



Healthy Children Ready to Learn

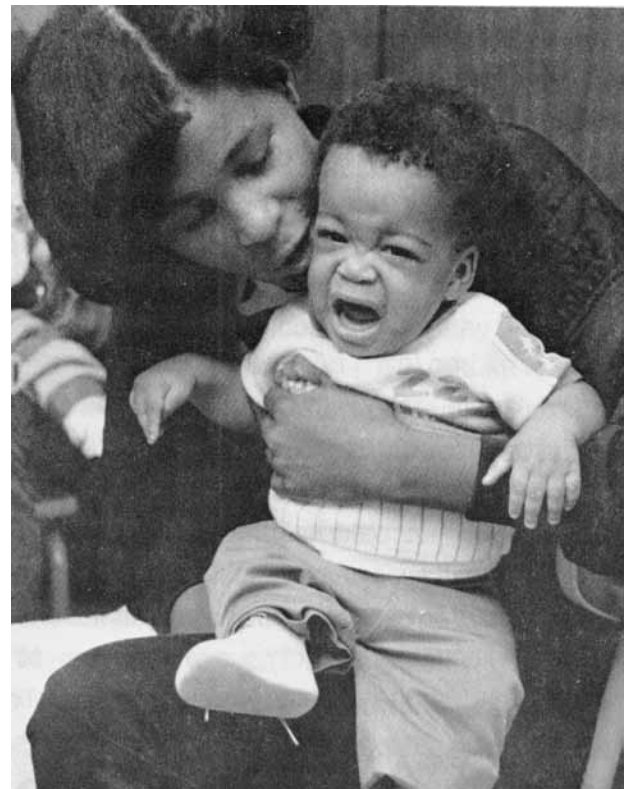
17 AND 18 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . . Emotions Are Blossoming

You have probably noticed by now that your little one can show intense feelings. You may have seen him become suddenly very excited, frustrated, happy, angry or fearful.

You can help him understand his feelings by giving them each a name. When a box won't open or a car won't roll, your little one may drop it or throw it in anger. Hold him and say calmly that you know it makes him angry when the toy won't work. These words show your toddler that you understand his feelings. Show him how the toy works, substitute another toy or just hold him gently. He will know you care about his feelings, and he will begin to learn to handle them.

It takes many years for a child to understand and cope with his feelings. The help you give him now will make this learning easier.



Watch Out

Keep Exploring Safe for Your Toddler

Your child must explore to learn. Help her explore safely. She will explore everything around her. She will put everything into her mouth and reach everything she can see. She will crawl or climb onto, into, above or below anything. She does not know what is dangerous. She cannot remember "no." It is up to you to think ahead for her, to understand that at any time, she may suddenly do something that will put her in danger.

Remember, *HEALTHY CHILDREN* describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Perfectly normal children may do things earlier or later than those described in *HEALTHY CHILDREN*. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your doctor.

Q&A

How Can I Avoid Spoiling My Daughter?

Most of us think a “spoiled” child is one who expects always to get her own way, even at the expense of others. She is demanding, self-centered and most unpleasant to be around.

We have said you cannot spoil a young baby by giving her care, comfort and attention when she wants it. One-year-olds who have been well cared for are generally secure and trusting. Babies who have uncertain care during their first year may become fearful and more demanding.

During a child’s second and third year, “spoiling” can happen if parents don’t set limits or don’t enforce limits consistently. Children become spoiled when parents give in to unreasonable demands, fail to limit

annoying behavior or allow their children’s minor needs to inconvenience others. When limits are clear and enforced all the time, children learn how to succeed within these limits. This builds self-esteem.

Children need and want reasonable limits and rules. These should be rules your child can understand and follow. Don’t be afraid that your toddler will dislike you if you don’t always give her what she wants. Let her know you love her, but will not let her misbehave. Help her understand what the rules are, why they are needed and what will happen if she does not follow them. Setting and enforcing limits shows your toddler that you will help her to grow up safely, competently and “unspoiled.”

Learning by Helping

Children learn best when parents are willing to share simple tasks with them, like cooking, cleaning and other household jobs.

When your child tries to help you, remember to look for ways you can make helping fun for both of you. That way, your child will enjoy helping and will want to help more. Children can learn how to pour milk from a small pitcher by watching you. They can learn how to sweep the floor, pick flowers and hang up clothes. Toddlers spend up to 20 percent of their time just watching, listening and staring at you. They’re learning how to imitate the things you do. When you let your little person help you, you are giving him a chance to practice what he has learned. He will make mistakes of course, but don’t scold him for these. Instead say, “That was a good try. Maybe it would work better if you did it this way.” Take the time to help him succeed now, and later he will be able to do more things for himself and for you. This is time well spent for both of you.



Homemade Toys That Teach

Toss Bags

Toss bags can help your child develop muscles and coordination.

Materials

- Clean scraps of cloth, old adult socks
- Crumpled paper or short strips of cloth

Making the Toy

Make the bag by sewing squares or other shapes out of cloth or by tying ends of adult socks. Fill your bag with crumpled paper or torn rags and sew up or tie the opening. For safety, double the bag covers and make the bags at least as big as tennis balls.

Playing

Toss bags are fun just to throw; they can also be thrown at targets or into wastebaskets or tossed to other people. You can tie a string to the toss bag and attach it to a playpen or a high chair for drop-and-pull-back games.

Play Is Fun, Not Work

In each issue of *HEALTHY CHILDREN*, we describe games you can play with your toddler for enjoyment and



for growth. These games will help him solve problems, understand the world and learn the things he will need to know to succeed in school. Remember, these games should be fun for both you and your child. If you turn the games into work or into contests, your toddler will not want to play them. He might become discouraged about learning new things or feel like a failure. This will rob both you and your little one of the enjoyment and learning you can have together.

Play the game only when both you and your toddler want to play it. Stop the game before your child

gets tired or bored. This may mean playing the game only for a few minutes. Don't criticize your child for mistakes or failures; do praise his efforts and his successes. Use your imagination to vary the games so that they are more fun; encourage your little one to do the same. Make the play challenging but not frustrating for your child.

Play and learning go together, especially for your toddler. Keep play light, creative and fun.

Be Good to Yourself

When it seems everyone is against you

Sometimes other adults in your life seem to be criticizing you all the time. It's hard to be calm when someone is putting you down, but the way you respond can make a big difference. You can let them know that you ACCEPT what they say, but you don't have to AGREE with them. By accepting, you're simply saying, "I hear you." Here are some accepting words you can

use to give yourself a little breathing room and avoid arguments:

- *So you think I ...*
- *I'll think about what you said ...*
- *I can see how you might feel that way ...*

If you don't argue, it's hard for others to keep putting you down.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 17 AND 18 MONTHS OLD?

How I Grow

- I like to lug, tug and drag things.
- I want my own way almost all the time.
- I can walk upstairs if you will hold one hand.
- I like to run but I fall or bump into things sometimes.
- I'm beginning to use one hand more than the other.
- When things don't go the way I want them to, I get angry.
- I'm learning to creep backward downstairs.
- I like to grab anything I can reach.

How I Talk

- I understand more words than I can say.
- I'm getting good at imitating words.
- I often have long, babbled conversations with myself.
- Sometimes I will do what you ask me to do.
- I try to sing and I like to have you sing to me.
- Sometimes I can ask you for what I want, like a cookie, by naming it.
- I can say about 10 words, but mostly I use the word "no."
- I am beginning to understand the meaning of "now."

Play I Enjoy

- I like playing with nesting toys and stacking toys.
- I often run around without any particular plan.

- I like pushing wheel toys and large toy boxes and other things like that around the floor.
- I may be able to string large, colored, wooden beads.
- I still don't play very long with any one thing.

What I Have Learned

- I can fit a round block into a round hole.
- I can point to one or two parts of my body if you name them.
- I can copy the simple lines you make on paper.
- I may be able to match circles and squares on a form board.
- I am beginning to remember where things belong.
- I can use a stick to get a toy.
- I can build a tower of two or three blocks.
- With your help, I can turn pages of a book.



How I Get Along With Others

- I'm still mostly just interested in myself.
- I may be grabby and greedy.
- Sometimes I'm stubborn and bossy and sometimes I'm loving; in a few months, I'll be calmer and friendlier.
- I may be afraid of some things, like thunder and lightning and large animals.
- I may have temper tantrums when I'm tired, angry or frustrated.
- I still love to show off and get attention.

What I Can Do for Myself

- I can help put toys away.
- I may be able to turn on some faucets.
- When I'm ready for bed, I may bring you my pillow or my favorite stuffed toy.

Sounds Things Make

Purpose of the Game

To help your child pronounce difficult words and learn to connect objects with sounds.

How to Play

- Sit together in any relaxed position.
- Imitate sounds for your child. Use your body to show action, like when a jet goes “zoom,” a duck goes “quack,” a fire engine goes “ding-ding-ding,” a train goes “choo-choo-choo,” a dog goes “wuuff-wuuff.”
- After each sound you make, ask the child, “How does a jet go?” or “How does a dog go?”
- You can use a picture or model of the objects when you play this game.

Sharing Is Hard

“Mine! Mine!” Do you hear that a lot from your little one? Sharing is a very difficult thing to learn. We don’t expect children to be able to share until they are about 3 years old, but you can begin to lay the foundation now.

How do you teach your child to share? Children probably learn best by having many good sharing experiences over a long period of time. You need to talk about what’s mine and what’s yours, what’s daddy’s, what’s mommy’s and even what’s doggy’s. It also helps to demonstrate sharing behavior. For example, you’ve just cut an apple in half. You can say, “I have a red apple, and I will share my apple with you.”

If there are other children in your home, your child may need to learn sharing more quickly. Be sure she has some things that are just for her, that she does not have to share. She will need a lot of help from you to learn to share. Be patient and don’t expect true sharing until your young one is older.

It’s Always in the Same Place

Purpose of the Game

To help your child pick the can that a toy is under three times in a row so that he can learn to use clues like sizes, shapes, and so on to solve problems.

How to Play

- Sit with your child at a table or on the floor.
- Tell your child to turn around and not to peek.
- Put a toy under one of three different size tin cans.
- Ask your child to guess which can it is under.
- Change the position of the cans but always put the toy under the same can.
- When your child guesses the right can say, “Good, let’s try it a few more times to see if you know where the toy is always hidden.”



HE or SHE? HIM or HER?

HEALTHY CHILDREN gives equal time and space to both sexes. That’s why we take turns referring to children as “he” or “she.” Please note: when we use he or she, we include all children.

Childhood Immunizations

Your child needs immunizations to keep her from getting sick from very dangerous and even deadly diseases such as polio, whooping cough and German measles. Some of these immunizations are given in the first six months of life, but others are not given until the child is older. Immunizations make your toddler's immune system strong to protect her body from future infections.

It is important to keep a record of all of the immunizations your child has received. You will need to show proof that your child has been immunized before she can go to child care and kindergarten. An Official Immunization Certificate from the Department of Health signed by your physician or health

care provider who gave the immunizations, is required to enroll your child in school or child care. If she has missed any immunizations, check with your pediatrician or your health department about how to get her back on schedule.

It is important to keep up with which immunizations your child needs. However, the recommendations can change from year to year. It is best to check with your pediatrician or health department for the latest recommendations. You can also go online to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/child-schedule.htm to find the most up-to-date list.

NUTRITION

It's okay to eat a little or a lot!

"You have to eat everything on your plate." Is this something you were told as a child? After all, no one wants to see food wasted. It's really unfair to ask your child to eat the same amount every day. Some days your child will be very hungry and will want more than you've put on his plate. Other days he will be less hungry and won't want as much. Only your child knows how hungry he is, so let him decide how much to eat. Let him eat until he isn't hungry anymore, then let him stop.

Many parents worry that their toddler isn't eating enough, but most toddlers eat enough for growth and health. They don't need to be bribed or rewarded to eat more.

Don't punish your child for eating too little or for eating too much. If you do, your child will feel ashamed of his appetite and will begin to feel guilty about food.

If there is food left on his plate, put it away for another meal or snack. If you find there is always food left on his plate, you may be giving him too much food and need to give less.

If your child asks for more of a certain food and you don't have any more of it, say you're sorry there isn't any more. Then offer more of the food that is still left. It takes a lot of patience to help children this age learn to eat well.

Guidance & Discipline

Guidance and Discipline

Discipline comes from the word disciple that means learner or student. Discipline is used to teach children right from wrong. People who study the development of young children generally agree that spanking and other physical punishment (like slapping, pinching and hitting) are not effective forms of discipline, and they may be harmful to children. Children should never be shaken, as this can cause permanent brain damage and even death. Physical punishment, or the threat of it, is not likely to teach children to control themselves. In fact, it may teach them to be sneaky, aggressive and fearful. It can also teach that hitting or hurting others is okay. It is also harmful to punish a child by telling him you will leave him or stop loving him. Such threats can cause your toddler to feel he can't trust you or that he is not important to you. He may feel fearful and insecure, and he may be less willing to cooperate with you.

Here are some discipline ideas that work for many parents:

- **Catch your toddler being good and praise him.** Too often, parents forget to do this. Praise will encourage him to be good and will help him to understand which of his actions you like. If you only give him attention when he misbehaves, he will learn to behave poorly to get your attention.
- **Tell your toddler what he should do instead of what he should not do.** Say, "Carry your coat this way," not "Don't drag your coat on the ground."
- **Plan ahead.** Before special visits and trips (like visits to grandma, parties, or shopping), explain clearly to your toddler how you want him to behave.
- **Take toys or healthy snacks along when you are out with your toddler.** This will help to avoid boredom, hunger or crankiness when you are away from home.
- **Practice prevention.** Within reason, remove things you don't want your child to touch. Limit visits with other children if you expect squabbles. Be sure your little one gets enough rest to avoid fussiness.
- **Tell, don't ask.** If you want your child to act a certain way, tell him what you want; don't ask him. If you need to take him to the doctor, say "Now we are going to the doctor," not "Do you want to go to the doctor now?" If it is bedtime, say, "It is bedtime, now," not "Do you want to go to bed now?"
- **Help your child learn what he needs to do.** If you want him to pick up his toys, make it a game that you play with him. If he resists bath time, tell him a story while bathing him.
- **Offer alternatives.** When he is doing something you don't want him to do, suggest or substitute something else he might enjoy. "You can pour water in this pan, not on the kitchen floor." "You can roll the ball in the house, not throw it."
- **Give choices.** Sometimes you can help your toddler show his independence and get his cooperation at the same time by giving him a choice. "Will you put your toys in the basket or the box?" or "Are you going to wear your sweater or your jacket when you go out to play?"
- **Take a time out for yourself.** If you begin to feel angry at your toddler, put him in a safe place, tell him that you are upset and need to be quiet for a few minutes. Then go to another place and try to relax. After relaxing, it will be easier for you to guide him calmly and sensitively.

If you have any questions or comments please contact the Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent at your county UT Extension office.

SHOW YOUR TODDLER HE'S IMPORTANT TO YOU



HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN

was originally developed as the Parent Express series by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service. The material was adapted for use in Tennessee by Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Janie Burney and others. Contact Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Denise Brandon for information about this publication.

We feel better about ourselves if we think we are important to others. This is especially true of toddlers. They are forming opinions about themselves. Whether they feel loved, capable, and important depends on how they are treated by people who care for them. Show your toddler you care about him and respect him. Let him know you love him just for being himself, not for what he does. Tell him you thought about him during the day while you were gone. Tell him that you like his smile, his laugh, his toes and ears. Show him you're proud of all the things he is learning to do. Tell him how much you enjoy doing things with him.

Don't assume he knows all this just because you take care of him. Take the time to put your affection into words. Loving words that come from the heart can never be said too often.

RESOURCES

From a Bookstore or Library:

Touchpoints: Birth to Three: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development by T. Berry Brazelton and Joshua Sparrow, M.D., Da Capo Lifelong Books, Cambridge, MA, 2006.

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, 5th Edition: Birth to Age 5, by American Academy of Pediatrics, Bantam, New York, 2009.

Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense (3rd Edition) by Elyn Satter, Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 2000.

Your Child's Weight: Helping Without Harming by Elyn Satter, Kelcy Press, Madison, WI, 2005.

From the Extension Office:

What You Should Know About Lead and Children, SP421, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2004.

Child Guidance Techniques, PB1161, by Denise J. Brandon and Clint E. Cummings, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

Selecting a Quality Child Care Center, SP455, by Matthew Devereaux, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

The Challenge of Being a Parent, SP487-A, Adapted for University of Tennessee Extension, 2007.

From the Internet:

www.utextension.utk.edu

<http://fcs.tennessee.edu>

www.cyfernet.org

www.zerotothree.org

www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/

Visit the UT Extension Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/> and the Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/fcs/>