

"The health, productivity, and creativity of any society are the direct result of how the children of that society were treated."

-Dr. Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph. D



*the*  
**Nurturing Center**

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES

STRONG FAMILIES BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES

## ALTERNATIVES TO SAYING "NO"

*by Susan Christofferson*

For most parents, "No" is a word we use too much.  
After a while, children tune those "no's" out.

- Replace "no" with positive direction. Say, "Walk!" rather than "No running!"
- Learn to anticipate when "no" will have to be used and interrupt the activity before you need to use "no".
- Distract by giving your child something else when taking an object or an activity away.
- Explain your reasoning to your child. "This might break so I want you to play with something else."
- For young children, remove the source of many "no's" by placing breakables, plants, etc. out of reach.
- Question your child about what exactly they want to do before you say "no". You may find that what they want is not as complicated as you thought.
- If an activity is not allowed, is there a similar activity that might be? Or is the activity allowed somewhere else? "You can play with the ball outside."
- **"NO" IS POWERFUL. WHEN YOU DECIDE TO USE IT, MAKE IT COUNT!**

The  
Nurturing  
Center's  
goal is  
to ensure  
that each  
child has  
the right  
to be treated  
with respect  
and live  
in safety  
with secure,  
healthy,  
nurturing  
relationships.