

The Growing Years

Healthy Start...where good results begin

Months 15 and 16

Your Toddler Wants You to Know

How I Grow:

- I like to climb on things, and I usually like to do it alone.
- I can climb upstairs on my hands and knees.
- I can climb out of cribs, off sofas, and onto tables.
- I'm always on the go; I can walk pretty well; I can run a little.
- I like to carry things in each hand.
- I want to show you how independent I am by doing things I want, not what you want me to do.
- I am learning to walk backwards.
- I can turn pages in a book, a few at a time.

How I Talk:

- I can say three or four simple words besides "mama" and "dada".
- When you ask me to, I can point to my shoes or parts of my clothing.
- I can let you know what I want by the way I talk or point.
- I can follow simple requests like "give me the ball."
- I can point to pictures you name, if the things in the pictures are familiar to me.
- I can understand simple directions such as "no," "come," "show me," and "look."
- I don't usually like having a whole story read to me. I would rather point to pictures in a book and have you talk to me about them.
- I am beginning to say "no" a lot.

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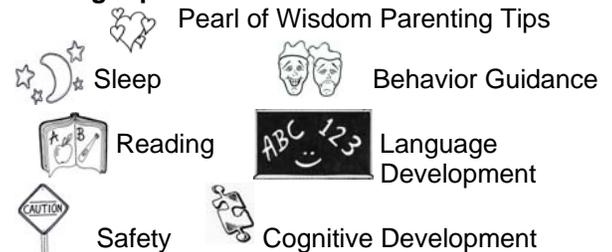
Your Child is Curious About Everything

Help your child explore her world. Fifteen and sixteen month children are moving fast. They are crawling, scooting and walking. How exciting for them! Their world is full of new

things to touch, throw, and climb on and to fall from and knock down. Your quiet, cuddly baby has become a lively little person, and that means you have to be lively too. That can be fun, but it can make you tired, anxious and angry.

Playpens are OK when you need to rest or calm down, but keep playpen times brief. Enjoy your child's exploring, and help her discover new things safely. She needs to learn about her surroundings so she can feel good about herself and her world.

Watch for these symbols to find articles on the following topics:



Guidance and Discipline: Limits Show Love

Sometime between 15 and 24 months, toddlers may become resistant and defiant. You will probably hear them say "no" a lot. All this is perfectly normal. They are more aware of their individuality and more able to do things for themselves. They want to test their independence and power and how you how important they are. They may do this by being negative, but that is a sign that they are growing up. Be patient.

Your toddler needs encouragement to become more independent, but he also needs guidance and discipline. Otherwise, his independence might cause him to hurt himself or others, be destructive.



These can be trying times for parents. Early on you need to decide on some reasonable rules. Choose a few rules, but not too many. Make rules that your toddler can understand and follow. Most importantly make rules that you can enforce consistently. Rules like these help your toddler know you care about him, that you will keep him safe. You will also be helping him learn that he can and should follow rules, even if he really doesn't like them. He needs to know this to grow into a responsible adult.

Try not to break your own rules. If you have a rule against candy before dinner, try to enforce this all the time. Otherwise, you teach your toddler that rules don't matter or that they can be easily broken.

Explain in simple words why you have the rule. Say something like; "You always hold my hand when we cross the street so I can keep you from being hurt." This helps your toddler learn that rules have a purpose. Studies show that children follow rules better when they are given reasons for the rules. This understanding will help him follow rules and make good decisions later.

Your Toddler Wants You to Know (Continued)

What I Have Learned:

- I like to feel different kinds of things: smooth things, rough things, and soft things. I like soft things and smooth things, but I may not like things that stick to my fingers.
- I can throw a small ball, but I usually throw it crooked.
- I may be able to build a tower of two blocks.
- I can scribble with a pencil or crayon.

How I Get Along With Others:

- I mostly want my own way; I don't cooperate much.
- I like lots of attention.
- I am easily entertained.
- I can tell when someone I know is absent.
- I can recognize myself in a mirror or photograph.
- I'm pretty self-centered and often not friendly.
- I like to imitate the way you do things, like sweeping the floor, setting the table, or raking the lawn.

- If you show me that you like what I do, I will do it a lot.
- Sometimes I will get things for you.
- I like to know where you are at all times.
- I'm not very good at giving, but I like to get things.

What I Can Do for Myself:

- I like to do things for myself but I don't do them very well.
- I can let you know when I have wet or soiled pants but I'm still too young to be toilet trained.
- I may be able to use a spoon but I spill.

Play I Enjoy:

- I like to turn switches on and off.
- I like to throw things, push things and pound on things.
- I like to spin wheels.
- I like playing with spoons, cups and boxes.
- I don't play very long with any one toy.
- I like to carry around a soft doll or toy animal.
- I like playing in sandboxes.
- I like rolling a ball with you.



Toddler Talk:

I'm learning about movement. Help me discover how things move. If I like dropping something from my high chair, give me a paper napkin to drop and let me watch how the air moves it. Give me a sponge or tennis ball to throw. I like to hear the sounds things make when they hit the floor. Tell me the names of things and what they do: Roll, bounce, and splat. I will soon find out that things go spat get your attention.

Bounce me gently on your knees or lap, or clap with me in time to music. I like the movement and the music.

Let me have the space indoors and outdoors to practice crawling and walking. I am going to be running by the end of the year. Right now, let me practice crawling, standing, sitting, and walking on my own.



Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with criticism,
He learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
He learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
He learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,
He learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,
He learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,
He learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
He learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
He learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
He learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
He learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
He learns to find love in the world.



Self-Esteem Starts Early

Your child's self-esteem is made up of the thoughts, feelings, and ideas she has about herself. All together, these shape her ideas about how important, lovable and capable she is. Your child's view of herself, her self-esteem, is determined by the way you and others treat her. If she sees that the people who are important to her treat her as an important, competent young person, then she will feel she is valuable and competent. Your child needs to know that you continue to love her even when you don't like what she does. She needs to know that you expect a lot from her, but that you can accept her limited abilities.

High self-esteem is possible for everyone. A family's wealth, education, social class or mom or dad's occupation does not determine it. The basic foundation for your child's self-esteem is being build during the first years of her life. Because you and others cared for her, played with her and responded to her needs to grow and learn, she learned how precious she was to you. She also learned that you believed in her ability to learn and develop new skills. She needs this care and guidance, and respect from you as she continues to form her sense of self-esteem.

Building good self-esteem in children is one the greatest challenges of parenthood. The guidance ideas, play ideas, feeding and language suggestions in this developmental mailing series will help you encourage your child to feel loved and competent.

Pearl of Wisdom

Children's Behavior: It's All About Learning By Joan Mick

Children watch others as a basis for learning. They repeat behaviors over and over again to see if the same reaction happens every time they do something.

I was watching a couple in a restaurant yesterday having dinner with their young son. The baby ate for a short time but then wanted his cup. When he finished his sip he threw the cup on the floor. Mommy picked it up. He sipped again and threw the cup. Mommy picked it up again but this time she said "no more throwing or mommy will put the cup away." He took another sip but this time threw the cup on daddy's side of the table and daddy picked it up. Daddy said the same then and held his hand ready to catch the cup to take it if the boy threw it again. His mom got up from the table and started packing up to leave and the boy threw the cup on mommy's side of the table. Just then an older woman cam around the corner and picked up the cup that landed at her feet and said with a big smile "is this yours?" The boy smiled, knowing happily that everyone knew the game.

The next time you get frustrated because your child repeats the same behavior you can know that he is learning. When he has mastered a skill he will move on to a new behavior. Sometimes kids get into a rut. They need adults to help them out of the rut and onto bigger and more complicated tasks. After all we have been alive for many years and our children have only been alive for a few months. Our job is to guide our children and keep them safe.

Remember always behave as if someone is watching, because someone it.

Joan Mick is an Early Childhood Educator and Consultant in Anoka County.



Nutrition: Mealtime and Snack Time Routines

It is a good idea to give your child meals and snacks at about the same time every day. He will feel better if he knows he is going to have food at regular times. If he doesn't, he is apt to be crabby and cranky. He might overeat when he finally does get food, because he is not sure when he is going to eat again.

Eating in the morning helps your child stay alert and energetic. He might not want to eat just after he wakes up. That's okay; try again later. He will probably be ready for food in a half hour or so.

Children have small stomachs and may get hungry within a couple hours after a meal. Give your child nutritious snacks at mid-morning and mid-afternoon to take care of his hunger and keep him healthy.

Most people eat a meal around noon, and they may eat another meal about 5 or 6 p.m. You can plan the times of meals around what you have to do during the day. Try to stick to this regular schedule of meals and snacks.

Suppose your child refuses to eat at mealtime; but then asks for a snack immediately afterwards. Generally, it's a good idea to refuse his request and tell him he must wait until snack-time.

If your child doesn't want to eat what you've prepared, don't get into the habit of fixing something different just for him. Remind him that this is what everyone in the family is eating. Encourage him to try a few bites of the meal. Tell him it will be a while before the next meal or snack. If he still insists he is not going to eat, quietly remove his plate. Let him leave the table if he wants to.

Encourage your child to try lots of different foods. If he doesn't eat a new food for the first few times you serve it, don't give up. Children often reject new foods the first time around. Serve the food again a few days later. He may try it then. He may not try it until you've served it three or four times. By then, he will have seen other people eating and enjoying it, and the food will be more familiar to him.

Look Mom, I Can Feed Myself!

By now, your child has become an expert at putting things in his mouth. This is both good and bad news. The bad news is that lots of things go in the mouth that don't belong there. The good news is this means your child can begin to feed himself. If also means you can eat at the same time your toddler does rather than separately. Of course, he will be watching you and will try to do what you do. When he sees you eating with a spoon, he will want to practice eating with his spoon (child-size spoons are sold at most variety stores). But he will still eat most foods with his fingers.



More good news is that your child can begin eating the same foods you eat. There is no reason to buy special junior baby foods. You can easily make your own toddler foods by mashing, dicing, chopping, or shredding the foods you eat into small pieces that are easy to chew and easy to swallow.

Watch Out: These are the Accident Years

Do you know that: Accidents are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child? More children die and more children are permanently disabled due to injuries than all diseases combined.



As a parent, you worry about the illnesses your child may get, and you take special care to protect him. You must take the same care to protect him from accidents. Your child cannot protect himself.

Your children are growing and developing all the time. Their ability to do things changes suddenly. In no time at all, he can reach for a hot cup of coffee in your hands and get burned. Often accidents happen because parents are not aware of what their children can do suddenly.

Here are some ways you can prevent accidents:



- Protect your child from falls with stairway gates and window guards. Don't leave chairs near open windows or cabinets.
- Cover electrical outlets.
- Keep your child away from hot stoves and heaters
- Avoid scalds by turning the water heater down to 120 degrees F.
- Lock doors that lead to dangerous areas.
- Keep dangerous substances locked up or safety capped.

Lead Poisoning is A Serious Illness

The main cause of lead poisoning is chewing non-food items that contain lead, such as peeling paint or plaster in an old home, colored newsprint and comics, toys and furniture painted with lead-based paint, or soil contaminated by leaded gasoline.



Other sources of lead poisoning are some fold remedies. Only give your child medications prescribed by a doctor. If you renovate your house or refinish furniture, be careful that your child does not get dust or chips from the old paint in his mouth.

Children with lead poisoning don't always look or act sick, at least not at first. Lead poisoning often shows up in simple things like laziness, grouchiness, upset stomach, headaches, or loss of appetite. Sometimes there are not signs at all until serious damage has occurred.

Since toddlers put everything in their mouths, supervise them carefully. Remove all items in your home and yard that may contain lead. If you think your child has eaten lead, ask your doctor to do a simple test called FEP.

Be Good to Yourself: Know When You're Really Stressed Out

We all feel like the world is closing in sometimes. You may feel like you have too much to do, not enough time, not enough money, nobody to help out. If you feel that way sometimes, you are not alone. When stress gets too heavy, you might have headaches or trouble sleeping. You may feel angry all the time, even when nothing's happening. Stress can do real harm to your health and your

relationships with your family, children, and friends.

You can learn to recognize the signs of stress in your own body. You may feel your muscles get tight, your hands might begin to sweat, or your breathing might get heavy and fast. Ulcers, migraine headaches, asthma, and high blood pressure can come from stress.

What can you do about it? First, remember that it's normal to feel stress when you are a parent. All parents feel stress sometimes. Talk to others about how you feel. Learn what other people do when they get "stressed out." Try different ideas for coping with stress, such as self-help groups, parent stress hotlines, exercise and time out for yourself. You can be in charge of your own stress. Find out what words for YOU.

When There Are Two Languages At Home

Most people who have studied language learning believe that if you speak two languages at home, then both languages should be used with your child from the beginning. Some experts suggest that one parent or caregiver always use one language and another parent or caregiver use the second language. This way, the child can keep the two languages more separate and will be less confused about hearing and speaking them. A child learning two languages will be a bit slower at first in language development than a child learning only one language, but by her 4th or 5th birthday, she should catch up and be able to speak both languages well.

Bath Time Fun

You may have noticed how much your child loves to splash in water. Take an extra minute or two at bath time to let your child have more fun.

Keep some toys just for water play. Plastic containers, measuring cups, spoons and funnels all make fine bath toys. Be sure to wash them before giving them to your toddler.



During the bath, you can play the Name Game. This is a good way to have fun and help your child learn the names of body parts. Point to each body part while you say, "Here's your nose. Here are your eye," and so on. Soon your child will be able to point to the right part when you say the name.

When your child sits in the water, you can sing or chant, "One hand splash, other hand splash, up, down, splash, splash all around." Remember always to stay in the bathroom with your toddler. She is not old enough to bathe alone and could easily fall or get caught under the water.

All About Books

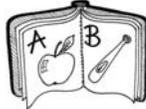
Toddlers and babies enjoy many of the same basic board books. They also like animals (adding the sounds is a favorite), pictures, realistic photos, and bright colors they can identify. They are also ready to try books that are a bit longer with a simple story line. Remember that toddlers love to hear their favorites again and again, so you'll get to know some books by heart.

Some favorite toddler books include:
Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown

My First Book of Things by John E. Johnson

More More More Said the Baby by Vera B. Williams

Llama Llama Red Pajama by Anna Dewdney



Games for Growing

Naming Pictures

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn the names of things pictures in a book.

How to Play:

- Sit with your child on your lap.
- Read a picture book to your child.
- Encourage your child to find things pictured in the book. "Where's the rabbit? Find the bird. What is the boy doing? Is he playing with the toy?"
- Finish the story.

Reading Alone

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn to turn pages alone and look at pictures so that

he gets to know magazines as things he can read.

How to Play:

- Ask your child, "Do you want to read a magazine?"
- If yes, turn the pages of a magazine a few times and point out some pictures.
- Let your child look at the magazine alone.

Homemade Toys that Teach

Touch Treasure Box

Purpose: This toy helps toddlers learn about the different ways that things feel. They learn how to tell one feel from another. The toy also gives them a chance to collect and learn about the shapes, colors and sizes of different objects and materials.

Materials:

- Small cardboard box, like a shoebox
- Crayons
- Small touch treasures collected by child
- Glue (check the bottle to be sure it says nontoxic or child safe)

Making the Toy: Print your child's name in large letters with crayon on top of the treasure box. With your toddler's help, glue small objects of different textures and shapes inside the box. You can include pieces of sandpaper, scraps of wool, fur, sticks, small toys, shiny lids, rocks, and so forth. Make sure these things are not sharp or dangerous and make sure they are not small enough to choke your child.

Playing: Your toddler will enjoy just looking at and touching the things in her treasure box. Encourage her to tell you about the objects. You can tell her which ones are hard or soft, which are round or square. You and your toddler can take turns talking about the objects.

You might want to have separate treasure boxes for special kinds of things. For example, a box of all round things or things that are all hard, all furry or all shiny. You can take walks to collect natural things like leaves, cones, and flowers for an outdoor treasure box. You can make a treasure box of things from a special occasion, trip or person.



Nesting Cans

Purpose: This toy helps children begin to learn about big and little.

Materials:

- Three to five cans of different sizes that can fit one inside the other. The cans should have smooth edges. You can use juice cans, fruit cans, coffee cans, and so forth.
- Colored paper or cloth to cover cans.
- Glue
- Paper tape (not transparent tape)

Making The Toy: Cover the sides of the cans with colorful paper or cloth. You can use wrapping paper, construction paper, magazine pictures, wallpaper scraps, and so on. Glue the coverings onto the cans securely. Tape the can's sharp edges and seams.

Playing: Your child can nest these cans one inside the other, stack them to make a tower, line them up in order of size or roll them across the floor. You and your child will find other ways to use the cans for play and games.

Children Need to Move Their Bodies

Children need to play on climbers, with riding toys, push and pull toys, with balls and other toys that encourage them to use their large muscles. These activities help them:

- To learn balance and coordination.
- To use their energy in a constructive way.
- To learn concepts like speed, direction, and location.
- To use their imagination.
- To negotiation and take turns.
- To build self-confidence as they learn new skills.

Questions and Answers

Q. My 16 month old daughter and my 4 year old son fight constantly. It's driving me out of my mind. Why are they fighting, and what can I do about it?

A. Sibling rivalry can be a problem, especially when young children are less than three years apart. The older child may be fairly content with his new brother or sister until the baby begins to crawl. As you well know, when your baby

begins to get into things, you have to pay more attention to her. When this happens, her older brother may understandably feel you love him less. To make matters worse, the little crawler can break and take her brother's toys. Let your son know you understand and sympathize with his feelings. Suggest ways he can cope with his little sister without hurting her. For the next six to 12 months, you may feel you're constantly stopping quarrels and the biting. Worse, you seldom know which child started the quarrel.

There are some things you can do to cope with this rivalry.

Protect your children from hurting each other or each other's things. It does no good to try to make your older child feel guilty for his anger. After all, his feelings are quite normal and understandable. Do let him know you will not let him hurt his sister or let his little sister hurt him.

Do what you can to make life more bearable for your older child. Do not lavish praise on his little sister in his presence. Encourage your friends and relatives to follow this advice, too. Give your son enjoyable out-of-home experiences, a fun trip, a playgroup, and a babysitter just for him. Do this in a way that makes your son feel special, not pushed out or rejected.

Give your older child your undivided attention at least once a day. All your children need this special show of affection and care.

You might be tempted to put extra demands on your older child at this time. You might expect him to be more responsible, patient, unselfish, and grown-up than he reasonably can be at his age. Ease up on these expectations. Don't try to decide which child is to blame for a fight. Just separate them. If they are fighting over a toy, take the toy away from both of them. Then help them find something else to do.

Try to remember that fighting is common for children these ages. Your children have not turned into monsters. Be patient, understanding and firm. This period will pass.



Why Play With Your Child?

Your children learn best through play

- It tells your children that you love them
- It builds family unity
- It tells your children that they are important
- Your children begin to learn they are capable.

Why Talk With Your Child?

Parent-child communication is essential.

- To establish a relationship
- To get to know each other
- To share your values
- To expand your child's world.
- To make them feel important.

Sources

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Suggested Reading

For more information on development and care of toddlers, we suggest the source books as well as:

Pajamas Don't Matter (or What Your Baby Really Needs) by Trish Gribben (1980). Jalmar Press.

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

This developmental mailing gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." When we use he or she, we include all children. Fathers, partners, and other significant adults all play an important role during pregnancy and in childrearing. When we specifically refer to "fathers," the information may also apply to partners and/or other significant adults involved in childrearing.

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