

Parenting 101: How to say ‘no’ without becoming the villain

Parent-child bonding is the most priceless relationship in the world. No one wants to jinx it in life for anything in the world! Yet, there are times when parents are compelled to set boundaries over children's impulsive actions. In such cases, it's quite normal to get anxious. Your actions and words directly mould their growing personality and mental development. Hence, to strike a balance between their endless curiosity and

safety, it's important that we understand the context and approach of saying “no” to children.

Impact of saying ‘no’...

As much as we want them to live a carefree life, there are times when children's behaviour gets out of hand. Starting from playing with sharp tools to making crucial life choices, their actions are supervised

with strict restrictions. It all comes from the protective parental instinct. Although it is important to set boundaries, recurrently saying ‘no’ negates a parent's positive effort and intention. Rigid denial is often a counterproductive strategy.

“Despite repeated forbiddance, if a child is constantly engaged in an unwanted action, such as turning on and off a switch, he/she gets attention. This attention

draws a child more towards that negative action. In such cases, saying no becomes ineffective. So, a temporary avoidance of their action works. Instead of saying no, we should navigate children, especially toddlers, towards the option they can do,” explained Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed, Professor, Child Adolescent & Family Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

