



The Reason Why:

One of the most significant gifts you can give your child is the gift of self-control. Self-control is a vital life skill and a virtue that God breathes. By instilling self-control in your child from a young age, you are setting them up not only for success in their physical life, but their spiritual life as well. Blanket time training helps children understand boundaries, regulate impulsivity, and develop the ability to play independently.

The Initial Training Process:

- Start with a small blanket.
- Give the child a toy and initially (for a few days) stay with them, playing with them.
- Mom/Dad can leave for a minute, instructing them to stay on the blanket and telling them they will be back (Keep child within your sight).
- Mom/Dad comes back and plays some more.
- Mom/Dad praises them for staying on the blanket.
- A timer (starting with 1-5 minutes) should be used for the entire time Mom/Dad and child are playing on the blanket.

After a few days of doing the above, the mom places her child on the blanket with the instruction to stay on the blanket and play with his toy. Mom/Dad leaves but needs to be able to watch him.

- Always use a timer for this activity.
- The moment the child gets off the blanket, Mom/Dad needs to go over and verbally instruct him to get back on the blanket and if necessary, place him back on the blanket.
- If the child gets off the blanket, Mom/Dad needs to instruct them to get back on the blanket verbally and if necessary, place them back on the blanket.
- If the child gets off the blanket again, Mom/Dad should isolate them in their crib or playpen.
- If crying ensues, then wait for the child to quiet themselves. Mom/Dad will then get the child up and put them back on the blanket with the same instruction to stay on the blanket. If the child gets off again, they are back in isolation.
- After the child quiets down this time, Mom/Dad starts them in a new activity, and blanket time is over for that time period.
- When the child has stayed on the blanket for the entire time, and the timer goes off, the mom praises her child, says, "Blanket time is over!" and then moves on to the next activity.

Making it a Habit:

Slowly increase the Blanket Time as mom sees success. When the child is doing well at Blanket Time, it can be used as an additional option for structure in the child's day. A blanket can move all over your house, to the doctor's office or a friend's house, helping to prevent the very young toddler from wandering or getting into items that are 'off limits'. This tool can help to minimize the amount of "No's" needed at this age. It also helps develop your child's ability to play independently for a length of time.

- The goal is to have the child characterized by playing on the blanket without supervision for the length of time that the mom chooses.
- Establishing Blanket Time helps with the next transition that will occur around two years, "Room Time". Using the blanket in Room Time goes smoother than giving a child the whole room to play in. Once the child is characterized by staying on the blanket in Room Time, then the blanket can be removed, thus opening the child's freedom.

Other Considerations:

- Using a timer is very beneficial because the child learns that the activity is over when the timer goes off. A child should think the timer decides when the activity is over rather than thinking their crying or other inappropriate behavior is what causes Mom or Dad to determine the activity is over. If a timer is not used, the baby or child will cry without ceasing, thinking that his crying is what changes activities.
- Don't be surprised if the child is doing well with blanket time and then tries to push the boundary by slowly inching off the blanket or protesting the activity altogether. Stay consistent in your expectations. We reap what we sow ([Galatians 6:7](#)).
- Consider reserving a few select toys that are special just for blanket time. Ultimately, you also want your child to look forward to blanket time.
- Use the same blanket.
- After establishing a routine of having Blanket Time at home for at least 30 minutes, start having the child do it outside the house using the same blanket. Using the same blanket will help the child associate the boundaries set at home while on the blanket.
- Using Blanket Time outside the home allows you to engage in another activity while keeping your child close by and ensuring they are playing safely on the blanket instead of running around and potentially getting hurt or causing damage (e.g., during Bible study, church services, at a friend's home, etc.). Remember to bring the same timer so they are aware that their playtime will end when they hear the familiar sound.
- Video of an 18-month-old doing Blanket Time.