

TODDLER

COMMAND CENTRAL

"I want eggs!" "Give me my cup!" "Get my truck!" Once they start talking, many kids can issue commands from the moment they wake up to the time they go to bed. They've learned that they can control what's around them, and they're busy trying out this new power.

With demands flying all around you, you might find yourself absentmindedly bringing her that cup or truck, says Jody Johnston Pawel, author of *The Parent's Toolshop*. But beware: If she discovers that barking orders gets her what she wants, it'll get harder to teach her to ask nicely later. Instead, try:

Setting standards If she forgets "please," remind her. If she's being whiny, you could say "I can't understand you when you talk like that." Try to be consistent in correcting her, says Pawel; otherwise,

she'll keep testing to see if she really needs to talk politely.

Talking specifics

Toddlers don't understand the concept of time, so saying "Wait a minute" won't mean much, says Pawel. Instead, explain in concrete terms: "When I tuck you in bed, we'll get your book," for example.

Finding the positive

If she can't have what she wants, an acceptable alternative can help her feel in control. Try something like "Yes, you can have that cookie after dinner." —Ann Muder

