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16-20 Months

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Relationships – Striving for Independence

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

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Identify development affecting their child's behavior.
- Recognize the changes in the parent-child relationship as their child becomes more independent.
- Understand and empathize with their child's perspective of a given situation and then use that understanding to respond.

In his own way, and in his own time, each child's developmental clock ticks along toward independence. Through the ups and downs of developmental stages, the toddler is headed for the magic hour of "first adolescence." This is the time the toddler realizes that he is no longer attached and dependent, but a separate, independent person. He's had glimpses of this before – when he crawled away from mom or dad or when he played with the phone even though was told, "No." But now it sweeps over him as a wave. He's independent. Not clearly understanding what this means, he practices.

- He tries wanting whatever the parent doesn't want.
- He tries not wanting whatever the parent does want.

This rigid approach doesn't get her what she wants. But she continues to try, to practice. She knows it is her parents from whom she must gain her independence. It is her parents who receive this daily declaration of independence. She trusts them enough to tolerate her rigid, yet erratic, behavior. The onset of "first adolescence" is unmistakable whether the toddler is sixteen- or eighteen- or twenty-four-months old.

- "All he says is, 'no, no, no.'"
- "She walked up to her brother, said "mine" and walked away. He didn't know what happened."
- "He was hot and thirsty and I offered him juice. He said "no" so I put it back in the refrigerator. He sobbed."

It is a frustrating time for parent and child, and anyone nearby. It is the time when the parent-child relationship lives off the deep well of love and goodwill which has built up over the previous year. This rapport and attachment makes all the difference. Understanding what the child is attempting to do may keep that well from running dry. Patience and laughter are equally vital. Parents who can step back and watch their son “bite the hand that feeds him” and “cut off his nose to spite his face” and “rock the boat” every chance he gets will get a lot of laughs. There will be a lot of stories to tell when he is not around.

Unfortunately, most parents are taken by surprise. First time parents often take this assertion of independence personally. “Weren’t we doing a good enough job?” Second time parents expect him to behave the same as their first child did. Most often, parents don’t feel comfortable with their relationship with their child. He has changed. Now their relationship must change. This “first adolescence” is another transition in the parent-child relationship. It is difficult to recognize the positive aspects of the transition which will be freeing for the parent and be awesome for the toddler. This takes some adjustment in developing a new relationship of shared power. No caring parents would want to stop the clock and keep their child a baby forever. However, the child’s amateurish attempts at independence put parents in a role they do not enjoy.

- The child must challenge.
- The parent must be patient and set limits.

Parents will dip into that well of goodwill often. In conflict, someone wins and someone loses. The best strategy at this time is to avoid power struggles. No one likes to be a loser, not even a child. Testing all boundaries is your child’s way to figure out how the world works and where his power begins and ends. When your child continually gets into things you wish he wouldn’t, he is not being disobedient. He is asking the question, “is this okay to do or not?” A parent’s job is to answer this question for the child by providing appropriate guidelines.

Relationships – Striving for Independence Discussion Page

- What behaviors has your child displayed that show you she is striving for independence?

- Power struggles can be an issue at this age. How do you handle them when they occur?

- A toddler can become very frustrated with objects, with what he is not capable of doing, and with his parents who won't give him what he wants. How do you deal with your child's frustration?

- What changes have you noticed in your relationship as your child becomes more independent?

Relationships – Striving for Independence At Home Suggestions

Try some of these suggestions to help your child through her “first adolescence.”

- Allow time for your child to leave one activity before you expect her to do something else. Transitions may become more difficult during this time.
- Slow down. Limit scheduling of activities. Your child is changing rapidly. He needs a simple life right now.
- Avoid asking questions like, “Do you want your diaper changed?” Instead say, “Let’s go change your diaper.” If you ask a question when there isn’t a choice, what do you do when your child responds with a resounding, “No!”?
- Use repetition and a sense of place and order as your allies. Children love repetition of stories and daily patterns. Your child may have a heightened sense of needing “sameness” to make her feel secure.
- Guide your child’s behavior. During this time, your child will test all limits. By enforcing the crucial limits, you are sending the message, “I love you. I need to teach you what is acceptable and what is not while you test your wings.”

Parenthood – A Toddler in the Family

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationship** and the emphasis is **Sensitivity and Responsiveness**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Understand and empathize with their child's perspective of a given situation and then use that understanding to respond.
- Reflect on how their words and actions influence children's perception and behaviors.
- Allow children to initiate or continue appropriate activities of their own choosing without interfering.

Think back, about a year and a half ago to when you brought your new bundle of joy home. You were probably wondering who *is* this little creature? How will I be as a parent? Will I ever sleep through the night again? As time went on, you learned all about this unique little being, and often began feeling confident about how you were parenting your baby. And occasionally, you have even had a decent night of sleep. You learned how to respond to your baby's signals, and your baby in turn knew what to expect from you. The family settled into a somewhat comfortable place and a predictable routine.

You celebrated the special first birthday, watched your baby take first steps, and say first words. Your child began to understand words and follow simple directions. You could tell your baby to come to you and he would willingly comply. Then one day, you ask your child to come to you and there is a pause as if he is thinking, and then all of the sudden, he darts in the other direction. Your child used to be such a good little eater. Now, he dangles a piece of banana over his high chair tray and as you look at him, he drops it on the floor. You want to dress him, and he wants to run around in nothing but a diaper. You start questioning your parenting ability. The best answer is that you now have a toddler in the family.

When your child goes through a developmental change which prompts these contrary behaviors, it is only natural to speculate "is it me, who is responsible for this little being, creating these behaviors?" Some people have an on-going dialogue with themselves appraising their current situation. Some parents check with each other routinely to assess their feelings about parenting issues. Sometimes, checking in with each other doesn't happen until a serious problem or crisis occurs. Parents of toddlers are likely to be in a time of transition. It closely follows the transition of their child from baby to toddler. They are asking, "Now what?" This is a time when the primary, caregiving parent considers returning to work, or working more. Couples may be considering

having another baby. Perhaps it is the onset of independence in the toddler that causes change in the family. No longer having a baby in the house is different. To some parents, it is freeing. Sometimes, too freeing. Tom complains that his independent toddler does not comply with simple requests like she used to. Sally's exhausted by repeatedly saying "no," and says she hates having become a policewoman. Her toddler not only needs her to save his life, but forces her into that role full-time. It isn't the role she wanted. Both parents are looking at nursery schools. Both are considering working outside their homes. In these homes, the scheduling is easier, partly due to the toddler taking one nap. The household runs more smoothly. Family life is more fun. Parents, grandparents, and friends find it easier to care for and play with a toddler. They enjoy their time together. Parents often find they have more time for themselves and each other. Some have become more adept at putting these priority hours into their schedules. Only parents of toddlers in a final fling of a one-year-old clinging complain bitterly of being short-changed. Non-clinging toddlers can also affect marriages and other relationships in negative ways. Disagreements over child-raising, surface about bedtime, mealtime, and other times. No two people ever agree on everything. An active toddler, squirming his way between hugging parents, will pinpoint those areas where his parents differ. Independent children do not necessarily bring joy every moment. In fact, their new developments can bring stress. Toddlers may not help other relationships either. Rarely will friends say, "You're doing such a good job with Robbie's demands for independence." More often, normal misbehaving toddlers attract criticism and advice like a lightning rod.

With the perspective of a year-and-a-half of parenthood, it is helpful to ask, "How is it going?" Before looking ahead, it is helpful to remember all the learning, mistakes, joys, growth, losses, and changes that have occurred. Then, use this transition time to check if everyone's needs are being met and the family is functioning well.

When researchers look at families that are functioning well, they see families:

- spending time together.
- being committed to their family.
- accepting each other as they are.
- communicating well with each other.

Research on healthy families has little advice for parents on:

- how much time they spend alone together.
- how much time each parent has to pursue his or her own interests.
- how much time each parent works.
- when is the best time to have another baby.

No outsider can make these or other decisions for parents. The following exercise is designed to help mothers and fathers focus on the changes in this transition time. It can be used for communicating with each other about how it is going.

Remember, just as our children grow and change, so do we as parents.

Parenthood – A Toddler in the Family Discussion Page for Mothers

Remember how it was when your child was an infant. Compare those days to today.
In comparison . . . MORE (+) SAME (0) LESS (-)

- I work. (however you define work) ()
- I enjoy my child. ()
- I see my friends. ()
- I am happy. ()
- My child needs me. ()
- I feel competent. ()
- I notice changes in myself. ()
- I go out. ()
- I feel good about being a parent. ()
- I get emotional. ()
- I feel confident. ()
- I get along with my parents. ()
- I am concerned about money. ()
- I worry. ()
- I laugh. ()
- I spend time with other adults. ()

Pick three areas you would like to change. How can you make those changes occur?

**Parenthood – A Toddler in the Family
Discussion Page for Fathers**

Remember how it was when your child was an infant. Compare those days to today.
In comparison . . . MORE (+) SAME (0) LESS (-)

- I work (however you define work) ()
- I enjoy my child. ()
- I see my friends. ()
- I am happy. ()
- My child needs me. ()
- I feel competent. ()
- I notice changes in myself. ()
- I go out. ()
- I feel good about being a parent. ()
- I get emotional. ()
- I feel confident. ()
- I get along with my parents. ()
- I am concerned about money. ()
- I worry. ()
- I laugh. ()
- I spend time with other adults. ()

Pick one area to share with the group.

Parenthood – A Toddler in the Family At Home Suggestions

Having a toddler in the family can be a wonderful time for family fun!

1. What is your favorite activity to do with your child in your home?
2. Where is your favorite place to go with your child?
3. What is one joy that having a toddler has brought to your family?
4. What does your toddler do that makes you laugh?
5. What behavior of yours does your toddler imitate?
6. What has been a fun family time you have had lately?
7. What have you done in your family to help support your toddler's development?
8. What is your toddler's current favorite activity?
9. What is one thing that having a toddler has taught you about yourself as a parent?
10. What are you teaching your toddler about being a member of your family?

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.

A complex toddler is the sixteen-to-twenty month old. Many of the developmental aspects of this age may appear negative. However, the first "no," the first "mine," the first time she runs away when called, and the first tantrum are developmentally significant. They indicate something wonderful is happening inside. As Penelope Leach states in her book, **Your Baby and Child**, "His willfulness is a sign that he is growing up, and that he feels secure enough at present to try to manage things for himself."

On the outside, the toddler has a bigger, more competent body to help her accomplish tasks that were frustrating just a few months ago. She can reach higher, climb higher, run faster, and maybe jump down two steps. Her fingers can also manipulate pens, pencils, puzzles, Duplos, locks, and many other things you wish she couldn't. The curiosity of the toddler is enormous. She will re-introduce her parents to the wonders of the world. She enjoys playing with shapeless materials such as sand, play-dough, and water. Scribbling and finger-painting are also fun. Her excitement over what she creates is contagious. She shows pride over her accomplishments by showing you, and maybe even clapping for herself.

Your toddler is capable of expressing a wide range of emotions. As his motor and intellectual skills advance, and as he travels away from his parent, he is very aware of being a separate person. He can now tolerate being separated from his parent for a time. However, this separateness also increases your child's need to have you near, and to share in all of his discoveries about the world. He is so curious about everything and he wants to make sure you are there to share every minute. He is conflicted between his budding autonomy and his need to be by you. This can often bring out feelings of frustration, and sometimes even rage. On the other hand, these strong

emotions can shift from tears to laughter in minutes. Your toddler may be very excited over just about anything, like seeing a butterfly for the first time.

One aspect of toddler development that might take parents by surprise is when their seemingly fearless child begins to exhibit some anxiety in certain situations. She may fear new people, bedtime, dogs, or even taking a bath. This is a sign her imagination is growing. She is more aware of the world around her and she is processing all this information. It is all part of her exploration towards independence. She has many successes, but she is also discovering that things can go wrong – a dog might bark at you – you can fall down – and you might see shadows on your wall when you go to bed. These fearful feelings are all normal and will begin to fade as your toddler begins to understand the world and feels more in control.

Parents can ease their child's fears first by accepting that no matter how irrational the fear may seem to you, it is very real to your child. Be reassuring and comforting as you talk to your child, and stay near when you sense he is anxious. Explain the situation and allow him to explore his fear in a controlled environment, like visiting a little puppy while you hold your child. Some children find comfort in combating their fears while armed with a security item such as a blankie.

Another exciting aspect of this age is the leap in language development. Vocabulary varies greatly from child-to-child, but half of expressed words are nouns. Language is powerful. Your child may think that because he can say a word, his request should automatically be granted. Over-generalization of a specific word is common. All four-legged animals may be called "dog" before your child learns to differentiate. He also understands much more than he can express. Parents learn to speak in the present because patience is not part of the toddler's vocabulary. Gone are the days of saying, "later, after your nap, we will go to the park." He hears the word "park," and he is at the door.

Overall, this is a time of rapid change and growth in all areas of development. Parents can support their child's development by trying to gain their child's perspective as he/she navigates through this sometimes chaotic stage. We marvel as we watch the early toddler explore and learn by trial and error, with laughter and tears. Imagine how it feels for them inside their little bodies. We help them by providing an environment that reinforces their blossoming skills. They need space to move, safe objects to explore, books to read, and a patient parent with a sense of humor.

Growing – Overall Development Discussion Page

Following is a mixed list of behaviors and characteristics that fit no one particular child. They are typical of this age. Some will apply to every toddler. Which ones apply to your child? Choose three to share with the group.

This is the time:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for imitation play. • for simple puzzles. • when it is easy to overestimate a child’s mental ability. • when jabbering increases. • for labeling and naming everything in sight. • when new fears surprise parents. • for sorting games. • that parents assume the child understands everything. • for frustration. • when scribbling is fun. • for encouraging cause-and-effect. • of “no” and “mine.” • for more playing alone. • for demanding parents’ attention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of speed and of dawdling. • when showing-off is fun. • when possessiveness reigns. • for negativism. • when the attention span grows. • to encourage self-help. • for showing a sense of humor. • for tantrums. • of determination and repetition. • of increased interest in peers. • for undressing self. • for going up and down stairs. • of demanding attention. • of no common sense. • when parents need to laugh.
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Growing – Overall Development At Home Suggestions

Since your toddler enjoys messing with materials, try one of these recipes for a play time with your child.

Play Dough

1/2 cup salt	1 Tbsp. oil
1 cup flour	1 cup water
1 tsp. cream of tartar	food coloring

Mix ingredients together. Cook over low heat until mixture forms a ball (it only takes a few minutes) or microwave on “high” for three minutes.

Hints: Use with cookie cutters, plastic knives, scissors, rolling pins, liquid laundry detergent lids, garlic press.

Finger Paints

3 Tbsp. sugar	food coloring
1/2 cup corn starch	liquid dish detergent (like Dawn, Ivory)
2 cups water	

Mix sugar and corn starch. Add the water. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until well-blended. Divide the mixture. To make colors, add a little food coloring plus a few drops of liquid detergent.

Hints: For easy cleanup, paint on a cookie sheet or tray. If child wants to make a print, set paper on tray and press lightly. For puffy paints, add Ivory Snow and beat with an egg beater.

Soap Bubbles

“A”	“B”
1 cup water	½ cup liquid dish detergent
2 tsp. dish detergent	few drops salad oil
½ tsp. sugar	2 Tbsp. water
1 tsp. glycerin	food coloring

Mix “A” or “B” ingredients together. Use immediately.

Hints: Glycerin available at discount stores. For bubble wands, use pipe cleaners, cookie cutters, berry baskets, plastic six-pack holders, string, margarine lids (punch holes or cut out shapes.)

Learning – At a Child’s Pace

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:

- Identify and build upon children’s individual interests.
- Participate in activities and experiences where children and adults learn new things together.
- Provide a variety of materials and activities in the home environment.

The toddler continues to learn by doing. She learns about objects and their functions by manipulating them. She tries to jam square blocks into round holes. She lacks finesse.

Trial and error learning requires objects for experimentation. Practice, practice, practice. She gets the block into the square hole. Practice, practice, practice. She gets all the square blocks in the square hole. Then, she gets the round ones in the round hole.

She becomes skilled in repeating a sequence of actions until she can do it on the first try. Her puzzle piece gets pushed around until it drops into place. Each time she repeats this, it takes less time. Then, she’s got it.

Her learning has been sensori-motor, using her senses and muscles. Now it appears she is using her mind, rather than the puzzle piece. She looks, ponders, picks up the puzzle piece, turns it, and sets it in place.

She can foresee what would happen if As this occurs, parents will observe their child’s natural creativity in action. She may discover:

- New ways to use toys.
- New ways to reach things.
- New ways to put things together.

Toys stacked on each other are one example of creativity. A box stacked on a chair for reaching greater heights is another example, and what would happen if . . .

Learning is the natural result of all child play.

Learning is often considered too serious to be left to playing children. Researchers want to quantify it. Parents want to control it, enrich it. Is she playing with the right toy in the right way? Can we test what she has learned?

Here's the dilemma. With many parents, play loses its fun. In our competitive culture, what should parents do with a child who ignores educational toys in favor of a feather duster and the telephone? What about the child who found the sorter boring and prefers to stack the blocks, or stir them in her frying pan?

Trusting toddlers to do and learn what they need to do and learn – is hard. It sounds almost too simple in a society of educational tools, flash card learning, and computers. There is so much to be learned. Is there still time for fun and dawdling? For creativity? Yes!

Worse yet, most toddlers are learning backwards. They are the great un-doers. They untie their shoes, unzip their zippers, unlock their car seats, unhook doors, and some uncap child-proof bottles. Unbuttoning and unsnapping, they undress and un-diaper. They've got the taking apart learned, but can't put much together.

It is difficult to regard undoing as learning. It seems to be the prelude to doing. Yet it is what mom and dad do. It is a superb example of cause and effect. By undoing, toddlers have learned the function of objects by manipulating them.

Parents who observe closely and let their toddler set her learning pace are relaxed. They see this undoing for the learning that it is. They can enjoy it.

This relaxed manner can carry over and keep parents from intruding on their daughter's lengthening periods of playing by herself, even when she's not playing with a toy properly. **A lengthened attention span is a gift parents can give their child by not interfering in the play process.**

David Elkind is concerned about appreciating the child's pace in his book, *The Hurried Child*. Research validating child readiness is ignored when parents are teaching preschool children to read and add because it is possible. Elkind warns against ignoring the developmental stages of childhood and assuming that what is possible for children is good for children.

Elkind recognizes child play as child learning. He sees the parental role as supporting the child's interests, not as pushing the parent's interests.

When parents push toddlers in their negative stage, their relationship will suffer. This is sad, because toddlers can be the best playmates and companions. They are so creative. They are learning so much.

Learning – At a Child’s Pace At Home Suggestions

How can parents help their toddlers through their learning adventures? Here are a few suggestions.

1. Realize that often your toddler needs to get **saturated** with an object or activity. He needs to explore in his own way and at his own pace until he is ready to move to another situation. Allow for a lot of open-ended unscheduled play.
2. Think about creating a toddler-friendly play environment.
 - Space to move** – to encourage large muscle development.
 - Safe objects to explore** – to encourage small muscle learning.
 - Play phones, dolls, and trucks** – to encourage imitation and pretend play.
 - Music, crayons, and play-dough** – to encourage creativity.
 - Books, the zoo, and a trip to the grocery store** – to encourage an interest in reading and language development.
3. Consider the roles you play in your child’s learning.
 - Narrator** – talk about what your child is doing to provide a language rich experience.
 - Observer** – through observing your child, you begin to understand the world from her perspective.
 - Playmate** – with no agenda, share in your child’s exploration of the world.
 - Helper** – when your child is having difficulty solving a problem, help in small incremental steps until your child can figure it out on his own.
 - Coach** – when appropriate, introduce new aspects of play to your child. Expand your child’s range of experience without any pressure by providing an example of how the object may be played with.
4. **Provide a variety of play and learning situations** – your child will enjoy playing with alone, with you, and with her peers. Through playing with others, your child will learn to negotiate and get along.
5. **Have fun** – follow your child’s lead. Your toddler’s learning process can be very enjoyable to watch.

Routines – Eating and Sleeping

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationships** 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 that new development can impact daily routines.
- Recognize the importance of establishing daily routines to the overall development of the child.

The increasingly independent toddler realizes she has some control over events in her life. She is bigger, stronger, and louder. Her parents may be realizing they do not have the same control over her they once did.

The more a parent tries to control, the harder the toddler will resist.

Eating and sleeping are two areas in which you do not want to create power struggles.

Mealtime with a toddler may not be a Norman Rockwell painting. By this time, your child is probably adept with a fork and spoon, but may prefer fingers anyway. Appetite and food preferences may change daily. During this time, physical growth slows, resulting in a fluctuating appetite. Food preferences may be determined by food temperature, texture, or even color. The breast-feeding, bottle, and cup dilemma might also be going on in your household. The transition from one to another is usually time consuming, sometimes emotionally draining, and almost always messy.

One nap in the afternoon is usually enough for the busy toddler – not always enough for tired parents. Night-waking makes a resurgence during this time. Developmentally, your child is working on talking. It is not uncommon for a parent to hear a monologue coming from a semi-awake child. An active imagination also produces vivid dreams which may be frightening. Pesky, two-year molars may also be the culprit. If your child has latched onto a security object, the link to the object may be more intense than it ever has been before. This attachment should be honored.

The best course of action is to establish eating guidelines and a bedtime ritual. Each family needs to determine what works best for their child, and themselves. What is most important is that whatever is decided is consistently followed. If the rules keep changing, the child will continue to test the boundaries.

Routines build security for your child.

As Dr. Brazelton states in his book, ***Touchpoints:***

“I urge parents to redouble their rituals and their determination to hold the line at bedtime Putting a toddler to bed at this age is not for the faint-hearted.”

Routines – Eating and Sleeping Discussion Page

- What is a typical mealtime like at your house?

- Does your child show food preferences? What are some of his favorite foods? What foods will he not touch?

- Do you have guidelines for eating? If so, what are they?

- What is bedtime like at your house?

- What is your child's favorite bedtime story?

- Is your child waking up at night? How do you respond to this night-waking?

Routines – Eating and Sleeping At Home Suggestions

Engaging cooperation from your child at this age is not always easy. To avoid power struggles in the areas of eating and sleeping, try these suggestions:

- **Focus on the task. Give a time reference.**

“When the timer goes off, it will be bedtime.”

- **Use positive language and modeling.**

Try putting a few Cheerios on your spoon so they don't spill.

- **Try reasoning.**

“We need to finish eating so we can go for a walk in the park.”

- **Give a limited task.**

“Let's pick up all the blocks first.”

- **Give a limited choice.**

“Would you like me to read *Goodnight Moon* or *The Goodnight Book* tonight?”

Meal Guidelines

Here are some typical daily portion sizes and examples from each food group adapted from Ellyn Satter's book, **How to Get Your Kids to Eat - But Not Too Much:**

Protein Group

(2-3 ounces)

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

1 egg

1 slice cheese

½ cup cooked beans

1 piece of meat or fish the size of the palm of their hand

2-3 ounces tofu

Dairy Group

Each gives the calcium and protein of an 8 ounce glass of milk (1 cup = 8 oz.)

1 cup yogurt

1½ ounces cheese

1½ cup cottage cheese

Fruits and Vegetables

(4 servings)

Provides an excellent source of:

Vitamin A

Dried apricots

Cantaloupe

Carrots

Mango

Pumpkin

Spinach

Squash

Sweet Potatoes

Vitamin C

Broccoli

Brussel spouts

Cabbage

Cauliflower

Grapefruit

Mango

Oranges

Spinach

Strawberries

Breads and Cereals Group

(4 servings)

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

1 slice bread

½ cup cooked cereal

¾ cup dried cereal

½ cup cooked noodles

½ cup cooked rice

Sleep Guidelines

The typical 18-month to 3-year-old sleeps 11-13 hours in a 24 hour period. By 2 years of age, most toddlers have one nap in the afternoon averaging 1-3 hours in duration.

Behavior Guidance – Learning Through Limits

This topic falls under the domain of **Parent-Child Relationships** 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.

When children "misbehave" they are sending the message to parents:

- I need to know the limits.
- Occasionally, I need to test the limits to make sure they still exist.

Parents should take the lead in establishing the atmosphere in the home through respectful, consistent limit-setting.

Consistent limits provide security for children.

When children are growing rapidly, they need some consistency in their lives. It helps them to organize their world. When establishing limits, think of the following:

Consider your child's:

- abilities.
- stage of development.
- memory.
- perception.
- language.
- temperament.

Consider your environment. Is it:

- predictable?
- supportive?
- ordered?
- safe?

Consider yourself. Do you:

- have appropriate expectations of your child?
- communicate limits in a way your child understands?

- follow through with appropriate consequences?

Think about these wise words from Laura Davis and Janis Keyser from their book, **Becoming the Parent You Want To Be.**

“Whether we’re comfortable with children’s behavior or not, whether it’s safe for the child or appropriate out in the world, it is driven by an impulse we can appreciate. In the midst of childrens’ challenging, difficult behavior, it is worthwhile to ask: “What’s the impulse that’s behind this behavior?” “Is there something my child is working on that I can support, even as I help her adjust or change her behavior?”

It is important that we remember that children are not engaging in difficult, annoying behaviors because they are “trying to push our buttons” or purposefully trying to irritate their parents. Rather, they are trying to figure out what action gets what response, while they are learning how things work, and what impact they have on their world.

Behavior Guidance – Learning Through Limits Discussion Page

When you think about your child and how he or she is learning, what is a current behavior that requires guidance?

What behavior guidance technique(s) have you tried?

How did your child respond?

Consider the following list of techniques. Which one might work as a technique for this behavior?

Here are some options for guiding behavior:

- **Physical Removal** – of object or child
Make your environment as safe as possible first.
- **Substitution**
Transfer acceptable part of behavior to an acceptable place, such as coloring on paper not on walls.
- **Consequences**
Actions that result from child's unacceptable behavior.
Natural – a direct result of child's behavior. Generally not safe for children this age to experience, such as touching a hot stove.
Logical – a result provided by parent due to child's behavior. ("When you throw your food, it gets taken away.")
- **Modify the Environment**
Enrichment – add a few different toys.
Enlargement – utilize parks, basement, and garage as play areas.
Reduce – too many toys, take some away.
Restrict – gate off areas that are unsafe.
Simplify – do not plan too many activities, allow for transition time.
Rearrange – you might want to change from baskets to toy shelves, so your child can select toys and put them away easier.
- **Ignoring**
Used for harmless but irritating behaviors such as whining.
- **Praise** – most effective when it is:
Specific
Immediate

Sincere

Related to the event, and not the child. (“Thank you for picking up your blocks.”)

- **Power**

On – parent has power. (“You must hold my hand in the parking lot.”)

For – parents enables child to have power. (“If you turn the puzzle piece a little, it fits.”)

With – the power is shared by parent and child. (“Let’s play in the sand together.”)

- **Tiny Time Out**

Interrupts inappropriate behavior, and removes child from the scene of action.

Demonstrate appropriate behavior. (“No hitting; touch gently.”)

Behavior Guidance – Learning Through Limits At Home Suggestions

When guiding your child’s behavior, consider the following:

Toddlers behave the way they do because;

- They are curious.
- They are trying to gain understanding of their world, control over their bodies, and their environment.
- They need to test their environment through cause and affect activities. Through this experimentation, they learn new skills and boundaries.

Toddlers need from their parents;

- Unconditional love.
- Clear feedback.
- A consequential environment.

When in doubt about what you are doing, ask...

1. What will this action teach my child?
2. What effect will this action have on my relationship with my child?
3. What effect will this action have on my child’s self-confidence?

Toddler Frustrations

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

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Model, teach, and positively reinforce children's methods of constructively coping with frustration and conflict.
- Involve children in thinking of solutions and anticipating consequences.
- Help children identify and understand their emotions.

Having a toddler in your family is exciting and challenging. It is a time of rapid cognitive and emotional growth. Your child has spent a lot of time observing her world and practicing a variety of developmental tasks. She no longer has to solely rely on trial-and-error learning.

She can now orchestrate her plan in her head to accomplish her goal. In her mind, the plan plays like a fine-tuned violin. In reality, there may be barriers to the orchestration. Her body may not cooperate by not being developmentally capable to complete the task. She may not have the language she needs to make her request. Her parents may thwart her attempt. Hence, frustration soon follows.

The frustration can manifest itself in behavior such as biting, hitting, throwing objects, temper tantrums, and verbal protesting. The degree to which a child displays these behaviors depends a lot on the child's individual temperament. Qualities like persistence and non-distractibility might intensify during this time.

Since these behaviors do not occur in a soundproof booth, parents are the most likely audience for the floor show. When a toddler expresses his/her frustration in a repetitive, overt manner like biting, parents also need a plan. Patience and consistency help fine-tune the child. Your toddler needs to repeatedly hear the message, "I understand you are frustrated, but I will not allow you to bite, hit, kick, or throw things at me."

For other behaviors like temper tantrums, a parent's best option might be to ignore the behavior. Make sure your child cannot injure himself as he flails around and give the behavior no attention. This sends the message, "This behavior will not get you what you want." Temper tantrums can be disorienting and draining for your child. After the tantrum has subsided, always reconnect with your child so he knows he can express strong emotions without jeopardizing your relationship.

When the frustration stems from his body not being able to do what he wants, offering assistance might be helpful. To be respectful, ask if help is needed before you dive in. Frustration is not always negative. Sometimes through frustration, a child can achieve his goal. As Magda Gerber, infant and toddler specialist, says, *“We should teach our children to enjoy the struggles of life.”*

Toddler Frustrations Discussion Page

For toddlers, these are the four main sources of their frustration:

Frustration over body size

Most environments are not built for toddlers – furniture is too big for them and they spend a lot of their time staring at knee-caps. They also watch their parents do things, like put their shoes on with ease, and they have difficulty imitating the same task.

Have you noticed this type of frustration in your child? Give an example.

How can you help your child cope with this source of frustration?

Frustration over independence

Toddlers want to do many things themselves that they are not capable of or are unsafe. They have difficulty understanding why they can't stand on the table.

Have you noticed this type of frustration in your child? Give an example.

How can you help your child cope with this source of frustration?

Frustration over language

A toddler is usually a person of few words but many actions. For the toddler, it is like playing charades all day long trying to communicate needs and wants.

Have you noticed this type of frustration in your child? Give an example.

How can you help your child cope with this source of frustration?

Frustration over parents

Your toddler may be very excited to conquer standing on the table only to be stopped by his watchful parent. The toddler does not understand why he cannot engage in this behavior. Often throughout toddlerhood, parents and toddlers are at cross purposes, meaning the toddler needs to explore everything while his parent is just trying to keep him safe. The adventurous toddler does not understand why his achievement of standing on the dining room table poses an issue for his parents.

Have you noticed this type of frustration in your child? Give an example.

How can you help your child cope with this source of frustration?

Toddler Frustrations At Home Suggestions

Since parents generally are the recipients of a toddler's frustrations, you may feel often at odds with your child. Frustration often exhibits itself in the form of a **temper tantrum**. Here are some suggestions from Laura Davis and Janis Keyser, from their book, **Becoming the Parent You Want To Be** for responding to tantrums:

Keep it safe

Make sure your child cannot injure himself, you, or destroy property during the tantrum.

If necessary, gently restrain your child

Hold your child with gentleness and compassion, not with anger. Remember, a tantrum may be a frightening feeling of a loss of control for your child.

Stay close and talk about what you see

Let your child know you understand by labeling feelings, and empathize with his struggle.

Don't rush to comfort your child prematurely

This may send the message to your child that you can magically make frustration and difficult situations go away.

Tantrums are a measure of intimacy

Your child will reserve his strongest emotions for the people he trusts the most.

Don't take the tantrum personally

The tantrum is a reflection of your child's way he is coping with his frustration and not of your relationship.

Think about what you want to teach

As your child grows, consider how you want your child to learn how to deal with anger.

Redirect your child by providing a safe outlet

You can hit the pillow, but not a person.

Think about how you deal with frustration and anger.

Remember, your child is watching how you behave. When you feel a frustrating situation arise, make a plan of action to keep your anger in check.

Ask yourself these questions taken from the book, ***Battles, Hassles, Tantrums and Tears: Strategies for Coping with Conflict and Making Peace at Home*** by Susan Beekman and Jeanne Holmes:

- When might this situation occur?

- What will I do?

- How might my child react?

- How will I respond to my child's reaction?

- What are my options if my child does not cooperate?

- If I am getting too angry to deal with the situation constructively, what are my options for cooling off and for dealing with the immediate situation with the kids?
Imagine yourself taking these steps in detail, including 2 or 3 possible outcomes.

Sibling and Peer Relationships

This topic falls under the domain of **Family Development** and the emphasis is **Family Relationships and Dynamics: Relationships**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Value and schedule time to be spent with extended family members and friends, including peer relationships for children.
- Recognize and nurture siblings as individuals with unique needs.
- Foster sibling relationships.

The sibling relationship is unlike any other relationship your child will have in life. Siblings share the memories of the family. The sibling relationship is often the practice ground for other interpersonal relationships. This unique relationship is not without its ups and downs.

Many factors influence the relationships between brothers and sisters, such as the following:

- Age span between children;
- Personality characteristics of individual children;
- The sexes of the children;
- The overall state of the family.

The typical toddler characteristics may intensify the issue of sibling rivalry. Toddlers are striving for independence, becoming more territorial, and vying for the attention of their parents. Their increased mobility also makes it easier to get into their brother's or sister's things. Toddlers learn through imitation, and siblings may grow weary of being followed around and mimicked all day long.

If you have more than one child, you will have sibling rivalry. However, parental behavior can help decrease, or increase rivalry. The first step is accepting that this is normal and ultimately, a way children learn to solve problems with other people. Second, when a problem arises, wait a bit before you solve the problem for them—they may work it out. (Of course if a child is hurt, or property is being damaged, the problem is out of their control.) Third, look at issues that keep reoccurring and find a consistent way to deal with them. Each child in the family needs to feel respected, and protected.

Toddlers also interact with children who are not their siblings. The peer relationship brings its own set of issues. Interacting with a peer is a skill that has to be learned through a lot of practice. Even though each toddler is a unique individual, he may exhibit some of these behaviors: (adapted from the book ***Your Toddler***, by Richard R. Rubin, Ph.D., John J. Fisher III, M.A. and Susan G. Doering, Ph.D.)

- **Timidity**
Staying close to their parent, and acting shyly.
- **Watching**
Staring at people and surroundings is a way toddlers learn about new situations.
- **Parallel Play and Imitating**
Toddlers often play side-by-side, noticing what the other is doing and trying it out.
- **Treating Other Toddlers like Objects**
A toddler may approach another child like a new toy. She may poke and prod to see what this “object” may do. This is done out of curiosity, not hostility.
- **Acting Selfishly – Not Sharing**
The concept of sharing is not yet mastered by the toddler. He wants to experience and possess everything.
- **Acting Aggressively**
Aggression toward peers and adults is the outgrowth of frustration and anger that a toddler feels while striving for independence.
- **Showing Empathy**
When toddlers meet on a regular basis, they may show affection such as a hug when they think a child is hurt or sad.
- **Playing Cooperatively**
By repeated exposures with each other, they learn how to “play without conflict.”

One of the main issues of this age, whether your child is interacting with a sibling or a peer, is the concept of sharing. The first step towards understanding sharing, is understanding the concept of “mine.” This can be confusing for the toddler as stated in this tongue in cheek view from the child’s point of view.

The Toddler Property Laws

If I like it, it’s mine.

If it’s in my hand, it’s mine.

If I can take it from you, it’s mine.

If I had it a little while ago, it’s mine.

If it is mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.

If I am doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.

If it looks just like mine, it’s mine.

If I saw it first, it’s mine.

If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.

If it’s broken, it yours.

The toddler watches another child play with a toy and it looks like so much fun that the child just has to have it and play with it immediately. When you think about it, the concept of sharing is in conflict with the child's need to explore and imitate. From the adult perspective, the parent hopes that his/her child will not be a bully. Along with learning what "mine" really means, the toddler needs experience with others, and a caring adult to mediate and teach negotiating skills. Just saying the word "share" does not teach the concept. Children need specific verbal cues and modeling to eventually understand how to successfully interact with siblings and peers.

Selecting Toys, Books, and Music

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, book, and music selections.
- Identify and build upon their child's individual interests.
- Provide a variety of materials and activities in the home environment.

A toy, according to the dictionary, is simply stated as "an object for children to play with." This does not necessarily mean a big, bright, expensive "educational" toy purchased at a store. Rather, this encompasses all safe items that your child 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 toddlerhood 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 her child and then strategically place those activities in her path.

Another perception parents might have is that their toddler's sometimes aimless roaming means he/she is bored. This perception 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 more play than a whole room full of endless toys. Try to select a variety of items to encourage play in the different areas of development (such as 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. As Magda Gerber would say "the child should be active, not the toy." Look for toys that allows for open-ended play like a ball that can be rolled, thrown, bounced and covers many ages from infancy through childhood.

Music exploration and participation is a fun way to encourage development of many skills. Sometimes saying words is easier when they are said with a tune behind them. Songs and rhymes provide the rhythm and patterning which are instrumental to language development. Dancing to music is great for large muscle coordination.

One of the best ways to spend time interacting with your child is reading books. Even if your active toddler is not at the point where he sits next to you and listens intently to the story, read out loud and model *your* interest in books. Reading to your child positively impacts the development of language and writing as well. By sharing books with your child, you are helping him/her develop early literacy skills such as beginning to understand pictures in books and pointing to specific objects. Naming objects in books increases your child's vocabulary and understanding of the world. These early interactions with books is not to teach formal reading, but rather to cultivate an enjoyment of books and foster positive parent-child interactions. The skills needed for reading and writing will unfold naturally through these fun and meaningful exchanges through books.

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, book, or music that your child currently enjoys to share for our discussion of this topic.

Selecting Toys, Books, and Music Discussion Page

Share your toy or book 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 was one of your favorite toys when you were a child?
- What do you see as your role in your child's play?
- How do you decide what books to select for your child?
- What is your child's favorite non-traditional toy play object?
- What was your favorite book when you were a child?
- What frustrates your child during play lately?
- Complete this sentence: One thing I wish my child didn't enjoy doing or playing with is . . .

How do you encourage the enjoyment of music in your home?

Selecting Toys, Books, and Music At Home Suggestions

Here are some general guidelines for selecting toys:

- Evaluate all toys for safety: small parts, sharp corners, and size. Suggested age on packaging can be one 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	Focused Skill Development
Simple puzzles	Balls of various sizes	Toys for sand and water play	Simple instruments	Matching games
Duplos	Push-and-pull toys	Play dough	Large crayons and paper	Color and shape sorters
Bristle blocks	Small climber	Toy phone	Toy dishes	Books with hidden pictures or that require specific actions
Wooden blocks of various sizes	Small slide	Recorded music and vocal recordings (e.g. parent, child)	Toy broom	Books with themes, e.g., animals, colors, or shapes
Large pegboard	Small riding toys	Toys that make noise	Dolls, stuffed animals, or puppets	
Toys that open and close			Hats	

Here are some suggestions for sharing books with your toddler from BrainWonders – a joint project by BOSTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER, ERIKSON INSTITUTE, ZERO TO THREE.

Make Sharing Books a Part of Every Day

Read or share stories at bedtime or on the bus.

Have Fun

Children can learn from you that books are fun, which is an important ingredient in learning to read.

A Few Minutes is OK – Don't Worry if You Don't Finish a Story

Young children can only sit for a few minutes for a story, but as they grow, they will be able to sit longer.

Talk or Sing About the Pictures

You do not have to read the words to tell a story.

Let Children Turn the Pages

Babies need board books and help turning pages, but a three-year-old can do it alone. Remember, it's OK to skip pages!

Show Children the Cover Page

Explain what the story is about.

Show Children the Words

Run your fingers along the words as you read them, from left to right.

Make the Story Come Alive

Create voices for the story characters and use your body to tell the story.

Make it Personal

Talk about your own family, pets, or community when you are reading about others in a story.

Ask Questions About the Story, and Let Children Ask Questions Too!

Use the story to engage in conversation and to talk about familiar activities and objects.

Let Children Tell the Story

Children as young as three years old can memorize a story, and many children love to be creative through storytelling.

For a musical interlude, try the CD, **101 Toddler Favorites**, and grab a rattle (or a spoon and pan) and sing and dance along.

Creating Family Traditions and Celebrations

This topic falls under the domain of **Family Development** and the emphasis is **Family Traditions and Values: Rituals and Celebrations**.

Parents support their children's development when they:

- Establish rituals that are followed with their family.
- Engage in life events with their children (i.e. birthday, weddings, funerals).
- Provide opportunities for children to feel connected to family history and cultural heritage.

Every family has rituals and traditions. They may have become so ingrained in the rhythms of our daily life that we become less aware of their existence. We may be more aware of big celebrations such as a birthday party, but less aware of all the traditions and rituals within that celebration. For example, often a cake is presented to the birthday person with candles ablaze. The person is to make a wish and blow out the candles. Most of us blow out the candles without thinking of where that tradition originated. It is a tradition, because it is a practice that has been passed down from generation to generation.

When a child enters our life, it is a great cause for celebration. We often reflect on our own childhood and the celebrations, traditions, and rituals from our family. Our memories may be that of a favorite lullaby that was sung to us at bedtime or a traditional food that was served on a holiday. We may also want to establish brand new traditions for our new family.

Family celebrations, traditions, and rituals can be fun, meaningful, and even silly. However, they do provide a sense of security and a feeling of belonging for our children. They become important markers in family lifecycles. Family traditions and rituals are also important because they:

- Create a sense of family identity. Each family will make a celebration unique through their individual traditions.
- Provide predictability and stability in a rapidly changing world. To know that every Sunday is pizza night and we always eat together can give the family a chance to reconnect and relax.
- Provide a time when different generations can be together. Structuring time for young and old helps preserve family history and traditions.

- Encourage a blend of familiarity and creativity. Each new addition to the family enhances the richness of traditions by adding new elements.

Whatever celebrations and rituals you create, your child will have special memories and traditions to pass on to the next generation. Family celebrations, traditions, and rituals should create a positive feeling, occur at predictable intervals, and have more significance than our daily routine and activities. They should be a time of **family togetherness not family stressfulness.**

Creating Family Traditions and Celebrations Discussion Page

Ritual – Any practice or pattern of behavior that occurs at a specific interval or time that has special meaning. (Example – Reading “Good Night Moon” every night, because it has been requested by your child, for whom it obviously holds a special meaning).

Tradition – The passing down of the elements of a culture from generation to generation. (Example - Serving Grandma’s “sour kraut surprise” every Thanksgiving, because your mother did).

1. Share your favorite family celebration and why. Can you think of a specific ritual or tradition within that celebration?
2. Share a tradition you would like to pass down to your child.
3. Share a food that you link with a family celebration.
4. Did you have any daily or weekly rituals in your family of origin?
5. What is your favorite holiday to celebrate and why?
6. What tradition would you like to create to be passed down to the next generation?
7. How do you make your family celebrations a time of family togetherness not family stressfulness?
8. Have you started any daily or weekly rituals with your child?
9. If you could create a holiday to celebrate, what would it be?
10. Share a favorite memory from a family celebration, ritual, or tradition from your childhood.

Creating Family Traditions and Celebrations At Home Suggestions

Here are some ideas for creating meaningful family traditions.

- Consider what is most important to your family during family celebrations. Add traditions to your celebration that connect meaning to the celebration.
- Think about creating a tradition that teaches a lesson like donating to a charity.
- Choose traditions that can include every family member and that take into consideration the needs and capabilities of each person.
- You can have too much of a good thing. Too many traditions and rituals may add stress and reduce their significance.
- Think about your yearly celebrations (holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.) and consider what traditions are most important to you. They will be easier to observe and maintain from year to year if you plan in advance.

Developing Language

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 or 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.

As you listen to a group of children of this age, you will hear a variety of stages of language development. Some children are enjoying labeling everything with a single word, while others are speaking sentences. As with other areas of development, there is a **wide range as to what is considered typical**. Many children's speech at this age could be described as "telegraphic" or two-word phrases like "more milk" or "big dog."

Even though your child may not be speaking volumes, she understands much of what you say. She demonstrates this daily by responding to your various requests. Your child is relying less on gestures and facial expressions and more on spoken words to obtain information.

Another interesting element of language at this age is your toddler does not need to see the object in order to interpret the meaning of words. For example, you can say, "Let's go to the park," and your child will get his coat and wait (impatiently) by the door. Parents soon learn not to say such statements unless they are ready to go that minute.

Your child is becoming aware of the power of words, especially "no" and "mine." The willfulness and the striving for independence of your toddler is clearly communicated through verbal responses. We need to be aware of how we express certain phrases like, "Do you want to have your diaper changed?" or "It's time to change your diaper." The first example leaves us open for the answer of "no" when our intent may not have been to offer a choice. There are other times when a choice is appropriate like, "Do you want applesauce or pears for lunch?" Your child can assert his independence and practice language in a way that decreases frustration and power struggles. It is appropriate and necessary for your child to feel the power of words—that he is understood and his choices are respected. The At Home page of this curriculum has suggestions on how you can encourage your child's language development.

**Developing Language
Discussion Page**

Try the following activities and write down examples of your child’s language.

- Record an example of your child’s speech during focus play.

- Try to engage your child in activities that use the following concept words:
in – out (You are in the house. Come out of the house.) up – down (Go up the stairs. Go down the slide.) empty – full (Empty the container. Now fill the container.) little – big (Here is a little ball. Find a big ball.)

Does your child understand the concepts?

Does s/he repeat back any of the words? Give an example.

- Look at a book with your child. Ask your child to name some objects. Give an example of objects named.

- Did your child ask you any questions? Give an example.

Developing Language At Home Suggestions

Here are some things to consider regarding typical language development of this age:

The child's receptive vocabulary (what he understands) far precedes his expressive vocabulary (what he can actually say). Generally at this point, a child can follow a 2 step command.

Jargon is often used at this age which is a mix of made up words and understandable words which has the intonation of a sentence.

The average vocabulary is approximately 50 words by 24 months with half of the words being nouns.

Telegraphic speech, which is putting two words together ("more milk"), lets us know that he is beginning to know about the order of words which give language a specific meaning.

Children of this age have also figured out a very important question, "what's that?"

Remember – language has the largest range and variability of normal skill development in comparison to other areas of development. Typically, a child's first words are around the first birthday.

Here are some ways to encourage language:

- Ask questions requiring a choice. This helps language comprehension and problem-solving abilities, and may decrease power struggles that occur at this stage.
- Provide outings and shared experiences to the park, library, store or zoo. Talk about what you see and do to increase vocabulary and understanding of different aspects of your child's world.
- Share stories about situations, people, and activities in your child's life.
- Look at books, listen to music, and sing songs together.
- Extend your child's utterances by adding descriptive words such as color, size, or action. "The big, red ball rolled fast."
- Do not actively correct or criticize your child's speech. Simply restate it in the correct manner.
- **Suggested Reading:**
Growing Together: Communication Activities for Infants and Toddlers, by Monica Devine, a speech and language pathologist, has a great deal of useful information and fun activities.

Seasonal Fun and Safety

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 snowsuits 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

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

- **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

- **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

- **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
- **French Regional Park** County Road 9 in Plymouth (763-694-7750). (A nice place for a picnic or walk.)
www.threeriversparkdistrict.org
- **Lake Harriet** In Minneapolis (952-922-1096). (A great place for a free, outdoor summer concert or to step back in time and ride the Como-Harriet Streetcar.)
www.trolleyride.org.

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

Websites

www.aap.org – The American Academy of Pediatrics website offers pertinent health information and an array of other topics.

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 – Infant specialist Magda Gerber features information on a variety of topics focusing on her philosophy of caring for infants with respect.

www.fathers.com – A broad resource for topics for fathers.

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 –The internet for women providing information on a range of topics from health to parenting.

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 – 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

Minnesota Dads At Home www.mdah.org

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