”



## Time to Remove These Phrases:

### “Good Job!”

- **Lacks specific feedback, making it unclear what the child did well** – we always want to provide concrete language.
- It can lead to dependence on external praise rather than intrinsic motivation – focus on the process!
- Overuse can make "good job" less meaningful over time.
- **Alternatives:** Offer specific praise with actions/efforts. For example, "You stacked the blocks so high!" or "You worked really hard to put the blocks away."

# Questions? Let's Hear Them!

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