

The Growing Years

Healthy Start ...where good results begin

Months 17 and 18

Your Toddler Wants You To Know

How I Grow:

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

How I talk:

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

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Emotions are Blossoming

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

You can help him understand his feelings by giving each feeling a name. When a box won't open or a car won't roll, your toddler may drop it or throw it in anger. Hold him and say calmly that you know it makes him angry when the toy won't work. These words show your toddler that you understand his anger. It also gives him

a word that helps him understand his feelings. Show him how the toy works, substitute another toy or just hold him gently. He will know you care about his feelings, and he will begin to learn to handle them.

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

Learning By Helping

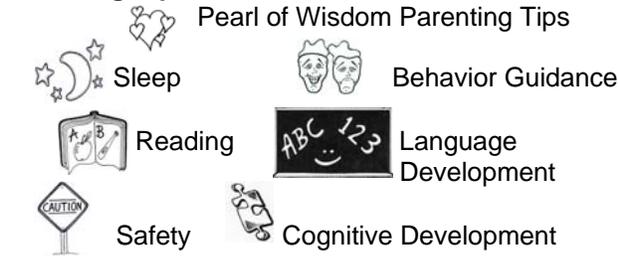
Children learn best when parents are willing to share simple tasks with them, like cooking, cleaning and other household jobs.

When your child tries to help you, look for ways you can make helping fun for both of you. That way your child will enjoy helping and will want to help more. Children can learn how to pour milk from a small pitcher by watching you. They can learn how to sweep the floor, pick flowers and hang up clothes. Toddlers spend up to 20 percent of their time just watching, listening and staring at you.

They're learning how to imitate the things you do. When you let your little person help you, you are giving him a chance to practice what he has learned. He will make mistakes, of course, but don't scold him for these. Instead say, "That was a good try. Maybe it would work better if you did it this way." Take the time to help him succeed now, and later he will be able to do more things for himself and for you. This is time well spent for both of you.



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



Watch Out: Keep Exploring Safe for Your Toddler

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



Remember, this booklet 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 booklet. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider or call 763-323-KIDS.

Your Toddler Wants You To Know (Continued)

Play I Enjoy:

- I like playing with nesting toys and stacking toys.
- I often run around without a particular plan.
- I like pushing wheeled toys, large toy boxes, and similar things around the floor.
- I may be able to string, large colored, wooden beads.
- I like blowing bubbles.
- I still don't play very long with any one thing.

What I Have Learned:

- I can fit a round block into a round hole.
- I can point to one or two parts of my body if you name them.

- I am able to do a simple puzzle.
- I am beginning to remember where things belong.
- I can build a tower of two or three blocks.
- I can turn pages of a book.

How I Get Along With Others:

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

What I Can Do for Myself:

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

Show Your Toddler He's Important to You

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

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

Sharing is Hard

"Mine! Mine!" Do you hear that a lot from your toddler? Sharing is a very difficult thing to learn. We don't expect children to be able to



share until they are about 3 years old, but you can begin to lay the foundation now.

How do you teach your child to share?

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

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

Toddler Property Rules

- 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's mine, it must never appear to be yours in any way.
- If I'm doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.
- If it looks just like mine, it's mine.
- If I think it's mine, it's mine.

Behavior Guidance Ideas

Those who study the development of young children generally agree that spanking and other physical discipline (like shaking, pinching, and hitting) are not necessary for discipline and are harmful to the child. Physical discipline, or the threat of it, is not likely to teach children to control themselves. In fact, it may teach them to be sneaky, aggressive and fearful. It can also teach that hitting or hurting others is okay.



It is also harmful to punish a child by telling him you will leave him or stop loving him. Such threats can cause your toddler to feel he can't trust you or that he is not important to you. He

may feel fearful and insecure, and he may be less willing to cooperate with you.

Here are some discipline ideas that work for many parents:

- Catch your toddlers being good and praise him. Too often, parents forget to do this. Praise will encourage him to be good and will help him to understand which of his actions you like. Don't let him think you will only pay attention to him when he is being naughty.
- Tell your toddler what he should do instead of what he should not do. Say "Carry your coat this way" rather than "Don't drag your coat on the ground."
- Plan ahead. Before special visits and trips (like visits to grandma, parties or shopping), explain clearly to your toddler how you want him to behave.
- Take toys along on trips to fight boredom and crankiness. Keep surprise toys and snacks handy for hungry or fussy times.
- Set things up to encourage good behavior. Within reason, remove things you don't want your child to touch. Limit visits with other children if you expect squabbles. Be sure your little one gets enough rest to avoid fussiness.
- Tell, don't ask. If you want your child to act in a particular way, tell him what you want; don't ask him. If you need to take him to the doctor say, "Now we are going to the doctor," not "Do you want to go to the doctor now?" If it's time to put toys away say, "Let's put the toys away now," not "Do you want to put your toys away?"
- Help your little one want to do what he needs to do. If you want him to pick up his toys, make it a game that you play with him. If he resists bath time, tell him a story in the bath.
- Offer alternatives. When your toddler is doing something you don't want him to do, suggest or substitute something else that he might enjoy. "You can pour water in a basin, not on the kitchen floor." "You can throw the ball outside, not in the house."
- Give choices. Sometimes you can help your toddler exercise his growing independence and get cooperation at the same time by giving him a choice. "Will you



put your toys away in the basket or in the box?" or "Are you going to wear your sweater or your jacket when you go out to play?"

- If you find yourself getting very angry at your child, take time out. Put your toddler in a safe place; tell him you are upset and that you need to be quiet for a few minutes. Then go to another place and try to relax. After this, it will be easier for you to guide him calmly and sensitively.

If you must discipline your child, have your toddler spend a few minutes quietly away from his toys and take a "time out."

Be Good to Yourself: When It Seems Everyone Is Against You

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

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

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

Nutrition: It's Okay to Eat a Little or a Lot

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

Many parents worry that their toddler isn't eating enough, but most toddlers eat enough

for growth and health. They don't need to be bribed or rewarded to eat more.

Don't punish your child for eating too little or for eating too much. If you do, your child will feel ashamed of his appetite and will begin to feel guilty about food. If there is food left on his plate, put it away for another meal or snack. If you find there is always food left on his plate, you may be giving him too much food and need to give less.

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



Health: Toddler Immunizations

Every child needs immunizations during infancy and early childhood. Some of these immunizations are given in the first six months of life, but others are not given until the child becomes a toddler.

The first toddler immunization protects against measles, mumps, and rubella (German Measles) is called the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) shot. It is given at 12 months to 15 months of age. This shot, with another dose given at 4-6 years old, protects against all three of these childhood diseases.

Several of the immunizations given to toddlers – polio, HepB, Hib, and DPT (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis or "whooping cough") – are more of the same ones your child received as a baby. This series of immunizations is very important to protect against dangerous diseases like polio and whooping cough. Frequently, clinics give the polio and DPT immunization at 12 months of age, along with the MMR immunization. Some doctors may delay the polio and DPT immunization until the child is 15 months of age. Keep a written record of your toddler's immunizations so that you can be sure she has the ones she needs. You will need to show proof that your child has been immunized before she can go to



kindergarten. Ask your clinic for more information.

An up-to-date immunization schedule may be obtained from the following web site www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule/htm#Printable

Hand Washing Song

Sing this to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." If children wash their hands with soap and water during the time it takes to sing this song, then they will have effectively cleaned them well!

"Wash, wash, wash your hands,
Play our handy game,
Rub and scrub, scrub and rub,
Germs go down the drain, HEY!"

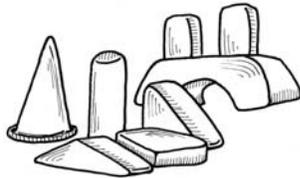


"Wash, wash, wash your hands,
Play our handy game,
Rub and scrub, scrub and rub,
Dirt goes down the drain, Hey!"

Children and Play

Play is the key to every child's well being. Children learn about the world and experience life through play. One definition of play is the "spontaneous activity of children." Through play, children practice the roles they will play later in life.

Play has many functions. It increases peer relationships, releases tension, advances intellectual development, increases exploration and increases chances of children speaking and interacting with each other (Santrock, 1994).



Sensorimotor play is typical play behavior for children up to age two.

Children begin by selecting objects that give them a response, such as toys that make a noise or bounce. These toys receive approval of smiles and giggles. Adults make sure the child's toy selection includes ones that stimulate their senses and enhance their motor skill development.

Between the first and second year, children begin to understand the meaning of objects. The child begins to incorporate this new knowledge into play, but often in a humorous manner. The child will call animals by different names. For example, a child may say a cow says "oink-oink". The child will also pretend objects are used for other purposes such as using a banana for a phone. This is the beginning of pretend play.

Between ages 2 to 4 children begin to make a transition in their play. By this age they realize one thing can stand for another. By processing this knowledge, children are able to imitate or imagine events in ways they do not exist. Through this fantasy play, children can examine events and relationships in ways that are different from the original intent. For example, three- and four-year-olds understand a sponge is really a sponge. They also can pretend it is a boat skiing across the lake or a basketball sliding through the net.



Learning to play with children require adults to have a willingness to think and act like a child. Often as adults get involved with work, family and personal responsibilities, they forget the spontaneity of childhood.

Allow yourself to be creative and get dirty. Often the child will take the lead and assign the adult a role to play.

Homemade Toys That Teach Toss Bags

Purpose: Toss bags can help your child develop muscles and coordination.

Materials:

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

Making the Toy: Make the bag by sewing squares or other shapes out of cloth or by tying the ends of adult socks. Fill your bag with crumpled paper or torn rags and sew up or tie the opening. For safety, double the bag covers



and make the bags at least as big as tennis balls.

Playing: Toss bags are fun just to throw; they can also be thrown at targets or into wastebaskets or tossed to other people.

Play is Fun, Not Work

In every issue, we describe games you can play with your toddler for enjoyment and for growth. These games will help him solve problems, understand the world and learn things he will need to know to succeed in school.

Remember, these games should be fun for both you and your child. If you turn the games into work or into contests, your toddler will not want to play them. He might become discouraged about learning new things or feel like a failure. This will rob you both of the enjoyment and learning you can have together.

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

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

Games for Growing Sounds Things Make

Purpose of the Game: To help your child pronounce difficult words and learn to connect with sounds.

How to Play:

- Sit together in any relaxed position.
- Imitate sounds for your child. Use your body to show actions, like when a jet goes "zoom," a duck goes "quack," a fire engine goes "ding-ding-ding," a train goes "choo choo," a dog goes "wuuff-wuuff."
- After each sound you make, ask the child, "How does a jet go?" or "How does a dog go?"

- You can use a picture or model of the objects when you play this game.

It's Always in the Same Place

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

How to Play:

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

Remember, when playing any game with your child, be flexible. Change the way you play it, and encourage your child to change the game too. Games should be fun for both of you.

Best Bubble Solution

- 1 Cup of Water
- 2 Tablespoons of Glycerin (found at the drugstore)
- 4 Tablespoons dishwashing liquid

Mix together and have fun. Try making bubbles with berry baskets, bubble wands made from pipe cleaners, and straws. This is a great way to refill those bottles of bubbles when you run out.



Pearl of Wisdom

How Do I Keep the Kids Happy While Traveling?

It's travel time and families are on the move in cars, buses, trains, planes, and boats. No matter where you are going or how you are getting there, the success of the



"getting there" part of your trip depends on how well you plan ahead.

Often we devote our energy to the details of when, how, where, and how much. We often don't know to actually apply the same questions to planning for our kids. Children need to be busy. The younger the child, the more you will need to be involved in pulling together their favorite types of activities in containers, bags and boxes that will delight your young child with the discovery of the contents. You will also need to plan to spend sit-down time with your children and be the investigator of the play.

Children learn to play from you. Don't forget to sing songs, hold finger plays and listen to story tapes. It is important to be patient and help your child learn to hear the cue to turn the page. Very young children should not be "set in front of" videos in their car or at home. They benefit more from talking, rhyming, singing, story telling and laughing over and over and then some! These are vocabulary building years. You just can't talk, read or sing too much.

As your child gets older and more verbal, give them books about your upcoming trip. Most of these can be found at your local library. Or, you could make picture books to familiarize your child with where it is they are going. To do this, cut out pictures from brochures or maps that relate to your trip, and if you like you may add words too. Paste them on colored paper cut to the size of sandwich bags. Insert photos, and punch holes in the "zip lock" side of the bag and tie together with ribbon. Your child will love the anticipation of getting to your destination, and will be "familiar" with this new place. (You could even include pictures of the family members/friends you expect to see when you get there.)

Your kindergartener and school age kids will love road games, using the map and planning for breaks and for meals. Road signs are a great source for hangman game words. They also can be used for spelling bees, story strings (you start with words from a billboard, and then the children take turns using billboards and signs to continue the story). Plot out your trip

on a map with your kids. They will be able to anticipate when and where breaks and gas stops need to occur.

In short, all children really need on trips are fun activities, exercise for their growing, wiggly bodies, and a sense of knowledge about where they are going and some power over what they can do when they get there.

Happy Parenting!

Vicki Thrasher Cronin

Vicki Thrasher Cronin is a Parent Educator and Early Childhood Educator. This article was reprinted with permission from Ready 4 K.

Questions and Answers

Q. How can I keep my daughter from being spoiled?

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

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

During a child's second and third years, "spoiling" can happen if parents don't set limits or don't enforce limits consistently. Children become spoiled when parents give in to unreasonable demands, fail to limit annoying behavior or allow their children's minor needs to inconvenience others. When limits are clear and enforced all the time, children learn how to succeed within these limits. This builds self-esteem.

Children need and want reasonable limits and rules that they can understand and follow. Don't be afraid that your toddler will dislike you if you don't always give her what she wants. Let her know you love her, but will not let her misbehave. Help her understand what the rules are, why they are needed and what will happen if she does not follow them. Setting and



enforcing limits shows your toddler that you will help her to grow up safely, and "unspoiled."

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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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