

# The Growing Years

**Healthy Start...** *where good results begin*

**Months 19 and 20**

## Your Toddler Wants You to Know

### How I Grow:

- I explore a lot.
- I may be able to kick a large ball.
- I like being independent, but sometimes I want to act like a baby.
- I can run without falling too often.
- I can stand on either foot holding onto something.
- I still like to climb on everything.
- I don't know about safety, so I count on you to keep things safe for me to explore.

### How I Talk:

- I'm very good at saying "no."
- I love to name things.
- I can follow simple directions.
- I like to be read to.
- I can say about 15 words.
- I like to listen to nursery rhymes and stories.
- I ask a lot of questions, mostly by saying "why?" or "what's that?" Be patient with me. I am just trying to learn.

### What I have Learned:

- I can pull the toilet paper wa-a-y out.
- I can put two pieces together to form a simple figure.
- I'm beginning to know what things are for, like a hammer is for banging.
- I can draw an up and down line pretty well.

**Continued on page 2.**

## Your Child is Special

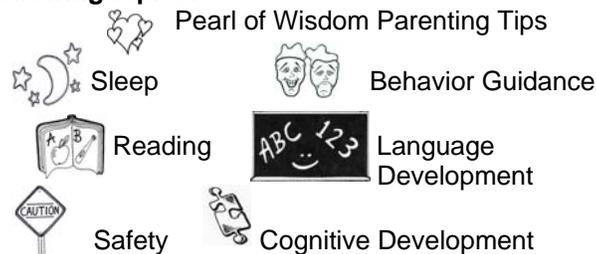
Isn't it nice that your child is like no other child in the world? In every developmental mailing in this series, we have included a reminder to parents that perfectly normal children differ in the sequence and speed of their development

because parents often worry that their children are not developing, as they should.

Those who study young children agree that one predictable thing about children's development is its variability. Normally developing children may walk before they are 7 months old, but many do not walk before they are 18 months old. Normal children may begin talking at 8 months or at 24 months, and so it is with all learning.

Your child naturally enjoys learning new skills. You can support and encourage this learning not by pushing or criticizing or comparing your child with other children but by teaching, encouraging and celebrating her success.

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



## Research In Brief: Secure Toddlers Are More Compliant

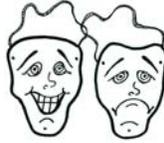
There has been a lot of research on the relationship between parents and their young children. For some, this relationship is close and loving, but for others the relationship is tense and uncomfortable. In a close relationship, the child feels secure. She feels she can count on her parents for affection, care and protection. Dr. Alice Sterling Honig reviewed studies of parent-child relationships. She concluded that a close, secure relationship



between parent and child occurred when the parents were aware of the child's distress and were able to quickly and successfully comfort the child. She writes, "...children are more likely to obey parental signals if they have a positive, harmonious affectionate relationship with their parents."

## Temperament and Goodness of Fit

Research shows that goodness of fit between your child's temperament and your parenting style is important for healthy social and emotional development. Differences in child temperament require differences in parental handling to achieve a good fit. A good fit means parents match their demands or expectations with what their child is able to do, given the child's temperament, age and abilities. For example, we don't expect an infant to know what is safe, so we childproof our home. In the same manner, we can't expect an active toddler to sit still too long (until everyone finishes dinner), although we can expect him to come to the table for a short while.



Creating a "good fit" means parents meet the needs of their child, while also meeting the needs of everyone else in the family (including the parents' own needs).

How can you create a good fit with your child? Knowing your child's temperament is a good place to start. When you understand your child's temperament you can plan ahead to prevent problems. This means rather than just reacting to your child's behavior, you can plan where your child might have specific needs or difficulties and use parenting strategies that make it easier for your child to behave. For example, if your toddler adapts slowly to changes, you will likely have to introduce a new food a number of times before he is likely to try it. If your toddler is highly active, you will need to provide ways for him to release his energy, such as



running in the park or climbing on the slide or jungle gym. Then you can stick to limits of not climbing on the tables.

When parents' expectations and demands do not fit well with their child's temperament, there is a poor fit. A poor fit leads to stress in the parent-child relationship and parents feel less capable in their parenting. Research also shows that children who experience a poor fit are more likely to develop behavior problems.

## Toddler Talk: Let Me Play in Water and Sand

Let me play in sand, dirt and mud even if I get dirty. A pile of sand or dirt in the corner of the yard will be great. You can make a sandbox by filling an old tire with clean sand. Keep the sandbox covered when it's not in use to keep out cats and dogs.

Let me play with water.

Bathing, filling and emptying containers, and washing dishes are great fun. Give me a plastic bucket or can filled with clear water and an old paintbrush. I will paint the sidewalk, the house and everything I can reach. Put a small dishpan of water on the kitchen floor or outdoors. Add a funnel, sponge, measuring spoons, and cups, a washcloth and a plastic squeeze bottle. I'll enjoy pouring, squeezing, washing, and squirting. Remember, don't leave me alone with water; I can drown in less than two inches of water.



All this is teaching me about the world I live in, and it's lots of fun.

## Your Toddler Wants You to Know (Continued)

### How I Get Along With Others:

- I love cuddling.
- I like to help you do simple things.
- I'm still not much interested in other children.
- I may treat other children like they were things; I may hurt them.
- Even when I'm with other children, I like to play alone.



- I want to keep my toys to myself, and I may hide them so others can't play with them.
- I need time to get to know people; I'm afraid of some people.
- I like to do things with adult help.
- I may be less friendly to adults, but this is just temporary.

### What I Can Do for Myself:

- I can brush my own teeth.
- Sometimes, I will let you know when I'm going to have a bowel movement.
- I can let you know when I need dry clothing.
- I go to bed without complaining.
- I can feed myself pretty well.

### Play I Enjoy:

- I like to play alone, but I like adults to be near me.
- I like picture books and I love looking at pictures of myself.
- I enjoying swinging on a swing.
- I like dressing up in adult clothes and pretending I am an adult.
- I like to have you sing to me.
- I like making mud pies.
- I like to take toys apart.
- I like rides and walks.
- I like to look at myself in the mirror.

## Happy Dancing

Toddlers like to do things with their parents. They like music, rhythm and body movements; happy dancing combines all these things. Turn on some music. Teach your child to do a happy dance. Dance to fast music and slow music. Hold hands and dance together. Clap your hands to music or use large wooden spoons to beat on something that makes a nice noise. Show your little one how to keep the rhythm and play along with the beat. Children grow up to like the kind of music they hear when they are little. Play different kinds of music and your child will learn to like many kinds.

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 booklet. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider.

## Special Toy or Blanket

Lots of children have special blankets, teddy bears or toys. Some children take up with the strangest things. They claim them and call them their own forever, or at least until someone makes fun of them. The most common favorite object is a blanket. Your little one may appear every morning with one thumb in the mouth and the other hand clutching a ratty, tattered blanket.



There are some stories about security blankets that would truly surprise you. Heaven forbid if it should get lost, stolen (who'd want it?) or washed. Yet that blanket or teddy bear or toy represents a friend who has shared your child's life through thick and thin, in sickness and health, in good times and bad. Most of us would welcome such a friend if it could do as much for us.

What to do about these special comforts and attachments? You leave them alone, because in time your child will realize the blanket or bear or other toy isn't going to solve life's problems. He will come to realize he can solve his problems by himself. For now let him enjoy his comforting "friends."

## When You Are Concerned About Your Child's Development

Anoka Area Interagency Early Intervention can assist you if you have concerns about your child's speech, development, or behavior. They link families to services that best meet their needs. Services are home based and family focused. Call **763-323-KIDS** for assistance with your concerns.



## Sometimes Change Takes Time

Does it sometimes seem that your child changes almost too fast, while at other times he learns important things so-o-o slowly? Believe it or not, your little one wants to learn and is doing his best. Some things are just hard for



him to get the hang of. You can help by being patient and calm and by encouraging and praising each tiny accomplishment. That way, he won't get upset and have trouble learning.

If your messy eater gets two spoonfuls of applesauce in his mouth without spilling much, let him know you are pleased. If he plays with another child just five minutes without squabbling, compliment him.

Let him know you appreciate what he can do. Try not to criticize what he cannot do. He'll learn faster, and you'll both feel better.

## Temper Tantrums

Sometimes children between the ages of one and three have temper tantrums. They may cry, shout, hit, bite, and throw themselves on the floor and kick. Some hold their breath. You may not know what started the tantrum. You certainly know you want to stop it!

Some children have tantrums because they have learned it is a way to get attention or to get something else they want. Others imitate parents who have quick tempers. Tantrums probably mean that the child is overcome by anger or frustration. Maybe she has been told too often what she cannot do. Children seem to have temper tantrums most often when they are overtired, hungry, or very excited. Although temper tantrums are normal for children this age, they don't happen as often if the child feels loved and important.

There is no magic way to handle tantrums, but here are some suggestions:

- Try to remain calm (which is often hard to do).
- Keep your child from hurting herself or others.
- If possible, walk away and ignore her behavior (as long as she cannot hurt herself or others).
- Separate her from other children or from the place where she's having her tantrum or just hold her in your arms.
- When your child is calm, comfort her and try to understand the reason for the tantrum.

- If you give the child what she wants when she has a tantrum, she might learn to use tantrums to get her own way.

## Nutrition: Mealtime Is Mess Time

Toddlers are messy eaters. You can bet that a lot of food will end up on the floor. If you are worried about the carpet or floor, put an old sheet or newspapers under the high chair. You can shake out the sheet and throw the newspapers away after meals. When the sheet is dirty, you can wash it.



Things that make eating easier for toddlers are small, unbreakable items, such as a:

- Spoon with a short handle.
- Bowl with sides to push food up against
- Cup that your toddler can circle his hands around and pick up. (This cup should not tip over easily. If you use a training cup with a lid, it can make drinking easier.)

There will be a lot of spills. Most of the time, they will be accidental. If it happens three and four times in a row, your toddler might be playing or trying to get your attention. This means it is probably time to end the meal.

Serve your toddler food at the same time everyone else is eating. Your toddler will learn how to eat by watching you and other family members eat. Don't expect good table manners yet. Your child will learn these gradually over the next few years.

A high chair can help. Toddlers are such busy little people they might not want to stop to eat when it's time for a meal or snack. When you put your child in a high chair, he knows that it's time to stop what he is doing and eat.

## Watch Out: Avoid Burns

Burns are among the most serious and painful injuries to children.

The problems, pain and disfigurement from a burn could last the rest of your child's life.

Most burns to children occur between birth and 4 years of age.



Most burns to children are caused by:

- Scalds from hot liquids and foods such as coffee, tea and grease.
- Contact with hot surfaces such as stoves, irons, and heaters.

These burns occur most often in the kitchen when hot liquids are spilled while you are cooking and serving, and when appliances are hot.

During this early age, children grow so fast that parents are often not prepared for what a baby can do. Toddlers can pull hot food off a table or touch a hot stove while they are trying to walk. A 2-year-old will get underfoot in the kitchen, and you can spill hot food on him.

Parents often change their habits and household after the burn to their child has happened rather than before. Remember that your child will surprise you with his ability. Expect him to change overnight. Be prepared.

- Never eat, drink or carry anything hot when you are carrying your child; you can't handle both.
- Never leave anything hot on the edge of a table or counter.
- Be especially careful when your child is with you in the kitchen. Don't let him play in the kitchen when you are not there.

## Health: Give Your Child A Lifetime of Happy, Healthy Smiles

Your child's first teeth are important for:

- Helping your child chew and talk.
- Saving space for permanent teeth to grow in straight.
- Helping your child feel good about her smile.



By following a few easy steps you can avoid dental problems in your child's future.

- Gently clean your toddler's teeth and gums daily with a damp cloth, gauze or toothbrush.
- Feed only formula, milk or water from a bottle. Do not add sugar.
- Offer the bottle only at feeding time.
- If you use a pacifier to comfort your baby, never dip it in any sweet substance.

- If your drinking water is fluoridated, make a habit of encouraging your child to drink it. If your child's drinking water is not fluoridated, ask your doctor about fluoride supplements.
- Take your child for a dental checkup when she is between 1 and 2 years old.

## Help Your Child Get Ready To Read

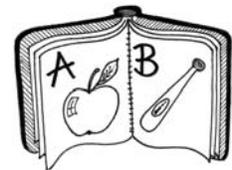
By the time children are two years old, they understand 300 to 500 words. You help your child learn new words by talking and reading together.



- Talk to your child about what you are doing.
- Encourage your toddler to tell you about things. Listen patiently and ask questions.
- Read favorite books again and again.
- Talking with children develops comprehension skills that will help them understand what they read.

Some books that you and your toddler may enjoy reading together include:

I Can Do It Too! By Karen Baicker  
Whose Baby Am I? by John Butler  
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle  
Jump, Frog, Jump! by Robert Kalan  
Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh  
Dinosaur Roar! By Paul Stickland



## Dress Up and Dramatic Play

Dressing up and pretending help children:

- To practice language and social skills.
- To use their imagination and creativity.
- To role play and understand real life events.
- To express feelings and problem solve.



## Sensory, Water and Sand Play

These touchy-feely things help children:

- To develop small motor skills necessary for writing readiness.
- To develop math skills, i.e., more/less.
- To learn concepts of shapes and sizes.

## Homemade Toys That Teach Milk Carton Blocks

Purpose: Block play allows young children to experiment with patterns, shapes and sizes. They learn how to stack things and they learn what happens when stacks are knocked down. These lightweight building blocks, which cost almost nothing to make, are very popular with children.

### Materials:

- Milk or cream cartons
- Heavy plastic or duct tape

**Making the Toy:** Take any two cartons of equal size and cut them to the same height. Turn one over and slip it inside the other so that it makes a block.



Secure the edges with duct tape or heavy mailing tape – a kind children can't pull off and swallow. You can cover the blocks with adhesive paper or you can paste letters, numbers, or pictures on them.

## Games for Growing:

### Big and Little

**Purpose of the Game:** To teach your child about opposites and sizes.

### How to Play:

- Sit in any relaxed position.
- Place three big and three little blocks on the floor.
- Pile the blocks up in different patterns and describe what you are doing. For example, "Now I'll put the little block on it" and so on.
- Now say something like, "We need a big block. Give me a big block," or ask for the little blocks so that your child learns the difference between big and little.

Encourage your child to make up other block games or big and little games you can play together.

## Touch a Word

**Purpose of the Game:** To help your child point to objects named and learn the words for these objects.

### How to Play:

- Sit with your child.
- Turn pages in a baby' picture book and say to your child, "Where's the car? Touch the horse."
- Then say, "Now look at this. This is the word for car." Point to the word and then say, "Point to the car. Touch the word for car."

Remember, play this and any game only if it is fun for both you and your child.

## MN Parents Know

This is a trusted website with valuable parenting information, resources, and activities to help your children grow, develop and learn from birth through high school. Visit the website at [www.parentsknow.state.mn.us](http://www.parentsknow.state.mn.us)



## Pearl of Wisdom

### Just Playing

(Original Author Unknown)

When I'm building in the block room  
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play,  
About balance, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up,  
Setting the table, caring for the babies,  
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."  
I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint,  
Or standing at an easel, or molding and  
shaping clay,  
Please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just  
Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I just might be a teacher someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or  
some "playing" at my school,  
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "play."



For you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.  
I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods.  
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is  
"Just Play."  
I'm learning to follow directions and see the  
differences.  
I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and  
move my body.  
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning how my body works.  
I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school  
today,  
And I say, "I just played."  
Please don't misunderstand me.  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my  
work.  
I'm preparing for tomorrow.

Today, I am a child and my work is play.

## Questions and Answers

**Q. I've heard about the terrible two's. What are they, and how do I cope with them?**

**A.** Terrible two's may not be terrible, but they can be difficult. Most toddlers go through a period at about 2 ½ years old, some as early as 18 months, some much later, when they seem to delight in doing just what you do not want them to do. This happens because toddlers are learning independence at this age. They have the physical ability to do things on their own and are learning that they can have some power over others. They have learned to say "no" and "I want." To practice all these new abilities, they want what they want right now, and they let you know this very clearly. Sometimes, they demand things they shouldn't have, and sometimes they demand things they don't even want, just to show how powerful they are.

Remember, when your toddler reaches this stage, he is not being deliberately nasty. He is just showing that he is growing up. Be patient. Use the guidance ideas discussed in these developmental mailings. In a few months, your toddler should be moving out of this difficult period.

### Sources

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Graphics: [www.designedtoat.com](http://www.designedtoat.com)

#### Contributors

Nutrition: Joanne Ikeda, M.A., R.D. Nutrition Education Specialist, University of California Cooperation Extension.

Health: Colleen Sevens, R.F.D., M.S.T., California Department of Health Services.

#### Suggested Reading

For information on first aid for young children we recommend:

"The First Aid Chart" by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Order by calling toll-free 800-433-9016 or writing American Academy of Pediatrics, Publication Department, 141 Northwest Point Blvd., P.O. Box 927, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007. Cost is \$2.95.

For other good information on first aid for young children and first aid classes, contact your local Red Cross office.

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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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