



Preschool Parenting: Four Guidelines to Promote Independence

1. Offer choices

- Should be authentic, meaningful, and acceptable—for example, “You can play in the living room or your bedroom.”
- Limit choices to two so as not to overwhelm them
- Enforce “no choice” situations

2. Schedule “independent play time”

- Should be consistent and predictable—for example, every day while you prepare dinner
- Create a “yes” environment—should need as little support or direction from you as possible
- Enforce boundaries—you are not available unless it’s an emergency



3. Respect the struggle

- Don’t rush—allow time, support, and practice
- Allow and “sportscast” frustration—narrate actions and validate emotions
- Resist urge to rescue: shows your child that he’s capable of doing things without your help

4. Promote problem solving

- Encourage them to answer their own questions—for example, “I’m not sure of the answer, how could we find out?”
- Respond with open ended questions—for example, “what else might you try?”
- Encourage risk taking—perceive failure as life lessons or new challenges to overcome

“Do less. Observe more. Enjoy Most”- Magda Gerber

