



PARENT GUIDE • THROWING

Throwing Behavior Blueprint™

Stop unsafe throwing. Understand the purpose. Teach where objects belong.

CHANGE WHAT DRIVES THE BEHAVIOR, AND THE BEHAVIOR
OFTEN CHANGES.

Step 1: find what throwing accomplishes

SENSORY EXPLORATION

The sound, crash, movement, weight, or visual result may be interesting or regulating.

ALL DONE OR REJECTION

Throwing may mean finished, no thank you, too much, or get this away from me.

COMMUNICATION BARRIER

The child may lack an easier way to request help, attention, space, a break, or a different choice.

OVERLOAD OR FRUSTRATION

Demands, waiting, transitions, pain, or accumulated stress may be reducing capacity.

IMPULSE OR MOTOR PLANNING

The body may release the object before the child can pause, aim safely, or choose where it belongs.

LEARNED OUTCOME

Throwing may have ended a task, created a reaction, gained attention, or brought a preferred result.

Step 2: match the response

MELTDOWN OR OVERLOAD

Create safety, remove dangerous objects, reduce demands and language, co-regulate, and wait for recovery.

WANT, LIMIT, OR ESCAPE

Hold the reasonable boundary, offer a usable choice, and prompt the replacement without rewarding throwing.

SENSORY OR MOVEMENT NEED

Provide a safe object, target, space, or movement activity that gives similar input.

ALL DONE OR COMMUNICATION

Prompt all done, no thank you, help, break, or the finished spot and respond consistently.

Food throwing: Use small portions, a finished bowl, and the calm script “Food stays on the table.” After regulation, have the child help clean up matter-of-factly.

Step 3: map the 0-60 Journey™

	Touches, taps, drops, tests weight, or begins losing interest
	Pushes items away, says no, seeks movement, or repeats a request
	Grips tightly, waves objects, paces, argues, or becomes louder
	Raises the object, sweeps surfaces, threatens, or aims
	Throws items; familiar communication becomes difficult
	Dangerous or repeated throwing, panic, or loss of capacity

10-20 signals:

30-40 signals:

50-60 signals:

Steps 4-7: Block-Guide-Replace Plan™

04 • Block danger

Move people, breakable items, hot food, and hard or sharp objects.

Say: "I won't let you throw that."

05 • Guide the object

Point to or place the finished bin, table, tray, or handoff spot within easy reach.

06 • Replace the action

Prompt all done, help, break, no thank you, or offer an item that is safe to throw.

07 • Recover and repair

After calm, help clean up, check damage, repair what can be repaired, and briefly practice.

Avoid: Yelling, shaming, throwing the object back, long lectures, force-feeding, demanding cleanup during a meltdown, or giving the desired outcome only because throwing occurred.

Step 8: teach what to do instead

FINISHED SPOT

Put unwanted items in a bowl, bin, tray, or clearly marked finished area.

ALL DONE

Use words, gesture, AAC, or a finished card before removing the item.

BREAK OR HELP

Make the replacement quick, reliable, and easier than throwing.

SAFE THROWING

Provide balls, beanbags, soft items, or an outdoor target when movement is the need.

HAND IT OVER

Practice giving an item to a trusted adult when the child cannot manage it safely.

CLEAN UP & REPAIR

After calm, help restore the space without shame or a long lecture.

The replacement skill we will teach:

Where we will practice:

Prevention plan

PREPARE

Use smaller portions, fewer objects, finished bins, visual boundaries, and clear expectations.

MEET THE SENSORY NEED

Schedule safe throwing, dropping, heavy work, or movement before high-risk moments.

PRACTICE

Rehearse all done, hand it over, finished spot, break, and safe throwing during calm.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Have the child help clean up after regulation while adults stay brief and consistent.

Common trigger, object, or setting:

Safe placement or throwing option:

Adult words and response:

Repair or cleanup plan:

Safety note: If throwing creates immediate danger, involves weapons, causes injury, or cannot be safely managed, seek appropriate emergency or professional support.

Need an individualized plan? Schedule at calendly.com/optimizemylife/newclientintake or email mary@supportiveminds.us.

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