

The Growing Years

Healthy Start... *where good results begin*

Months 23 and 24

Your Toddler Wants You To Know

How I Grow:

- I can throw a ball into a wastebasket.
- I can walk down stairs alone, both feet on one step at a time, holding on to the railing.
- I usually like to run more than I like to walk.
- I like to walk on low walls with one hand held.
- I can walk a few steps on tiptoe.
- I might be afraid of the noise of trains, trucks, thunder, toilet flushing, and the vacuum cleaner. I might also fear rain, wind, and wild animals. Be patient with me.

How I Talk:

- I can ask questions just to keep the conversation going.
- I can answer some questions such as, "What is your name?" "What does the dog say?" "What does the cat say?"
- I'm beginning to learn the meaning of "soon" and I am learning to wait.
- I can ask for food and drink.

What I Have Learned:

- I can sit and "read" picture books, turning the pages for myself.
- I can put together a puzzle of three to six pieces.
- I know pretty well where things are located in and around my house.
- I can make a tower of 4-6 blocks.

Continued on page 2.

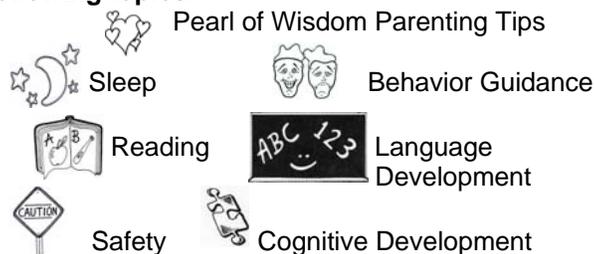
Build Your Child's Self Esteem

A child's self-esteem is his overall judgment of himself. It determines whether or not he likes, accepts, and respects himself. One of the greatest and most important challenges you face is to help your child feel good about himself.

Children begin very early to form either positive or negative pictures of themselves. You can help your child feel good about himself by telling him that you like who he is and you like the way he does things. Let him know when you think he does a good job of putting blocks in a bucket, or dumping them out of the bucket. Thank him for putting napkins on the table or hanging up his towel. Show him with smiles as well as words.

Tell your child what to do rather than what not to do. Instead of saying, "Don't carry the cat that way," say, "Carry your cat like this." That way, he'll feel like a success rather than a failure. Listen to what he says, and respond to his questions. Take time to understand his feelings, his joys and his fears. You are showing him that his ideas and feelings are important. All this will help him to feel important and capable. You are helping him develop the self-confidence to become the responsible, successful person you want him to be.

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



Toddler Talk

Give Me Lots of Different Experiences

- Make up a song or a story. Use my name and change the words to match my actions or feelings. This may help me calm down when I am cranky.



- Sing songs like "Rain, Rain Go Away" and "Mary Had A Little Lamb." These simple songs will be easy for me to copy.
- Look at the sky with me. Point out the clouds, the moon, and the stars.
- Keep me interested in my toys by dividing them into two boxes and switching boxes every week.

Research In Brief: Toddler Intelligence and Home Experiences

What kind of daily experiences are most likely to promote learning and intellectual development in young children?

Dr. Joseph H. Stevens, Jr., professor of early childhood education at Georgia State University, reviewed research designed to answer this question. The research showed that the way parents and caregivers help their children develop language skills does influence their children's intellectual development. Those children who were most intelligent had parents or other caregivers who talked to them a lot, encouraged their use of language and did things with them that helped them learn and practice language. Dr. Stevens writes, "Intellectually valuable experiences that involve the teacher and/or parents as active participants of the task with the child in labeling, describing, comparing, classifying, and questioning support (the child's) intellectual development (Stevens, 1981, pp. 67-68)

Your Toddler Wants You to Know (Continued)

How I Get Along With Others:

- I still don't understand sharing, but I like to be with other children for short periods of time.
- I like to please others.
- I am interested in babies and their mothers.
- I am afraid of disapproval and rejection.
- I like to order other people around.
- I sometimes show my anger by slapping, biting, and hitting.
- I want my way in everything.

- I am sometimes stubborn and defiant, and I often use words like "It's mine!" "I don't like it!" "I won't!" and "No!"

What I Can Do for Myself:

- I can take off my clothes- shoes, socks, and pants.
- I can unwrap packages.
- I know what a toilet is for, but I probably don't want to use it yet.
- I can turn doorknobs and open doors. Keep dangerous things out of my sight and out of my reach.
- I want to do lots of things by myself.

Play I Enjoy:

- I like to play simple chase games like tag.
- A teddy bear or soft doll is still my favorite toy.
- I like to take things apart and put them together. Watch out that I don't play with small pieces that could choke me.
- I can stack five rings on a peg toy in the correct order.
- I like to be pushed on a swing.
- I play happily with soft modeling clay.

Bedtime Talk

You might enjoy starting bedtime talk as part of your bedtime routine with your toddler. Bedtime is a good time to talk to your toddler without interruption in a cozy private place. Review the best things that have happened that day, and talk about plans for tomorrow.



The sound of your soft comforting voice will help your child ease into sleep. You'll probably find yourself doing much of the talking at first, but you're setting the stage for later discussions. As your child grows, she'll want to have private conversations with you about important things.

Be Good to Yourself: Parenting Is Difficult Work

Parents often think they aren't doing a "good" job if their children don't act the way they should. No matter how good you are as a parent, your child will misbehave. If you feel responsible for all of your child's misbehavior,



you will feel stress. That stress is hard on you and can cause you to be hard on your child. This will make things worse for both of you. Instead of criticizing yourself, try to give yourself some positive messages.

For example, sometimes parents think, "If I were a good mother or father, my child wouldn't be having so many tantrums." How about telling yourself and your child, "We got through that trip to the store without any fussing at all!"

Young children need parents who try their best, but that doesn't mean we can succeed 100 percent of the time. We all make mistakes. When you're not feeling OK, do try your best, but don't worry that you are not a super parent.

Give yourself and your child credit for the good times, and understand that nobody is perfect.

Get Ready for Toilet Training

There is not set age at which toilet training should begin. The right time depends on your child's physical and psychological development. You should not rush toilet training, but there are some things you can do, when you think your child is ready to be trained, to use the toilet. Teach your child the words he needs to ask to go to the toilet. A good time to do this is when you change his diaper. Tell him why you are changing him, "You peed and made your diaper wet" or "You had a BM (or pooped or bowel movement)." Show him and tell him the word for toilet or potty chair that you will want him to use.

Look for any of the following signs that your child is ready:

- Your child stays dry at least 2 hours at a time during the day or is dry after naps.
- Bowel movements become regular and predictable.
- Facial expressions, posture, or words reveal that your child is about to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- Your child can follow simple instructions.
- Your child can walk to and from the bathroom and help undress.
- Your child seems uncomfortable with soiled diapers and wants to be changed.

- Your child asks to use the toilet or potty chair.
- Your child asks to wear grown-up underwear.

When your child shows he wants to go to the toilet, sit with him at least the first few times. Don't give him toys to play with, and don't insist that he sit on the toilet when he wants to get off, even if he has not "done" anything. Always compliment him for his successes; don't criticize or punish his accidents.

For more information on toilet training visit our website at www.HealthyStartAnokaCounty.org.

Watch Out: Keep Your Child Car-Safe

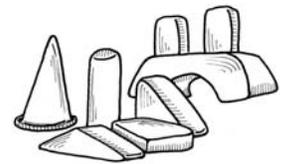
Your child darts around quickly now. He probably likes to run more than he likes to walk. He doesn't know what things could hurt him and may suddenly do something dangerous. Don't let him play near the street. Always hold his hand when you are in a parking lot or crossing a street or driveway. Use a child safety seat every time your child is in the car. Buckle the safety seat in the car with the car's seat belt. Never leave your child alone in the car.



Blocks: Great Toys for All Ages

Playing with blocks helps children do all these things:

- Use physical skills as they are lifting, building and moving blocks around.
- Use math skills as they are counting, matching, sorting, grouping, adding and noticing weight and length.
- Learn how to come up with and try new ideas for making a bridge or tower.
- Learn how to work with other children as they listen to other ideas and share.



Toddlers will pick up blocks, carry them around, drop them, put them in something, or move them from place to place. Older toddlers may



begin to stack blocks or put them together, side by side, on the floor.

- Toddlers need large blocks, made of wood, heavy cardboard, or plastic.
- Give toddlers a plastic bucket or basket to fill with blocks.
- Allow toddlers to get out blocks themselves and help put them away.
- Show toddlers how to stack blocks and how to keep a tower from falling over.
- Give toddlers lots of space for block play, so they can move around without tripping, or falling into their blocks.

Nutrition: New Foods Are Strange Foods

It isn't easy for toddlers to switch from baby foods to adult foods. Your toddler probably won't be happy when she finds a new food on her plate. In fact she, like most toddlers, probably won't eat a new food the first time it's offered.



When your child rejects a new food, it doesn't mean she doesn't like it. It means she's a little afraid of it and needs some time to get used to it. Here are some things you can do to help:

Serve yourself the same food and eat it to show that you like it.

Suggest that she might want to taste it, but don't force, bribe or punish her if she refuses.

Serve the new food again within a week or two. The second time, it won't seem so new to her. Again, don't make a fuss if she doesn't eat it. Sometimes, it will take up to 10 times before a toddler will even taste the new food.

Most toddlers would be happy to eat nothing except three or four favorite foods. Offer many different kinds of food for your toddler, not just a few favorites. Help her to enjoy foods like milk, yogurt, cheese, fruits, vegetables, breads, rice, cereals, fish, chicken, meat, eggs, peanut butter, and beans.

Disciplining Your Toddler

No doubt about it, toddlers are a handful! At times, it seems like they can be in two places at the same time, and be headed for trouble in a third one yet.



Many parents can recite nerve racking stories of toddlers perched on top a bookcase, or of a fall that resulted in an emergency room visit. Setting limits and maintaining some kind of control are difficult with toddlers because they are so independent, yet have so few skills to communicate and solve problems. The key to disciplining your toddler includes love, understanding and quick thinking!

Set up a safe environment

One of the most important things a parent can do to establish a safe environment. "Toddler-proof" your home by locking up dangerous chemicals and medicines, covering electrical outlets, and storing breakable objects up high, especially if your toddler is a climber! You also may want to take a close look at toys and how your toddler uses them. Getting hit accidentally on the head with foam block is not big deal, but a "bonk" on the head with a hard wooden block is more serious. A safe place to play and appropriate toys to play with will save you from saying "No" and make your job as parent much easier.

Establish a routine

Toddlers need naps and reasonable bedtimes. Small stomachs need nutritious snacks and meals frequently. Growing bodies need time to run, jump, and play every day. Riding around all day in a car seat, sleeping in a stroller, and eating fast food is OK once in a while, but if it's happening often you may want to rethink your schedule. Taking care of basic needs can go a long way in preventing a cranky, whiny child.

Remove or isolate

When a child is running out into the street or about to get into the household bleach, there is not time for negotiation. Parents MUST remove a child from a dangerous situation. Picking up, holding, or putting a child in his room for a few minutes until things can be made safe is perfectly OK. Your child may protest loudly, but your primary responsibility is to keep him safe.



Distract

This works especially well with very young children. When a child is doing something unacceptable, try to call attention to another activity – perhaps playing with another toy or reading a book together. The goal is to temporarily distract the child from the current problem. For example, if a child wants to play with breakable knickknacks at a friend's home, perhaps you can distract him with a stuffed toy. Since young children's attention spans are so short, distraction is often effective.

Redirect

If your toddler is throwing blocks, hammering on tables, drawing on books, remove the materials while saying something like "Blocks are for building, not throwing." At the same time substitute another appropriate toy for the material you just took away and say "If you want to throw something, throw the bean bag into the basket." By redirecting the activity into a more acceptable situation, you let children know you accept them and their play, and you channel a problem activity into a more acceptable activity.

Help your toddler understand "sharing"

Sharing is not something that toddlers do well. They aren't able to understand the process yet. Toddlers do enjoy playing next to other children, but are not very good at playing with other children. If you have several young children, it is better (and easier) to provide several similar toys than to require sharing. Two toy telephones can prevent many squabbles and may even encourage children to cooperate and communicate better. Toddlers usually find it difficult to share because they don't really understand what ownership means. They may think sharing a toy is the same as giving it away. It is very common for a toddler to give someone a toy, but expect it to be given right back. Older brothers and sisters sometimes have trouble understanding this. Sometimes it helps to explain that your toddler is just "showing" his brother the toy. If your toddler does share, give praise, but respect the need to protect treasures.

Disciplining toddlers is not easy. And you won't always feel good about how you handled a

situation. It's important to recognize that you are human. After all, it's hard to be calm when your toddler tries to drown the cat with orange juice or smack you in the face with a banana. You can respond quickly when your toddler needs guidance if you understand the reasons for his behavior and know your options.

Stories and Books are Important

Reading is an enjoyable activity to do with your child. It is also very important. It helps your child to learn the following:

- To see letters represent words
- To listen to language
- To use their imagination
- To increase their attention span
- To snuggle with someone special

Here are some books you might enjoy with your toddler:

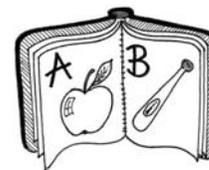
[Turtle Splash! Countdown at the Pond](#) by Cathryn Falwell

[Hands Can](#) by Cheryl Willis Hudson

[Spider On the Floor](#) by Bill Russell

[Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type](#) by Denise Cronin

[I Know a Rhino](#) by Charles Fuge



Homemade Toys That Teach

A Shape Board

Purpose: This toy can help children learn about shapes and about similarities and differences.



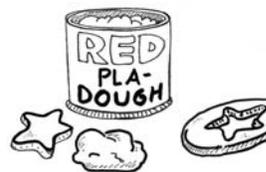
Materials:

- Cardboard sheet about 8 ½ by 11 inches
- A bright colored crayon
- White paper

Making the Toy: Draw and color in simple shapes on the cardboard with a colored crayon: a circle, a square, a triangle, and a star. Then draw, color and cut out matching shapes from white paper.



Playing: Show your child how to match the cut-out shapes to the shapes drawn on the board. Talk about the pieces, naming their shapes. Ask her to put the star on the star, circle on the circle, the square on the square and so on. Remember, play this and any game only as long as it is fun for both of you. Encourage and praise your child's efforts; do not criticize her failures.



Puzzles, Sorting, and Other Manipulative Toys

Children discover readiness skills through play.

- To coordinate their eyes and hands; reading and writing readiness skills.
- To increase self-esteem; by completing a task.
- To match and sort objects; a pre-math skill.
- To learn concepts of shape, size, color and location.
- To practice problem solving skills.

Encourage Wonder Through Science

- Why do things work they way they do?
- How do things work?
- What if I do this... then what?

Provide children with items to explore such as rocks, leaves, shells, magnets, water, and magnifiers.

This is a Home Where Children Live

You many not find things all in place.
 Friend, when you enter here,
 But, we're a home where children live,
 We hold them very dear.
 And you may find small fingerprints,
 And smudges on the wall,
 When the kids are gone, we'll clean them up,
 Right now, we're playing ball.
 For there's one thing of which we're sure,
 These children are on loan,
 One day they're always underfoot,
 Next thing you know, they're gone.
 That's when we'll have a well-kept house,
 When they're off on their own.
 Right now, this is where children live
 A loved and lived in home

Judith Bond

Games for Growing:

Color Learning

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn to match colors and begin to learn their names.

How to Play: Select five blocks or other objects of different colors.



Place two blocks of different colors in front of your child. Point to a block and say, "This is red." Ask your child to give you the red block. Ask your child to say the color of the block she handed you. Use only two colors at a time, but change the colors. For example, start with blue and red together, then switch to blue and green. Tell your child the name of the new color only. See if your child can remember the name of the other color.

Other Color Games: Have your child tell you the names of colors in stoplights, on television, in magazines, or on signs. Put together different things that are the same color and ask your child what is the same about them. Help your child use crayons or colored pictures to learn the names of the colors.

Blindfold Guessing

Purpose of the Game: To help your child name objects he cannot see. This way, he learns to put the name of the object together with the way it feels.

How to Play:

Ask your child to sit on your lap facing away from you. Place a blindfold on your child; if the blindfold is scary to your child, just ask him to close his eyes or turn his head.



Bring together objects the child knows well, like a spoon, rattle or small stuffed toy. Give your child different things one at a time to feel and ask him to guess what he is holding.

Other Blindfold Guessing Games: Put familiar things in a box or paper bag and ask your child to put his hand in the box or bag and tell you what he feels, or ask him to take out of the box or bag the items you name without looking at them.



Pearl of Wisdom Brain Development

Children are born learning. The science of brain development tells us that the first three years of life are very important for building the young brain. By age three a child's brain is twice as active as an adult's brain. During this time the brain is preparing the groundwork for a lifetime of learning and for future school success.

Parents, grandparents, and caregivers have an important role. They can make a huge difference in this early brain development. Young children learn best through warm, responsive caregiving. Holding, talking and reading to young children causes connections in the brain to form. A healthy child's brain will eventually form trillions of such connections!

Scientists also tell us that stimulating a young child's brain can be done through such simple acts as singing silly songs, talking about the colors and textures they see in the grocery store, holding and reading to them daily. Simple acts with amazing results!

Questions and Answers

Q. What do I do about my almost 2-year-old who bites and hits other children? Should I hit or bite her back?

A. Never bite or hit your child back. This does not stop this behavior. In fact, it may make her believe that biting is all right. Most children who bite do so for only a short time. Hitting may continue for a longer time than biting.

Sometimes, when young children play together they push, hit, slap or bite. Biting and forceful hitting must be stopped right away. Most children bite and hit when they are feeling angry. When your little one bites you or another child, say firmly, "No, Biting hurts." Move her to a safe place. Look her in the eyes and say, "I cannot let you bite." Help your toddler learn better ways to handle her anger. Teach her to substitute words like "stop that," "go away" or "I don't like that" for hitting and biting. After a minute or two, ask her if she is ready to play again without biting or hitting. If she says yes, let her return to play.

Never bite or hit your child back. This does not stop this behavior. In fact, it may make her believe that biting is all right. Most children who bite do so for only a short time. Hitting may continue for a longer time than biting.

When your little one substitutes words for hurting, praise her with words and hugs and say, "You did a good job of using words instead of hurting." When your daughter learns to express her feelings with words, hitting and biting will decrease.

For more information on biting and other aggressive behavior visit our website: www.HealthyStartAnokaCounty.org.



Sources

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Suggested Reading

For more information on development and care of toddlers we suggest the source books as well as: *Playtime Learning Games for Young Children* by Alice Sterling Honig (1982). New York: Syracuse University Press.

Remember, this fact sheet 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 fact sheet. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your medical provider.

This fact sheet 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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