

Change “No” to “Yes”

“No!” “Don’t do that!”

“NO!” “Get down!” “No!”

“Stop!” “NO!”

Do you ever feel like you are saying, “No,” “Don’t,” “Stop” all day long? Or there may be a child who seems to get on your nerves and you find yourself telling her, “No” all the time. A day full of “No” is stressful for you and for the children.

Change those Noes to Yeses!

Some adults spend a lot of time looking for things that are wrong so they can point them out to others. Children often hear what they are doing wrong, but rarely hear when they are doing something right.

Children want to please adults. They don’t usually go around looking for ways to do bad things to make us mad. But children need to know what to do to please us.

Tell children what you want

Young children need to learn what you want them to do. The only way they will know that is by you telling them.

If a child is coloring on another child’s paper, tell her, “Rachel you need to keep your crayons on your own paper.” If you see her coloring on another child’s paper and you say, “No, Rachel,” she doesn’t know why you’re saying no.

Try planning ahead to tell children what you want them to do before you begin an activity. “We all need to hold hands when we go for our walk to keep everyone safe.” “Let’s all wash our hands, then sit down at the table for snack.”

Catch children being good

Watch for children doing things you want them to and tell them. “Jonas, I like the way you’re sitting quietly and listening to the story.” “Clarisse, thanks for playing gently with the baby.” “Randy, I like the way you and Linda are building together.” When children hear they are doing good things, they will want to do them over and over. Make sure you see and comment on good things each child does every day.

Never say “No?”

There will be times when you have to say “no” to a child, especially if the child is doing something that isn’t safe. Make this your own new rule — every time you say no to a child, you need look for two times to tell him he’s being good.

When you focus on the good instead of “No,” you’ll find the children doing many more “good” things because they know what you’re looking for and they want to please you.