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**11-15 Months**

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## Relationships – Adjusting to a Toddler

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Importance of Parent-Child Relationship: Nature and Quality**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Recognize the changes in the parent-child relationship during the transition from infancy to toddler- hood.
- Understand that their effectiveness as parents is greatly influenced by the nature and quality of the parent-child relationship.
- Recognize that the parent-child relationship exists within the context of other human and environmental influences such as a change from one developmental stage to another.

This is the beginning of your baby's declaration of independence. It is the age of watching the baby you have grown to know and love, turn into a toddler you are just beginning to understand. For many parents, this is a bittersweet time. Your feelings may be as fickle as your child's behavior. One moment you are bursting with excitement as you watch your child skillfully take his first steps. The next, you are longing for the baby who would sit on your lap and cuddle while you sang or read a story. The times of cuddling do not stop though they may be shorter and less frequent.

The new freedom of getting around on two legs is very exciting for your child and tiring for her parents. When the dependent, sedentary baby turns into the independent, traveling toddler, parents do not have the control that they once did. As she toddles around, she gets into everything that is in her path. She is driven to explore. Your role has shifted slightly, from mainly nurturer to protector, finding ways to allow her to explore while keeping her safe.

A toddler, of course, still very much needs his parents. During this time, you may notice as your child ventures away from you, he may turn back and make eye contact with you. He is depending on your facial expression or gestures to tell him whether it is safe to continue or if he should return. This "viewing a loved one from a distance" helps to facilitate a child's interest in the outside world and gives him the emotional strength to separate. You may also notice that periodically, he will come back to you to get a hug or some other kind of contact. It is as if you are a gas pump and he needs to come back for "emotional refueling" to give him confidence to venture out again. On the other hand, your child may have periods when you can't get him off your lap. This fluctuation between dependence and independence is all part of the separation process.

Learning new skills can be frustrating. She needs reassurance and support through this transition. The baby may be gone, but the observant parent will marvel at the accomplishments of the blossoming toddler.

## Relationships – Adjusting to a Toddler Discussion Page

1. How do you balance your child's need to explore with your need to keep him/her safe?
2. The "do it myself" attitude can be messy and take more time. How do you handle your child's determination to, for example, feed him/herself while simultaneously exploring the food?
3. Anger and frustration are common feelings for the emerging toddler. Biting, throwing and hitting are common ways toddlers express these feelings. How do you handle these behaviors?
4. Your toddler is working on many skills and is changing rapidly. S/he needs support, security and reassurance. Your toddler may become very clingy. How do you deal with clingy behavior?
5. What are your feelings about the changes you are seeing in your child?

## Relationships – Adjusting to a Toddler At Home Suggestions

It is common for parents to feel a sense of loss when the transition from babyhood to toddlerhood occurs. Time goes fast. The transition will be complete before you know it. To remember the baby and celebrate the emerging toddler, why not take a few minutes and respond to the following questions:

What did you enjoy about your child as an infant?

What are you looking forward to about your child during toddlerhood?

What has your child taught you about yourself since s/he was born?

## Parenthood – Balancing Needs

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent Development** and the emphasis is **Balancing Parent-Child Needs: Other Family Relationships**.

Parents support their child's development when they:

- Balance parent-child relationship needs within the context of relationships with other family members.
- Construct strategies to maximize time and energy management techniques to better meet the needs of family members and oneself.

All humans, whether you are one or 101, are trying to achieve some sort of balance or homeostasis in their lives. Parents are not only trying to find balance in their own lives, but in the lives of their children and their family as a whole. It can feel like a daunting, near impossible, task. "All day long, parents make decisions about whose needs take priority, about who's going to have to wait, about who needs to hurry, about who gets to go at their own pace." (Davis, Keyser 1997).

Children make enormous demands on a parent's time and energy. It is easy for a parent to spend the day meeting the needs of other people and never get around to his or her own. By the end of the day, there may be time, but no energy. Some parents have decided to carve out some personal time either before children wake up in the morning or after their children are in bed. Just as we treat our children, we need to treat ourselves by scheduling a special way to take care of our needs. We know we will be better parents when we take better care of ourselves.

So much of the work of raising children and maintaining a home is work that is perpetually "in process". First, a meal is made and consumed. Then, the dishes are washed just in time to start the process all over again for the next meal. Rarely do we get a sense of accomplishment, because nothing stays finished. Often, we try to transfer a "business" sense of accomplishment to a "home-life" sense of accomplishment. The needs are different in each setting and so is the journey toward task completion.

Maybe we need to look at our "to do" list differently as we attempt to balance needs. We may have to alter our standards. As comedian Phyllis Diller once said, "Trying to clean house while the children are growing is like trying to shovel snow while it's still snowing". Maybe the things on our list should be; sang a silly song to my child, cuddled and read three books before naptime, walked to the park and watched the birds and the squirrels. Those would be fulfilling things to cross off a list. Infant specialist Magda Gerber encourages parents to slow down to "baby time" so you don't miss the special moments.

## Parenthood – Balancing Needs Discussion Page

Balancing the things we want to do with the things we need to do is not a new concept. Since time began, there have been families, in many ways, trying to manage everyone's needs the same way we do today. The ancient Greeks had two ways of looking at the concept of time; **Chronos** is clocks, deadlines, schedules, and **Kairos** is seeking beauty, joy and passion.

1. What are your *chronos*, the things you have to do that you would like to have a break from or change? List three.
2. Can you think of a way that you can get a break or change one of the items on your list? Be creative in your problem-solving.
3. What are your *kairos* that you have or would like to have in your life? List three.
4. Can you think of a way to increase the *kairos* in your life? Be creative in your problem-solving.
5. When you think of your "to do list", what are three of the items that you would like to have checked off at the end of a given day, as a way to work towards balancing the needs of your family?

## Parenthood – Balancing Needs At Home Suggestions

### A Story for Parents

*One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered overachievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz" and he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouth mason jar and set it on the table in front of him. He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside he asked, "Is the jar full?" Everyone in the class yelled, "Yes." The time management expert replied, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. He then asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is the jar full?" "No!" the class shouted. Once again he said "Good." Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?" One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you really try hard you can always fit more things in it!" "No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point." The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."*

What are the "big rocks" in your life, time with loved ones, working for a worthy cause? When you reflect on this story, ask yourself "What are my "big rocks?" and then put those in your jar first.

Author: Brian Bartes (top personal and business success coach)  
(3/6/2002 Life Excellence Newsletter)



## Growing - Overall Development

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **General Child Development: Process of Development**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Understand that child development is a process that:
  - is described and organized by domains that are interrelated,
  - progresses in stages,
  - is universal,
  - is individual,
  - occurs in predictable patterns, and
  - includes a range of skills and competencies within each domain.
- Understand that children learn, grow, and develop by playing.

Introducing the eleven-to-fifteen month old is like introducing the tadpole. Your child is a toddler growing in all areas of development.

Physically structural things are happening, slowly. The eleven-month-old is the right shape for crawling, but not the greatest for walking. His head is still large in relation to the rest of his body. Narrow shoulders and chest over the round belly and diaper create a pear-like shape. The legs seem short and the feet are almost flat, as arches develop with increased walking. Wrong or right shape, the one-year-old is a motion explosion investigating the world through movement and senses.

Your evolving toddler can now communicate in ways other than just crying. Most toddlers indicate their desires and needs by gesturing, dragging you around by the finger, or word approximations. The utterance "uh-uh" can mean anything from "I want up" to "I want juice." As your child refines his likes and dislikes, head shaking a "no" begins. The full range of a toddler's voice is tested. Screaming is common. Your child wants labels for every object encountered.

Early toddler-hood can be frustrating. She cannot always figure out how to get her body or an object to do what she wants. Emotions pour out and change rapidly. As with all transitions, this unsettling time can cause your child to be clingy. Separation and stranger awareness may resurface again.

Socially, a toddler is generally great company. His sense of humor is developing and he loves to perform (applause is appreciated). When with other children, he is not ready to play socially, but will play nearby, observe, and imitate what he sees. All in all, it is fascinating to watch the antics of the early toddler.

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## Growing – Overall Development Discussion Page

1. **Large Muscle Development** – How does your child get around? Crawling? Walking? Or in transition? What is your child exploring at home, using his/her large muscle skills?
2. **Small Muscle Development** – How is your child using his hands while at play? What is your child exploring at home, using his/her hands?
3. **Language Development** – How is your child communicating with you? Babbling? Gestures? Words? What is the latest communication, through gestures or words, your child has expressed?
4. **Cognitive Development** – What is the latest skill your child has learned? How does s/he practice this skill at home?
5. **Social-Emotional Development** – How is your child handling separation and stranger anxiety at the present time? Have you noticed your child reacting to separation or strangers in the past? How does your child react to other children?

## Growing – Overall Development At Home Suggestions

Here is a list of typical developmental behaviors that may occur within the time frame given. Remember, development is predictable but also individual and uneven during the first three years of life. One 12 month old child may be concentrating on learning to walk while another is content to crawl and beginning to use words.

### 12-15 months

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Social</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• walks alone</li> <li>• can climb up stairs</li> <li>• can grip a crayon</li> <li>• can run</li> <li>• bounces to music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• favors one hand</li> <li>• understands a word in context</li> <li>• understands cause and effect</li> <li>• starts pretending</li> <li>• remembers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• likes to sing</li> <li>• says several words</li> <li>• says “no” and shakes head</li> <li>• can follow simple directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• copies and imitates</li> <li>• likes to look at books together</li> <li>• starts to exhibit a temper when angry</li> <li>• waves good-bye</li> <li>• laughs at funny things</li> </ul>



## Learning – Through the Eyes of a One Year Old

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Approaches to Learning: Curiosity**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Encourage and support children's interest and excitement in discovery and exploration.
- Identify and build upon children's individual interests.
- Provide a variety of materials and activities in the home environment.

A one year old learns with his whole body and all of his senses. Each encounter with the environment creates an opportunity for learning through exploration. He is like a new explorer in a strange land. He approaches an item, utilizing everything at his disposal. He may pick it up and examine every side. He may taste it to feel its texture in his mouth. He may shake it and hold it up to his ear to see if it makes sound. He may throw it to see what happens. With each examination, he is learning about himself and his world.

In her brain, as she goes about the daily business of learning, she is connecting one neuron to another. She will begin to know what is soft and what is hard. What is heavy and what is light. What tastes good and what does not. She will begin to develop broad categories in her mind and begin to transfer information from one situation to another.

It has long been thought, by many child development experts, that intellectual development was separate from emotional development. For example, Piaget's research focused on how and when children classified physical objects. However, most children can classify emotions far earlier than physical objects. A four month old infant can react to a certain person with fear, but cannot yet sort objects by shape or color. How much does a child's emotional development impact his/her intellectual development?

Dr. Stanley Greenspan believes that infants have a "dual-coding" ability which is an emotional and physical response to stimulation. It is this dual-coding that is the key to understanding how emotions organize intellectual capacities and create a sense of self. A given situation can produce totally different reactions in different children. One child may interpret a person's voice as loud (physical) and respond with crying (emotional),

while another interprets it as soothing (physical) and responds with a smile (emotional). Intellectual and emotional development cannot occur without human interaction.

The crucial element to developing a child's potential is a loving and responsive parent or caregiver who helps the child make sense of the world.

Greenspan, in his book **The Growth of the Mind** (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc. 1997), reveals six developmental levels with unique emotional features which impact intellectual development. The passage, from one developmental level to the next, depends on emotional interactions between parent and child.

During toddler-hood, a child is typically in the fourth level entitled, "purpose and interaction". This level is entered when a child can connect sensation and emotion to an intentional action. Through his social interactions, a child determines patterns in his behavior and in the behaviors of others. He can now distinguish facial expressions, body postures, and basic emotions. This may account for all the testing of boundaries that occur in the daily life of a toddler. Through experimentation, he finds out how things work and what response he will get from those around him. He is also closely watching the actions and emotions of others. Since expressive language is limited, he relies on imitation and gestures to get what he wants. Let's say he would like something to drink (purpose) and needs someone to help him. He may pull mom or dad out of the chair and lead them by the fingers to the refrigerator (interaction).

However, it is the sensation of juice tasting good that started the process. The initial emotional response to juice is what organized the thought process and steps needed to get the juice. Without an emotional response, emerging behaviors and thinking can become disorganized, like playing a game without directions.

Another interesting facet of this level is the way a child learns to deal with angry feelings towards the one he loves. These feelings usually arise from frustration over not being able to do something or not getting what he wants. The toddler is figuring out how happiness and anger can coexist in the same little body. The integration of these feelings occurs through interactions with a tolerant parent who allows a range of emotions and provides appropriate responses.

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## Learning – Through the Eyes of a One Year Old Discussion Page

### Play Observation

#### *Purpose and Interaction Activities*

1. Stack the blocks for your child. How does your child respond?
2. Shake the container with the toy inside. What does your child do?
3. Open the container and show your child the toy, then, place it back in the container. How does your child respond?
4. Show your child a puzzle or shape sorter. How does your child respond?
5. At some point during playtime, show no emotion, change of body posture, or no interaction cues toward your child for a brief time. How does your child respond?
6. While playing, describe a time when your child had a purpose in mind that required your interaction to complete the task?
7. Did your child become frustrated during play? Describe the situation.
8. Did you have to set a limit on your child's behavior? Describe the incident.

## Learning – Through the Eyes of a One Year Old At Home Suggestions

The one year old is not only trying to figure out what affect his behavior has on objects in his world, but also what affect his behavior has on the people in his world. As discussed by Greenspan, learning is driven by the initial emotional response. Keeping this in mind, consider the following:

One year olds learn much through imitation. You will increasingly feel like you are being scrutinized as your child tries to copy your actions, and your speech.

A toddler, during this time of development, is beginning to distinguish various facial expressions and body postures. She will look to you as she is exploring and determine, by your facial expression, what is safe to explore, and what is not.

As your toddler's repertoire of gestures increases, he begins to figure what gestures get what response. You may see some frustration if his gesture is not met with the response he was seeking.

As your toddler begins to anticipate your response, she may test your response by seeking out things in the environment that have gotten her a "no" to see if she still gets a "no". Children learn through this testing behavior. Consistency and predictability provide boundaries and security as she explores.

One of the best ways for parents to get involved in their child's learning is to provide what Dr. Greenspan calls "floor time". As the name implies, get down on the floor, be patient, and let the child *lead* the learning.

## Routines – Eating and Sleeping

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent – Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Nurturing: Physical Care**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Provide for the nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, and safety needs of their children.
- Realize new development can impact daily routines.
- Recognize the importance of establishing daily routines to the overall development of the child.

Change is part of life. For a toddler, it is a state of being. During stages of rapid development, there can be times when routine behaviors appear regressive. Eating and sleeping routines can be affected.

This new growth (and regression) can impact parents by day and by night. Children are not equally hungry everyday. Food preferences are also developing, however fickle they may be. One day, bananas are a favorite – the next day, forget it. If a variety of nutritious foods are given, a parent must trust that a hungry toddler will eat. Parents should look at nutritional intake every couple of days instead of daily to reassure themselves their finicky eater is well nourished. The manner in which the food reaches the child's mouth is not always a direct route. Toddlers are messy eaters. Small portions and the clear message that food will be taken away when thrown, add some sanity to mealtime.

Sleeping can also be affected. Your toddler can now stand up in his crib. He may not want to lie down. It is difficult to sleep standing up. He may also wake in the middle of the night with a pang of separation anxiety. The teething of one-year old molars is also disruptive to sleep. What's a sleep-deprived parent to do? Establishing a calming bedtime ritual can help. Determining how you will handle mid-night waking can also help. Your child's naptimes are also in transition. A child at this age usually changes from two naps to one.

Routines are very important to the life of a toddler. Developmentally, they are trying to figure out the rules and the boundaries of their world. Ellyn Satter, author of **How to Get Your Kids to Eat But Not Too Much** states:

*“Your job in parenting your toddler is to offer her support for both sides of her ambivalent struggle between separation and security. You can help by teaching her to*

*do things competently and independently and by providing limits without taking away her self-respect or individuality.”*

This is a time of transition. Routines can help build security for your child during this time of rapid change. Routines help provide a predictable environment enabling your child to develop healthy eating and sleeping habits.

## **Routines – Eating and Sleeping Discussion Page**

**Please select one question or statement from each section to discuss.**

### **Eating**

1. What concerns or questions do you have regarding your child's nutrition?
2. Describe your child's current, daily eating pattern.
3. What limits do you set on eating and mealtime?
4. What do you do when your child does not eat what you are serving for a meal?
5. What is most or least pleasant about mealtime with your toddler?

### **Sleeping**

6. What concerns or questions do you have regarding your child's sleep?
7. What is your child's current, daily sleep pattern?
8. Describe your bedtime routine.
9. If your child wakes in the middle of the night, how do you respond?
10. What do you believe are your responsibilities in helping your child sleep?

## Routines – Eating and Sleeping At Home Suggestions

The average 3-18 month old needs approximately 13-15 hours of sleep in a 24 hour period. The 12-18 month old is in transition between one and two naps per day. Generally, the morning nap is one hour and the afternoon nap is 1-3 hours in duration.

Here are some routine-builders for bedtime;

- Have a winding-down time before sleep.
- Baths can be calming and set the stage for sleep.
- Sing a certain song every night like “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
- Brush teeth together to encourage a good habit.
- Cuddle together.
- Read a bedtime story together like “Good Night Moon” by Margaret Wise Brown.
- Offer a drink or a small snack.
- Try to have bedtime the same time every night to help set your child’s internal body clock.

Ellyn Satter points out the importance of the following ideas to avoid power struggles in her book, **How to Get Your Kids to Eat – But Not Too Much**:

Parents are responsible for which food is presented and the manner in which it is presented:

- Selecting and buying food.
- Making and presenting meals.
- Regulating timing of meals and snacks.
- Presenting food in a form a child can handle.
- Allowing eating methods a child can master.
- Making family mealtimes pleasant.

- Helping the child to participate in family meals.
- Helping the child to attend to his eating.
- Maintaining standards of behavior at the table.
- The Parent is **not** responsible for:
  - How much a child eats.
  - Whether he eats.
  - How his body turns out.

Many parents worry about amounts and, specifically, what quantities of what foods will give your toddler all the daily required nutrients? The truth of the matter is that some toddlers eat very little in a given day. Look at your toddler's eating over a two-to-three day period to more accurately evaluate her intake. The average one to three-year-old needs between 800-1,000 calories a day. Your child may choose to eat a great breakfast and lunch and very little at dinner.

These are a few, suggested daily portion sizes adapted from Ellyn Satter's book, ***How to Get Your Kids to Eat -But Not Too Much:***

**Protein**

2-3 ounces

**Dairy**

2 cups

**Fruits and Vegetables**

4 servings

**Breads and Cereals**

4 servings

**Protein Group**

Provides a good source of protein, iron, B vitamins, and trace elements.

- 1 egg
- 1 slice cheddar-type cheese
- 1/2 cup cooked, dried beans
- 1/2 chicken breast or a leg or thigh
- 1 medium pork chop
- 1 lean, ground beef patty
- 1 piece of meat or fish the size of the palm of your hand

**Dairy Group**

Each gives the calcium and protein of an 8 ounce glass of milk.

- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 1/2 ounces cheddar-type cheese
- 1 1/2 cup cottage cheese

**Fruits and Vegetables Group**

Provides an excellent source of:

***Vitamin A***

Dried apricots  
Cantaloupe  
Carrots  
Mango  
Pumpkin  
Spinach  
Squash  
Sweet potatoes

***Vitamin C***

Broccoli  
Brussel sprouts  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Grapefruit  
Mango  
Oranges  
Spinach  
Strawberries

**Breads and Cereals Group**

Provides a good source of B vitamins and iron while whole grains provide fiber and trace elements.

- 1 slice of bread
- 1/2 bagel
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal
- 3/4 cup dried cereal
- 1/2 cup cooked noodles
- 1/2 cup rice
- 1 average-sized taco shell or tortilla

Whether your child eats, is his or her choice. If your child feels pressure, he may choose not to eat. Your best course of action is to offer a balanced diet in a matter-of-fact manner and trust your child to eat what he needs. Providing a positive role model, by eating a healthy diet, may also encourage your child to eat. Remember, one of the primary ways toddlers learn is through imitation.

## Emotional Development - The Emergence of a Healthy Self

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Social and Emotional Development: Self-Concept**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Allow children to experiment with their growing competence and independence.
- Provide opportunities for children's exposure to a wide variety of materials and experiences.
- Provide children with warm, loving relationships.

Toddlers learn how to feel about themselves through the responses they receive from their parents. Loving parents tell their child he is loved and give him the opportunity to return that love. Through the exchanges in this warm, loving relationship, the child knows he is lovable. This is the first important step in developing a healthy sense of self.

Between 10 and 15 months, children become fascinated with standing and eventually moving away from their loved ones. This ability opens up a whole new world of exploration for the blossoming toddler, which at times can feel overwhelming. As the child moves away from his parent, he will turn back to see the reaction to his new found freedom. If he is met with a smile, this will give him the emotional strength to be separate and get to know his widening world. The toddler will explore for a bit and then come back and check-in with the parent for comfort and reassurance. The situations that do not elicit smiles from parents provide opportunities for toddlers to use their emerging self-control. They are also gaining practice respecting boundaries and limits. This behavior of separating and reuniting builds confidence for the toddler that he can have an impact on his environment and manage on his own.

The greatest boost to his competence comes when a child interacts with his parent and is heard and respected. When he hands his empty cereal bowl to his parent, instead of throwing it on the floor, and is met with a smile, he knows he is capable and that he can handle the rules of his environment. In many ways, a child's interactions with the people nearest to him are the training ground for venturing out and having successful relationships with others.

## Emotional Development - The Emergence of a Healthy Self Discussion Page

How can I:

- Show my child s/he is loved?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Consider his/her self-worth during our daily routines of feeding, dressing, changing and playing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Show I respect his/her feelings?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Let my child know I respect him/her even when I can't give him/her what is wanted?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Encourage his/her new skills and make him/her feel capable?

## Emotional Development - The Emergence of a Healthy Self At Home Suggestions

### Parents help their children develop a healthy self-image when they:

- Understand developmental stages to better define typical development.
- Provide a predictable and safe environment for the child to test boundaries with appropriate consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- Recognize that through the learning process, a child will exhibit strengths and also make mistakes.
- Arrange the child's environment to create successful experiences like a child-sized table and chair to allow the child to do things for him/herself.
- Accept, reflect, and respect the full range of a toddler's emotions and model and teach acceptable ways to handle his/her feelings.
- Show respect for his/her rights and abilities by being their child's advocate. Encourage and support your child as s/he works through problems.
- Let the child explore the world and allow him/her to see how things work.
- Use positive directions such as "please sit" instead of "don't stand". This emphasizes the appropriate behavior and makes clear the behavior you wish to increase.
- Help their child learn from his/her actions. For example, if food is thrown off the tray, this means that the child is no longer hungry and the food is removed. It is disrespectful to your child not to provide a consequential environment.
- Do what comes naturally by spending time getting to know their child. This lets a child know how special s/he is to you.



## Guiding Behavior – Teaching Boundaries

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent – Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Guidance: Discipline**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Recognize that guiding behavior (discipline) is a necessary component to keeping toddlers safe during exploration.
- Establish and maintain reasonable boundaries.
- Determine non-punitive, respectful ways to teach their toddler while guiding behavior.

The child who has recently learned to walk is excited to use this new skill. He delights in toddling around and exploring the possibilities of this new-found freedom.

The skill of walking adds a new level to exploration – table-tops, counter-tops and doorknobs – and a new level of child-proofing to parents. Your child has no judgment to determine what is safe to touch and what is not. Your child needs guidance to keep him safe. Review your home at this level and make safety adjustments when necessary. Look at what small or breakable objects he may be able to reach.

Another effective test is to shake tables, bookcases or shelves to see what might fall down on your child. If you have blinds or drapery cords, make sure they are securely out of your child's reach. A new walker is also prone to falling so minimize sharp edges in your home as much as possible. Each home is different and will have its own unique safety issues.

Each toddler is also unique with his/her own style of exploration and degree of persistence. Before getting upset at your child's behavior, let's look at his/her perspective to see why these frustrating behaviors may be occurring. Toddlers do not have the life experience or cognitive ability at this age to do things out of spite or defiance. One of the main reasons that children "misbehave" is **curiosity**. Children learn through doing and their intent is to figure out how the world works. We assist them in this process when we provide boundaries. **Testing power and control** is a way that children practice being separate from their parents and determine, based on parental response, what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Parents may also notice an increase in **attention-seeking behaviors** at this point in development. Generally, it doesn't matter whether it is positive or negative attention. Parents can lessen the attempts for negative attention by giving attention for positive behaviors. This will encourage the behaviors that you would like to reoccur and diminish the not so

desirable ones. **Frustration** over the learning process often explodes into temper tantrums for the young toddler.

He may not be coordinated enough to do the task that he sees his parent do with ease, like put on his own shoes. He also does not understand why his parent insists he hold his parent's hand while in a busy parking lot.

The best way a parent can help his/her toddler navigate this challenging time, is to try to gain your child's point of view to better understand his/her behavior. Understanding why toddlers do what they do, can help you determine what boundaries you need to set, respecting your toddler's need to explore and learn. Be patient and consistent and eventually your toddler will learn the rules of his environment.

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## Guiding Behavior - Teaching Boundaries Discussion Page

What is most frustrating about guiding your child's behavior at this stage?

Based on your answer above, consider the following questions:

- Considering my child's age, abilities and language skills, does she know this is something she shouldn't be doing? What are you using as your indicators of understanding?
- How did I make it clear that I wanted his behavior to change or stop? What were my words and actions? Does your child know what the desired behavior is? For example, please **sit** in your chair.
- If your child repeats the same behavior, would you choose the same or different method to make him/her change or stop the behavior?  
When a child is learning a new rule, s/he needs consistency to know the behavior is not acceptable. Pick a way to deal with it that you feel comfortable using and that is linked to the behavior to make it a learning experience for your child. For example, if your child begins throwing his/her food toward the end of the meal, the food gets taken away. This is a clear consequence and is linked to the child's behavior.
- Since children learning by exploring their environment, what safety concerns do you have for your child at this stage?

## Guiding Behavior - Teaching Boundaries At Home Suggestions

When asked about his thoughts on discipline, Dr. T. Berry Brazelton had this to say during an interview for the **Minneapolis Star Tribune** (September 21, 1994):

"It's the second most important thing you give a child. Love comes first, but discipline comes right on its heels. We're not talking about punishment, but teaching; your goal is to give the child an inner sense of where to stop."

Here are some options for helping your toddler develop "an inner sense of where to stop":

- **Physically remove** the child from the situation and tell him the behavior expected. This should be done gently but with a firm, controlled tone of voice.
- **Substitute** an acceptable behavior for the unacceptable one. Crayons are for drawing on paper, not on walls.
- Try **ignoring** harmless behaviors like whining. Eventually your child will learn it does not get him what he wants.
- **Evaluate power struggles** – children want control over their lives. You can give them power by giving choices and helping them with a problem, but not solving it for them.

## Communication Between You and Your Child

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Language and Literacy Development: Listening**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Engage children in conversation and notice and respond to what children say and do.
- Use mealtime and other daily routines as an opportunity for conversation.
- Use rhymes and songs with children to increase children's interest in language.

Your child has been understanding language for quite some time. Babies as young as nine months can understand simple statements such as, "Come here, Amy," by interpreting a parent's tone of voice and the physical cue of outstretched arms. She also has had ways to communicate with you since birth through crying, body and facial expressions, and gestures. You and your child have been learning how to read each other's signals. You have developed a special dialogue – a way to communicate with each other. Now, your child is learning a new form of communication through speaking words.

The production of words is a complicated process. In order to form a word, the mouth, tongue, lips, and dozens of small muscles must work together to produce certain speech sounds in a specific order. This is not automatic; it is learned behavior. It can only occur if a child:

- Is able to hear and see others talking.
- Has a chance to practice speech sounds.
- Is responded to and encouraged when practicing words.

Often, the beginning speech of a toddler comes out in the form of gibberish called "jargon talk." Your child has studied your speech and is now trying to copy what he has heard. It may sound like a whole sentence, but you may not be able to determine a single word. Your child is learning about the elements of conversation and how to communicate through words.

Your child's word for an object may not sound much like your word for the same object. The process of refining these words (so you're speaking the same language) can be frustrating for both of you. He utters and you go through words and physical gyrations trying to determine what he wants. To further complicate this process, his fickle finger may be pointing, but he really doesn't know what he wants either. In addition, he may

become very demanding, persistent and clingy as he attempts to verbalize his needs and desires.

Patience is definitely a virtue parents need during this time in a child's development. Realize that the frustration your child is experiencing is normal, and convey the message to him, "I am listening, and I will try my best to understand." Developing language is a process. As with other areas of development, your child's path will unfold in her own, unique way.

The following chart depicts typical receptive and expressive language at this stage of development.

<b>AGE</b>	<b>RECEPTION</b>	<b>EXPRESSION</b>
10 to 12 Months	Listens to words with understanding  Completes "give it to me" commands  Plays ball  Understands many action words  Responds in action to questions ("Where's the baby's shoe?")	Imitates sounds of others  Imitates melody of phrases  Says word-like syllables ("ma-ma-ma")  Builds up repertory of speech sound combinations  Says first word around 1 year
12 to 18 Months	Points to objects, body parts  Responds in action to commands ("Come here.")	True speech: intentionally uses words and anticipates responses  Vocabulary: 5+ words  Uses initial consonants, vowels

**Communication Between You and Your Child  
Discussion Page**

Observe and record your child's communication attempts as you watch him/her play for a ten-minute period. Tally the different forms and give an example of each.

Tally

\_\_\_\_ Used gestures like pointing or nodding head. Example \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Pulled you by finger and brought you to what she wanted. Example \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Used verbal communication words, jargon talk, etc. Example \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Used body language like running away or arching back. Example \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Other. Example \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Communication Between You and Your Child At Home Suggestions

Here are some suggestions to support language development, adapted from the book **Becoming the Parent you Want to Be – A Source Book of Strategies for the First Five Years** by Laura Davis and Janis Keyser:

- Talk to your child.
- Talk about what you are doing.
- Talk about what your child is doing.
- Don't limit yourself to baby talk. Be a good language model.
- Respond to your child's communication. Even if you can't understand the utterance, this sends the message that what s/he says is important.
- Extend your child's language. When your child makes a one word utterance like "milk", extend it into a sentence "Oh, would you like some milk?"
- Teach language through modeling.
- Create a language rich environment through speaking, reading, telling stories and, rhymes.
- Preserve your child's language. Record it or write new words on a calendar.
- In addition to the suggestions above, consider giving your toddler's gestures meaning. Since fine muscle development, in the hands, proceeds those required for speech, utilize your child's own gestures as a form of communication. Also, you may want to use a book on baby sign to teach your child specific gestures. The use of gestures can ease frustrations over communication while your child develops a verbal vocabulary.

## Personality - You and Your Child

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Relationship Skills: Temperament**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Identify, accept, and work with their child's temperament, whether similar to or different from their own.
- Understand the effect of temperamental characteristics on development.
- Determine the impact of temperamental characteristics on the parent and child relationship.

A person's preferred way of responding to the world is called temperament. Temperament is not something someone chooses. Temperament is also not created by parents. It is part of a child's genetic make-up. Personality develops as a result of initial temperamental characteristics and the experiences with people and situations in one's life. When a parent expresses, "You have my sense of humor," or "You act just like your Dad," it is the essence of this budding personality they are talking about.

Much of the information we have on personality was obtained from a ten-year study by Drs. Chess, Thomas and Birch and addressed in their book, ***Your Child Is a Person***. They followed the development of 231 children from birth to first grade and looked specifically at the child's typical response to his/her world in the following areas:

- How active was the child?
- How regular was he in his routines?
- Did the child approach a new situation willingly or did he withdraw?
- How adaptable was she to a change in her routine?
- What was his response to different sensory experiences such as a loud noise or an encounter with fingerpaints?
- How intense was the response to different situations?
- Was her overall mood positive or negative?
- How easily distracted was she from a task?
- How persistent and how long was his attention span when working on a task?

Following the children from birth to age 6, they noticed that children often responded similarly in similar situations as they grew. The impact this information has on parenting is that you are not responsible for every aspect of your child's behavior. Your child is born with a certain behavioral style. All temperamental characteristics have some aspects that are preferable. Some children, due to their behavioral styles, are easier to parent at certain stages than others. For example, a challenging trait in a toddler, like persistence, is an asset to that person as an adult.

Since personality develops through the interplay of genetics and environmental influences, the parent and child relationship plays a very important role. Understanding your child's unique temperament can help you learn to anticipate and cope with certain situations. For example, the child who is very affected by a change in schedule is not the child to take grocery shopping close to naptime.

Another aspect of personality, that can impact you and your child's behavioral styles, is the concept of introversion and extroversion. Often this is a very misunderstood part of a person's development. Sometimes, a person with introverted tendencies has been labeled as shy. On the other hand, a person with extroverted tendencies is considered outgoing and full of personality. A more accurate way to understand extroversion and introversion is to determine how a person restores their energy. An introvert will often need to refuel alone or with a couple of close friends, whereas an extrovert recharges by seeking out more activity and often more people. As with temperamental characteristics, neither is better than the other, it can just give an indication as to how you or your child may respond in certain situations.

The similarities and differences in our child's and our own personality adds an interesting element to our relationship. During toddlerhood, if your child's behavioral style conflicts with yours, it can make this sometimes trying time even more difficult. For example, the parent who has a low sensory threshold for noise will find it harder to deal with the toddler who enjoys playing with the volume and intensity of his voice.

Understanding and accepting your own style, along with your child's, can make the parenthood and childhood journeys more enjoyable for both of you.

## Personality – You and Your Child Discussion Page

How do you respond in the following areas? Place an "x" on the continuum.

### Energy

1	2	3	4	5
Do you enjoy sitting quietly for long periods of time?			Are you always on the move, always doing something?	

### Regularity

1	2	3	4	5
Do you have a built-in alarm clock? Do you eat at the same time every day?			Do you eat when you are hungry and sleep when you are tired with little daily predictability?	

### First Reaction

1	2	3	4	5
Do you dive into new situations wholeheartedly?			Do you enter new situations cautiously or avoid them when possible?	

### Adaptability

1	2	3	4	5
Do you adapt easily to unexpected change? Do you go with the flow?			Do you hate change and meet it with much resistance?	

**Sensitivity**

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Are you not very affected by noise or sticky fingers or being too hot or too cold?</p>			<p>Do you immediately cut out scratchy clothes tags? Do you always have a sweater, just in case?</p>	

**Mood**

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Do you smile through most everything and always find the silver lining?</p>			<p>Are you generally more serious and analytical?</p>	

**Intensity**

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Do you barely giggle at a funny joke? Can you wait a little longer to eat when you're hungry?</p>			<p>Do you laugh loud and long when something is funny? Are you "starving" instead of just hungry?</p>	

**Perceptiveness**

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Do you focus on a task and are not easily distracted?</p>			<p>Do you notice what other people miss? Do you become distracted when something catches your eye?</p>	

**Persistence**

1	2	3	4	5
<p>Do you switch to something else if something does not come easily?</p>			<p>Do you persist in the face of adversity?</p>	

Now think of these areas in terms of your child.

In what ways are you similar?

Where do you conflict?

### **Identify your energy source**

#### ***If you are an introvert, you probably;***

- Enjoy refueling by sitting down with a good book after a long day.
- Enjoy spending time with just a few good friends instead of a big group.
- Find being around a large group of people exhausting.
- Solve a problem internally before discussing it with someone else.

#### ***If you are an extrovert, you probably;***

- Enjoy talking with someone at the end of a long day.
- Find being around people and activity energizing.
- Enjoy refueling by spending time with a group of people after a long day.
- Enjoy solving problems by talking them through with other people.

Remember, everyone will have times when they will answer questions from both the extrovert and introvert sections. Think which category is generally your preferred way to respond to the world.

## Personality – You and Your Child At Home Suggestions

What do you know about your child's preferred way of responding to the world? How does your child:

- Take to a new food?
- Warm to new people?
- Handle separation?
- React when her routine is altered?
- Bring his personality into play?
- Handle a challenge?
- Go about everything she does? Quietly? Actively?
- Show his persistence?
- Respond to learning something new?
- Handle transitions like having to go inside on a nice, spring day to eat lunch?

In summary, think about these final words from ***Your Child Is a Person*** by Stella Chess, M.D., Alexander Thomas, M.D. and Herbert G. Birch, M.D., Ph.D.:

"Parents who enjoy their children in their own individual ways can be sure children are also benefiting. If there is one thing above all that children will thrive on, it is their parents' pleasure in them."

## The Meaning of Play & Selecting Toys and Books

This topic falls under the domain of **Early Childhood Development** and the emphasis is **Approaches to Learning: Curiosity**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Encourage and support their child's interest and excitement in discovery and exploration.
- Determine current developmental and upcoming developmental skills to identify toy and book selections.
- Identify and build upon their child's individual interests.
- Provide a variety of materials and activities in the home environment.

If you believe that play is learning, it takes on more significance. Should we entrust our children to know how to play and, therefore, with the responsibility of learning? How much play, thus learning, is the parent's responsibility?

Anxious parents, under the pressure of encouraging intellectual development, may buy every book and educational toy, and program all play; saturating their child and exhausting themselves. In this scenario, an essential play ingredient is missing - FUN!

Somewhere, there is a middle ground where parents do not feel guilty about adequate, enriching play experiences and where they and their child have fun while learning.

Fortunately, nature is on the parent's and toddler's side. Born with insatiable curiosity, they come ready to touch, see, smell, taste and explore. They learn from everything they can reach. At this age, play is impulsive, of brief duration, and caused by whatever catches your child's eye.

No particular toy or activity can fulfill the learning process. A child's play and learning is best accomplished when it is integrated into everyday life. Observant parents can find safe household objects to match a child's interests. Measuring cups make great stacking and nesting cups.

Be patient, supportive, and encouraging during playtime. Allow your child to concentrate and work on problems for a while before you help. Intervene when needed or to demonstrate additional play possibilities. Most of all, enjoy being with your child and have fun.

According to the dictionary, a toy is simply "an object for children to play with." This does not necessarily mean expensive "educational" toys purchased at a store. Rather, this includes all safe items that your baby may find fascinating. We have all watched a young child unwrap a present and find quite a bit of play value in the box and ribbon alone.

One of the many facets of toddler-hood is their "busyness" -- Their increased need to move and explore. This increase in activity may signal to parents a need to create or purchase new play items. As a child grows and changes, so does his play. The observant parent will watch and determine what currently fascinates his child and then strategically place those activities in his path.

A misperception parents might have is that their toddler's sometimes aimless roaming means they are bored. This brings about the temptation to bombard their child with an array of new things. In many cases, this will increase the roaming and decrease focused play. Less is more when setting up a play environment. A few well-chosen items will stimulate play more than a whole room full of endless toys. Try to select a variety of items to encourage play in the different areas of development. This could include something to climb on, books to look at, shape-sorters and puzzles for eye-hand coordination and music for listening and dancing. Include activities for your child to play with alone and some that invite your participation.

Your toddler is fascinated with the world. She is like a little sponge soaking up everything that her senses and body can experience. She is particularly interested in making sense of her world – wanting labels for everything she sees. Considering these toddler characteristics, sharing books with your child can be a enjoyable learning experience. Here are some additional reasons:

The sound of a parent's voice is music to a toddler's ears.

Looking at picture books sharpens visual perception and object- and-concept recognition.

Listening to books being read heightens the awareness that words have meaning.

Regularly reading aloud strengthens your child's abilities in the areas of reading, writing and speaking skills.

Lastly, consider this quote from Gail E. Haley's Caldecott Medal acceptance speech: *"Children who are not spoken to by live and responsive adults will not learn to speak properly. Children who are not answered will stop asking questions. They will become incurious. And children who are not told stories and who are not read to will have few reasons for wanting to learn to read."*

**Note – please bring with you a toy or a book that your child currently enjoys to share for our discussion of this topic.**

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## The Meaning of Play & Selecting Toys and Books Discussion Page

Share your book or toy and then answer one of the following questions:

- What did your child enjoy playing with here today?
- Complete this sentence: The latest skill my child has accomplished is . . .
- What does your child do that makes you laugh?
- What do you see as your role in your child's play?
- How long is your child's attention span when involved in play?
- What is your child's favorite non-traditional (toy) play object?
- How do you arrange your child's playthings?
- What frustrates your child during play lately?
- Complete this sentence: One thing I wish my child didn't enjoy doing or playing with is . . .
- What activity do you enjoy playing with your child?

## The Meaning of Play & Selecting Toys and Books At Home Suggestions

Here are some general guidelines for selecting toys:

- Evaluate all toys for safety. Watch for small parts, sharp corners, and sizes. Suggested age on packaging can be an additional guideline for safety.
- Consider your child's current interests, personality, and skills.
- Choose toys that will grow with your child and can be used in a variety of ways. A ball, for example, can be used by different aged children and can be rolled, kicked, thrown and caught.
- Look at all areas of development. Choose a few good toys to enrich each area.

Here is a list of possible age-appropriate toys to encourage development:

Manipulative Play	Active Play	Sensory Play	Creative Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple, shape sorters</li> <li>• Busy boxes</li> <li>• Simple puzzles with knobs</li> <li>• Toys that open and close</li> <li>• Stacking and nesting toys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push-and-pull toys</li> <li>• Various balls</li> <li>• Small riding toys</li> <li>• Small climber</li> <li>• Small slide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water toys</li> <li>• Sand toys</li> <li>• Recorded music, voices, and animal sounds</li> <li>• Mirrored toys</li> <li>• Toys that make noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dolls</li> <li>• Stuffed animals and puppets</li> <li>• Toy telephone</li> <li>• Books with simple stories and rhymes</li> <li>• Large crayons and paper</li> <li>• Wood or plastic people and vehicles</li> </ul>

Here are some story selections from *The New Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease which are of particular interest to toddlers:

- ***Goodnight Moon*** by Margaret Wise Brown.
- ***Harry the Dirty Dog*** by Gene Zion.
- ***I Can, Can You?*** by Peggy Parish.
- ***The Napping House*** by Audrey Wood.
- ***Pat the Bunny*** by Dorothy Kunhardt.
- ***Playing P*** by Helen Oxenbury.
- ***Regards to the Man in the Moon*** by Ezra Jack Keats.
- ***Snuffy*** by Dick Bruna.
- ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** by Eric Carle.
- ***Where's Spot?*** by Eric Hill.

***Growing Up with Music*** by Laurie Sale is a guide to the best recorded music for children. Here is a partial list of music appealing to toddlers:

- ***Music for 1's and 2's*** by Tom Glazer.
- ***Songs to Grow On - Nursery Days*** by Woody Guthrie.
- ***There's a Hippo in My Tub*** by Anne Murray.
- ***Babysongs*** by Hap Palmer and Martha Cheny.
- ***Hap Palmer Sings Classic Nursery Rhymes*** by Hap Palmer.
- ***Lullaby Magic: Volume I and II*** by Joanie Bartels.
- ***Lullabies of Broadway*** by Mimi Bessette.
- ***Lullabies Go Jazz*** by Jon Crosse.
- ***Baby Road*** by Floyd Doming, Edgar Meyer and Mark Harvard.
- ***Lullabies for Little Dreamers*** by Kevin Roth.



## Managing Stress – Being Present for the Moments

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent Development** and the emphasis is **Balancing Parent-Child Needs: Care of Self**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Maintain their personal overall health and well-being.
- Ask for and accept support from others when needed.
- Develop strategies to manage stressful situations.

It is not unusual for the parent of a blossoming toddler to describe life as a three-ring circus. You hardly have time to focus on one activity and your toddler is off doing something else that requires your attention. Your toddler is similar to a circus performer practicing a new skill. In the case of your toddler, it's probably perfecting climbing on top of the table.

You may also feel like a circus performer trying to balance on a tightrope while juggling too many balls. We are required daily to juggle different roles: parent, spouse, household manager, career-maker and the list goes on and on. The balancing act is trying to complete our daily tasks and still manage to take care of ourselves. We may often feel at the end of our rope: frustrated, tired, and stressed.

Not all stress is bad. A certain amount of stress can be a motivator to make a change or complete a task. A person cannot live life without stress. The task in order to maintain balance is to:

- Understand stress.
- Determine what causes stress.
- Develop ways to cope.

Stress comes in two forms called "acute" and "chronic." Acute stress comes from short-term demands like a project deadline or experiencing a toddler's temper tantrum in the grocery store. Chronic stress is when we have a situation such as an unhealthy relationship that goes on day-after-day and we see no way out. Chronic stress is damaging to our emotional and physical health.

Stress is not only a problem for parents but can also affect their children. Toddlers are notorious for imitating their parents. They carefully watch our facial expressions, our body language and our actions. Just as we learn about our children through their behaviors, they also learn about their parents through the way we behave. We all have days when we don't feel like smiling and feel harried and stressed. We are human and having stressed or down days is part of life. Children can survive through a few

scattered days with a stressed out parent. However, living with a parent suffering from chronic stress can be detrimental to your relationship with your child and your child's overall development. To be present for our children, to be present for the moments, we need to find ways to cope with stress.

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## Managing Stress – Being Present for the Moments Discussion Page

Please complete the sentence.

1. I feel stressed when . . .
2. I cope with stress by . . .
3. When juggling all my daily tasks, the one I would like a break from is . . .
4. If I had one hour to myself I would . . .
5. As a parent, I become stressed when . . .
6. A relaxing activity for me is . . .
7. My favorite comfort food is . . .
8. A perfect get away for me, if time and money were no object, would be . . .
9. I try to avoid getting stressed by . . .
10. When I am stressed I respond by . . .

## Managing Stress – Being Present for the Moments At Home Suggestions

Here is a list of tips for reducing stress. Maybe one or two will be helpful for you.

- Break problems into parts that you can tackle one at a time. It is easy to become overwhelmed, which can cause stress, when a task seems insurmountable.
- Try inhaling slowly for a count of four, holding for a count of four, and exhaling for a count of four. Paying attention to your breath can be very calming.
- Try to stop negative thought patterns. Mental spinning, where a negative thought goes round and round in your mind, can really increase stress. Substitute the thought with a pleasant memory from the past or something you are looking forward to.
- Try physical activities like going for a walk or practicing Yoga. Physical activity burns through stress and raises the feel good endorphins in your brain.
- Try to factor “me time” into your day. Each person can determine what that means for themselves. You might want to get up a little earlier than your child to exercise, read the paper, or whatever might make the day run a little more stress free.
- Figure out your triggers to stress and try to avoid them when possible. No one can totally avoid stress, but if you know that trying to do too many things at once creates stress, limit your activities.
- Balance “always in process” tasks with “completion” tasks. So much of taking care of a home and small children evolves around tasks that are always being repeated. For some people, crossing off items on a list is rewarding. For others, completing a project would give them a feeling of accomplishment.
- Help someone else. Sometimes a distraction can lessen your stress and you will be doing a good deed which is always fulfilling.
- Learn to say “NO”. When we try to be everything to everyone we can turn into a bundle of stress doing nothing well. Learn to delegate, which provides a good example for your children.
- Take a warm bath or shower. Water therapy can be very helpful to tense muscles.

## Seasonal Fun, Safety, and Celebrations

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Nurturing: Physical Care**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Identify seasonal safety concerns.
- Determine prevention and/or treatment strategies.
- Provide family fun opportunities.

### Winter Fun and Safety

A Minnesota winter means cold, snow, and (from a child's point-of-view) the dreaded snowsuit – a wonderful article of clothing designed for warmth but very inhibiting to the active toddler. Another winter battle is mittens. You put them on – your child immediately pulls them off. The one item of winter attire that many toddlers seem to like for some reason is boots. They may like them so much that they may not want to take them off – ever.

Winter can be fun for toddlers to go outside (if properly dressed) and discover snow and what it's like to feel cold for the first time in their lives. When enjoying our winter wonderland, it might take them some practice walking around in their bulky snowsuit and new boots. Stepping on ice is also a new experience as they learn to balance on a slippery surface. Learning that snow is not for eating is also a lesson that needs to be taught.

Since toddlers have smaller bodies, they lose heat faster and need to be monitored for sensitivity to cold. Pay particular attention to your child's head, hands, and feet. Dressing your child in layers will trap warm air and provide better insulation. If your child is overexposed to the cold, he could develop frost nip or frostbite.

**Frost nip** is minor damage to the outer layer of skin which appears white and soft to the touch. If your child develops frost nip, treat in the following manner:

- Do not rub the skin. This could damage the frozen tissue.
- If you cannot get inside immediately, use the heat of your body to gently warm the skin.
- If inside, use lukewarm water and immerse the affected skin.
- Remember that frost nip can quickly turn into frostbite if not attended to immediately.

**Frostbite** is the actual freezing of the skin. The most vulnerable areas are the tips of the ear and nose, and hands and feet. The affected skin will appear white and waxy and feel hard to the touch. To treat frostbite, begin warming the skin as stated for frost nip and seek medical attention immediately.

## Winter Fun and Safety Discussion Page

Complete the sentence:

- When I think of winter, I . . .
- I avoid cabin fever by . . .
- My child's favorite indoor activity is . . .
- My child's reaction to snow and cold is . . .
- My favorite outdoor winter activity is . . .
- If I could escape winter, I would go to . . .
- An indoor place I like to go in the winter is . . .
- A comfort food for me in the winter is . . .
- My dream winter vacation would be . . .
- My favorite winter memory is . . .

### Winter Fun and Safety At Home Suggestions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow bubbles indoors or outdoors. (Bubbles last a long time in the cold).</li> <li>• Make a lunch bag puppet.</li> <li>• Make a snow person.</li> <li>• Make a fort out of cushions, blankets and pillows.</li> <li>• Bake cookies.</li> <li>• Glue paper bits with a glue stick.</li> <li>• Play in kitchen sink with Tupperware.</li> <li>• Sponge in “paint with water” books.</li> <li>• Scribble with big washable crayons.</li> <li>• Play with dry oatmeal or grits in a big bucket.</li> <li>• In the empty garage, create large muscle fun; riding toys, room to run around, bounce balls</li> <li>• Rent-a-kid – have a friend over to play.</li> <li>• Play kitchen.</li> <li>• Watch a DVD. (Most libraries have free children’s DVD’s. Children enjoy watching movies of themselves, too).</li> <li>• Hang a swing in the basement.</li> <li>• Get big appliance box and make a house.</li> <li>• Shovel the snow.</li> <li>• Read stories.</li> <li>• Play hide-and-seek.</li> <li>• Play chase.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a parade – bang on pots and pans.</li> <li>• Make seed tracks for birds in the yard.</li> <li>• Use stroller or wagon for a walk on shoveled sidewalks.</li> <li>• Fingerpaint.</li> <li>• Place interesting and safe objects in a laundry basket or big box for emptying and filling.</li> <li>• Try something new for snack.</li> <li>• Bring out old toys – switch toys.</li> <li>• Invent an errand.</li> <li>• Make a snow hill in yard for sliding.</li> <li>• Play with scarves.</li> <li>• Play with magazines.</li> <li>• Play with big, safe magnets on refrigerator.</li> <li>• Make a simple bird feeder out of a milk carton and watch the birds.</li> <li>• Hang feed corn for squirrels.</li> <li>• Take pictures of child playing in the snow.</li> <li>• Hang a bulletin board in child’s bedroom for photos, art and cards.</li> </ul>
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## Summer Fun and Safety

What a fun summer a toddler (and parents) will have. It will be a busy summer, to say the least. Your toddler, the little explorer, will investigate the great outdoors like a scientist conducting an experiment. There will be rocks and sticks to collect, dandelions to pick, birds and squirrels to watch and lots of walking and running.

Parents will enjoy following close behind as the toddler discovers the world (if exhaustion doesn't overcome them). Your primary task, however, is to try to keep your happy wanderer safe as you share the joys of summer.

The following are health and safety issues you should consider.

### Protection from the Sun

Avoid direct sun during the peak hours of 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. You should select PABA-free sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15. (Call the company's 800 number to determine the expiration date). Apply 20 minutes before exposure. A hat with a wide brim gives added protection to head and eyes.

### Protection from Insects

Lightweight, long-sleeve shirts and long pants tucked in socks is a good outfit for walks in the woods. Do a tick check after you have been in the woods. Ticks should be removed with a tweezers and an antiseptic should be applied to the area. The deer tick that causes Lyme disease is very small and hard to detect. If your child develops a bullseye rash and/or flu-like symptoms, see your doctor.

### Water Safety

- Remember that a child can drown in a very small amount of water – even a bucket for washing your car. Empty the bucket first if you need to leave the area.
- If your child is in a pool, make sure they do not swallow chlorinated water that may cause water intoxication.
- Purchase a life jacket appropriate for your child's age and weight – a must for boating with a toddler.

### Poisonous Substances

- Know the plants in your yard to make sure their leaves or berries are not poisonous. Call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for a free booklet, "Friends and Foes in the Plant World," to help identify your plants.
- Make sure all poisonous substances (such as fertilizer, antifreeze and paint) are out of your toddler's reach and locked away if possible.
- Your toddler will have many great adventures right in the backyard. Here are some summer fun ideas.

### Around the House

- Make sidewalk chalk to create a toddler masterpiece. Combine 2 parts plaster-of-Paris with 1 part water and add powdered tempera paint.

- Make bubbles. Combine 1 cup Joy dishwashing detergent, 3 cups water and 3/8 cup white, Karo syrup. Shake and let settle for 4 hours. Store covered in the refrigerator to extend the suds' shelf life.
- For a refreshing summer treat, try this. Combine in blender 8 ounces of vanilla yogurt, a banana and 1/2 cup berries. Blend and freeze in popsicle holders.
- Plant a scatter garden of wild flowers or mixed greens. Kits are available at the Natural Wonders store in Ridgedale.
- Paint the house or sidewalk with a bucket of plain water and a brush.
- Purchase Playskool's 2-in-1 Summer Fun picnic table that opens into two compartments for sand and water play.
- Wading pools can be great fun (with strict supervision).
- Try fingerpainting for rainy day fun. Combine 3 tablespoons sugar and 1/2 cup corn starch. Add 2 cups water. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until well blended. Divide the mixture. Add food coloring and a few drops of liquid dish soap.

If you are in the mood to venture out, here are some suggestions:

- Como Park Zoo **Midway Parkway and Kaufman Drive in St. Paul (651-487-8200, 24 hr info line). Grounds open 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (hours change seasonally) Free. A nice-size zoo for small children.**

[www.stpaul.gov](http://www.stpaul.gov)

- Minnesota Zoo **Highway 77 in Apple Valley (952-431-9500). Open 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (hours change seasonally)**

[www.mnzoo.org](http://www.mnzoo.org)

- Minnesota Landscape Arboretum **3675 Arboretum Drive (9 miles west of I-494 on Highway 5) in Chanhassen (952-443-1400). Grounds open 8:00 a.m. to sunset. (building hours vary) Go and smell the flowers.**

[www.arboretum.umn.edu](http://www.arboretum.umn.edu)

- Parker's Lake Park **County Road 6 and Niagara Lane in Plymouth. (763-509-5200) Free. Has a nice beach, playground, snack bar and walking trails.**

[www.2.ci.plymouth.mn.us](http://www.2.ci.plymouth.mn.us)

- French Regional Park **County Road 9 in Plymouth (763-694-7750). A nice place for a picnic or walk.**

[www.threeriversparkdistrict.org](http://www.threeriversparkdistrict.org)

- **Lake HarrietIn Minneapolis. A great place for a free, outdoor summer concert or to step back in time and ride the Como-Harriet Streetcar. (952-922-1096). [www.trolleyride.org](http://www.trolleyride.org).**



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**Resource List****Books**

**The American Academy of Pediatrics Guide to Your Child's Symptoms; The Official, Complete Home Reference, Birth Through Adolescence (Guide to Your Child's Symptoms)** by Donald Schiff M.D., F.A.A.P. Steven P. Sheloy M.D., F.A.A.P., Villard publishing (January 1997). (Suggested hardcover copy due to formatting).

**Becoming the Parent You Want To Be – A Sourcebook of Strategies for the First Five Years** by Laura Davis and Janis Keyser, Broadway Books, 1997

**Caring for Your Baby and Young Child (Birth to Age Five)** by Penelope Leach, PhD., Bantam Books, 1998

**The Happiest Toddler on the Block: The New Way to Stop the Daily Battle of Wills and Raise a Secure and Well Behaved One-to-Four-Year-Old** by Harvey Karp M.D., Bantam, 2005

**How to Get Your Kids to Eat But Not Too Much** by Ellyn Satter, Bull Publishing, 1987

**The Intentional Family – Simple Rituals to Strengthen Family Ties** by William J. Doherty Ph.D., Avon Books, New York, 1997

**Meals Without Squeals: Child Care Feeding Guide and Cookbook** by Ellyn Satter, Bull Publishing, 1997

**No Cry Sleep Solution for Toddlers and Preschoolers** by Elizabeth Pantley, McGraw-Hill, 2005

**Raising Your Spirited Child** by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, Harper Perennial, 1992

**Sleepless in America – Is Your Child Misbehaving or Missing Sleep?** by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, Harper Paperbacks, 2007

**Take Back Your Kids – Confident Parenting in Turbulent Times** by William J. Doherty Ph.D., Sorin Books, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2000

**Touchpoints: The Essential Reference (Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development)** by T. Berry Brazelton M.D., Perseus Books, 1998

**Your Child Is A Person** by Stella Chess, M.D., Alexander Thomas, M.D., Herbert G. Birch, M.D., Ph.D., Penguin Books, 1982

**Your One Year Old: The Fun-loving, Fussy 12-to-24-Month Old** by Louise Bates Ames, Dell, 1983

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## Websites

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) – The American Academy of Pediatrics website offers pertinent health information and an array of other topics.

[www.askdrsears.com](http://www.askdrsears.com) – Leading pediatrician Dr. William Sears provides information concerning a variety of topics and features a “topic” and “question of the week”.

[www.educarer.org](http://www.educarer.org) – Infant specialist Magda Gerber features information on a variety of topics focusing on her philosophy of caring for infants with respect.

[www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com) – A broad resource for topics for fathers.

[www.gocitykids.com](http://www.gocitykids.com) – Resource for kid-friendly events all over the Twin Cities. Weekly e-mail newsletter with editor’s picks for the week.

[www.ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com) –The internet for women providing information on a range of topics from health to parenting.

[www.parentsaction.org](http://www.parentsaction.org) – Previously named “I Am Your Child”. Developed by Rob Reiner has a unique format that includes these three areas; **Learn** – provides access to important information on a variety of topics. **Share** – contains personal stories from parents, idea exchanges and book reviews. **Act** – provides information on how parents can get involved in issues affecting families.

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org) – Includes information on parenting topics from A to Z, tip of the week, brain development and articles from the top child development experts.

## MOMS Clubs

The MOMS Club (Moms Offering Moms Support) is a non-profit international organization which provides support for mothers who have chosen to stay home to raise their children, full time or part time. Goals include providing moral support to at-home mothers, providing a forum for topics of interest to women, giving mothers more of a voice in the community, and performing service projects, especially those benefiting children.

**To find the MOMS Club nearest you, contact:**  
**International MOMS Club web site:** [www.momsclub.com](http://www.momsclub.com)

**Minnesota Dads At Home** [www.mdah.org](http://www.mdah.org)

Minnesota Dads At Home is a network of dads who stay home with their children, some part-time, some full-time.