



AEP - Episode 101 - 5-Minute English - Toddlers

Hi, everybody. My name is Shana and this is the American English Podcast. My goal here is to teach you the English spoken in the United States. Through common expressions, pronunciation tips and interesting cultural snippets or stories, I hope to keep this fun, useful and interesting. Let's do it!

Hi, everyone, how's it going? All is great here. Just crazy as usual. If this is your first time listening to this podcast, you may not know that I am the mother of two girls, two little ones, Clara, who is nine months old, and Julia, who is almost two and a half. Julia is what we call a toddler. And toddlers are what we are going to speak about today in this 5-minute English episode.

The term toddler is typically used to describe a child that is between the ages of one and three, although some people consider a three-year-old up until four, also a toddler. It's the stage in a human's life when they're no longer a newborn, they're no longer an infant, so a baby, but they're also not really a kid.

The term toddler comes from the verb toddle, which means to walk with short and unsteady steps, according to Oxford Languages. For most of us, when we learn to walk well, we no longer toddle. We actually don't use the term toddle very often in English, although it does exist. And it's what little kids that are learning to walk do, they toddle.

There is much to be said about toddlers, and that's why today's 5-minute English lesson will be about this stage of development in a human's life.

You don't need to have kids or even like kids for this lesson to be useful. There are a ton of useful words and phrases you'll learn that will help you amp up your vocabulary and be able to talk about kids and behavior, and playing in general.

Please be aware, though, that this is an advanced listening lesson. That means you might need to pause at times. You may also find it useful to repeat the audio two or three times to better understand what is being said.

If you would like to gain access to the in-depth lessons on 5-minute English episodes, the 5-minute English course is available. For each lesson, you'll have the transcript with highlighted vocabulary, so that will be all of the challenging words you hear and phrasal verbs explained. Exercises to use the new vocab and quizzes to test you on what you've learned.

In order to practice your pronunciation, this course also provides a video for each lesson where I speak using the challenging terms. This will give you the opportunity to mimic the sounds of new vocab words in new phrases.

You can purchase the complete course by itself or get it at a discount by getting the Season 2 package. To find out more, check out the episode notes or check out the website at americanenglishpodcast.com.

Without any further ado, let's begin today's topic.

So what comes to mind when you think of a toddler? In other words, a child between the ages of one and three or four. Chances are the word toddler evokes a number of images from the way they look, to the way they talk, play and behave.



Both physically and mentally, toddlers change from one day to the next. They're learning to speak in sentences and communicate ideas. They can even follow simple instructions like, please sit down, don't hit your brother!

By the end of toddlerhood, all 20 baby teeth will have grown in. So if a child is not a picky eater, it's time to become familiar with new textures and flavors.

In fact, every day is about learning. Sometime between two and three, a toddler will be ready to potty train and do other simple activities like running, climbing or even riding a tricycle. One thing's for sure, life is about movement and discovery.

In the U.S., an estimated 61 percent of children under the age of five have some sort of childcare arrangement. Of those children, the majority are cared for by a relative, some have a nanny or occasional babysitter, while others attend daycare centers, nurseries and preschools.

As of 2018, 40 percent of three-year-olds in the U.S. were enrolled in a preschool program. That, of course, isn't to say that parents aren't around. According to Pew Research, one out of five U.S. parents chooses to be a stay-at-home mom or a stay-at-home dad. They'll be the first to admit that parenting is a job to do. To do it well takes patience and energy. Even the most loving parents aren't immune to temper tantrums.

Have you ever seen a perfectly happy child throw themselves on the ground and scream because they don't get what they want? That behavior is called a temper tantrum, and children around the age of two might throw tantrums wherever and whenever they like. We often call that stage of development the "terrible twos." If you ask a pediatrician about it, they might say that this behavior stems back to a strong desire to be independent while lacking verbal and motor skills to achieve one's goal.

For example, a child might try and put on a pair of shoes and throw a fit, or a tantrum, when they're unable to do so.

They might have a meltdown when they don't get to choose the color of their shirt.

Another common challenge for parents is teaching a child how to share. You may hear an American mom saying sharing is caring, or come on, let's take turns. And in response, see a two-year-old yank a doll out of another child's hands.

So how do American parents deal with misbehaving? Well, that depends on the parent and also the behavior.

- What should you do if your child hits a sibling?
- Do you put them in time out?
- Do you spank them?

What if they act up in the grocery store because you refuse to buy them a chocolate bar?

- Do you distract them by focusing on something else?
- Do you try and negotiate with them?
- Do you give in?

Many parents decide early on how to discipline in order to remain consistent. And although there are plenty of strategies on how to deal with misbehavior, it's always helpful to know what triggers it. Is it sibling jealousy? Are they cranky and defiant because of hunger or exhaustion? If so, sometimes a simple nap can work wonders.

In a toddler's eyes, the ideal parent would let them play every waking hour of the day. They'd love to stack blocks and do puzzles, play with legos, Play-doh or action figures. Hands down a toddler would enjoy drawing with chalk, coloring in a coloring book with crayons, or maybe even coloring on the walls.

As a parent, you may find yourself running through the sprinklers on a hot summer's day, blowing bubbles or even playing pretend. Activities like these can awaken the child in oneself.

If the toddler is not on a sugar high and bouncing off the walls at night, it might be time for peace and quiet. You can sit on the edge of their bed and read them a bedtime story before tucking them in. You might even want to sing them a lullaby to help them drift off to sleep.

That's it for this episode, I hope that you enjoyed the quick chat on toddlers.

Can you think back to when you were a toddler?



I have a really hard time remembering that stage of my life. It might even be the time when I had my first memory. One of my first memories was dancing like crazy to a song called Rock Lobster by the B-52s. It's a memory that's as clear as day. My cousin and I were pretending we were rocks and lobsters and we're falling all over the floor.

I have to admit, before having a toddler, this topic was uncharted territory for me. Julia actually seems like a teenager sometimes, even though she's only two and a half. And I like to joke that it's like that Katy Perry song, when she says she's hot, then she's cold. She's yes then she's no. Everything is always black or white for her.

The other day, actually, she woke up in the morning and asked for oatmeal. And then when I made it for her and handed it to her, she started crying because she wanted cold oatmeal. It was my mistake that I heated it up. Who knew?

I feel like these sorts of moments happen on a daily basis. And one of the pieces of advice that a pediatrician recommended to me is that giving a child options gives them the opportunity to exercise their autonomy. And so they feel very empowered and proud to do so.

So, for example, if I want to make sure my little girl wears pants outside, I'll say, do you want to wear the blue pants or the yellow ones? And so not wearing pants is not an option in there. And she gets to choose.

I can say, in the morning, do you want muffins or oatmeal? Now, I realized I need to ask, do you want cold oatmeal or hot oatmeal?

Yeah, this might sound ridiculous for some people, but I've noticed that these sorts of questions significantly reduce the amount of tantrums in my house.

On a daily basis, I remind myself that she is like a sponge and she'll internalize the way I react to each situation. So I need to keep my cool.

If you have kids and want to practice your English while learning about parenting, I have two awesome books to recommend.

The first is: *How to Talk So Little Kids Will Listen* by Joanna Farber and Julie King and *The Whole Brain Child* by Daniel Siegel and Tina Bryson. Both books are heavily based on



science and research, but also the authors of these books give relatable examples and very simplistic instructions on how to deal with a variety of behavioral issues. They're very easy to read.

The Whole Brain Child book I really enjoyed just because of the focus on how a parent can help their child become emotionally intelligent. I think emotional intelligence is a term that is easily translated, but it means to have the capacity to be aware of, control and express one's emotions and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically, according to Oxford Languages.

By nature, toddlers are not emotionally intelligent, right? They have two sides of the brain that don't really work together. They have the logical left side of the brain and the emotional right side of the brain. And so it's a parent's job to help them bridge the gap by understanding why certain things happen. There are very specific things that a parent can do to help a child become a normal, integrated human being.

Sounds complex, but it's actually not. I will post the links to those books in the episode notes as well. Remember, be sure to check out the 5-minute English course if you are interested in diving deeper into this topic.

Hope you're having a nice day, and until next time. Bye!

Smelly cat, smelly cat, what are they feeding you. Smelly cat, smelly cat, it's not your fault!

Thank you for listening to this episode of the American English Podcast. Remember, it's my goal here to not only help you improve your listening comprehension, but to show you how to speak like someone from the States.

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