TERRIFIC TODDLERS
By Judy Arnall

Toddlerhood really is a wonderful stage in a child's life. Often, their behaviour is misunderstood by parents, but is developmental their job to accomplish and move through that stage. It helps knowing what to expect. Here are some stages that toddlers go through and helpful parenting behaviours.

One to Three Year Olds Developmental Tasks:

- They need to assert independence.
- They need to begin separating when secure and cling when insecure.
- They need to explore and discover.
- They need to achieve a measure of control over their lives.

When a Toddler says "No!" they mean:

- I want to do it myself.
- I don't want you, I want you.

- I can't share because I don't understand the concept of ownership yet.
- I want to have some control over what happens to me.

Helpful parenting strategies to facilitate Toddlers mastering of developmental tasks:

- Offer many choices between two or three acceptable options.
- Offer many chances for toddler to try mastering a task.
- Respect your toddler's desire for separation or clinginess. A child whose dependency needs are quickly met by the parent, become much more independent sooner.
- Childproof your surroundings for safe exploration and discovery.
- Reduce your use of the word, "No". Use "later", "after", "when/then"….
- Accept and acknowledge all feelings. Only behaviours have limits.
- Don't expect a child under 3 to share their possessions.
- Understand that they may be told "no" many times but don't have the self-control to respect it yet.

Judy Arnall is a professional international award-winning _Parenting Speaker_, and Trainer, Mom of five children, and author of the best-selling, "***Discipline Without Distress: 135 tools for raising caring, responsible children without time-out, spanking, punishment or bribery***" She specializes in "**Parenting the Digital Generation**" www.professionalparenting.ca (403) 714-6766 jarnall@shaw.ca