

## Dyadic Video Evidence on How Emotions in Parent Verbal Bids Affect Child Compliance in a British Sample

**Authors :** Iris Sirirada Pattara-Angkoon, Rory Devine, Anja Lindberg, Wendy Browne, Sarah Foley, Gabrielle McHarg, Claire Hughes

**Abstract :** Introduction: The “Terrible Twos” is a phrase used to describe toddlers 18-30 months old. It characterizes a transition from high dependency to their caregivers in infancy to more autonomy and mastery of the body and environment. Toddlers at this age may also show more willfulness and stubbornness that could predict a future trajectory leading to conduct disorders. Thus, an important goal for this age group is to promote responsiveness to their caregivers (i.e., compliance). Existing literature tends to focus on praise to increase desirable child behavior. However, this relationship is not always straightforward as some studies have found no or negative association between praise and child compliance. Research suggests positive emotions and affection showed through body language (e.g., smiles) and actions (e.g., hugs, kisses) along with positive parent-child relationship can strengthen the praise and child compliance association. Nonetheless, few studies have examined the influences of positive emotionality within the speech. This is important as implementing verbal positive emotionality is easier than physical adjustments. The literature also tends not to include fathers in the study sample as mothers were traditionally the primary caregiver. However, as child-caring duties are increasing shared equally between mothers and fathers, it is important to include fathers within the study as studies have frequently found differences between female and male caregiver characteristics. Thus, the study will address the literary gap in two ways: 1. explore the influences of positive emotionality in parental speech and 2. include an equal sample of mothers and fathers. Positive emotionality is expected to positively correlate with and predict child compliance. Methodology: This study analyzed toddlers (18-24 months) in their dyadic interactions with mothers and fathers. A Duplo (block) task was used where parents had to work with their children to build the Duplo according to the given photo for four minutes. Then, they would be told to clean up the blocks. Parental positive emotionality in different speech types (e.g., bids, praises, affirmations) and child compliance were measured. Results: The study found that mothers ( $M = 28.92$ ,  $SD = 12.01$ ) were significantly more likely than fathers ( $M = 23.01$ ,  $SD = 12.28$ ) to use positive verbal emotionality in their speech,  $t(105) = 4.35$ ,  $p < .001$ . High positive emotionality in bids during Duplo task and Clean Up was positively correlated with more child compliance in each task,  $r(273) = .35$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $r(264) = .58$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively. Overall, parental positive emotionality in speech significantly predicted child compliance,  $F(6, 218) = 13.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .27$ ) with emotionality in verbal bids ( $t = 6.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and affirmations ( $t = 3.12$ ,  $p = .002$ ) being significant predictors. Conclusion: Positive verbal emotions may be useful for increasing compliance in toddlers. This can be beneficial for compliance interventions as well as to the parent-child relationship quality through reduction of conflict and child defiance. As this study is correlational in nature, it will be important for future research to test the directional influence of positive emotionality within speech.

**Keywords :** child temperament, compliance, positive emotion, toddler, verbal bids

**Conference Title :** ICDPDD 2022 : International Conference on Developmental Psychology and Developmental Delays

**Conference Location :** Bangkok, Thailand

**Conference Dates :** January 14-15, 2022