

The Growing Years

Healthy Start... *where good results begin*

Months 25 and 26

Your Child Wants You to Know

How I Grow:

- I often have to look at my feet to keep from stepping on things that are in my way.
- I like to do things in the same way each day.
- I like to walk by myself. I don't like being carried or pushed in a stroller.
- I can walk backwards for about 10 feet.
- I can jump with both feet off the ground.
- I can balance on one foot for about a second.
- I'm interested in lots of things, but usually just for a few minutes.
- I get into things and make messes.
- I can take lids off jars. Be sure things you don't want me to open have safety caps.
- I may have learned from adults to fear snakes, mice and spiders.

How I Talk:

- I like to learn words that describe things like, big, wet, high, hard.
- I can understand sentences, but I can't say long sentences yet.
- I like books I can point to pictures and name them.
- I usually give information in two or three word sentences like "all dirty," or "go to store," or "that mine."
- I can sing parts of songs or all of very short songs.
- I'm learning what front, back, side, and under mean.
- I am paying more attention now to what people say.
- I can use plurals like dogs, books, cups.
- I can imitate my parents' voices.
- I can talk mostly to myself and adults, not much to other children.

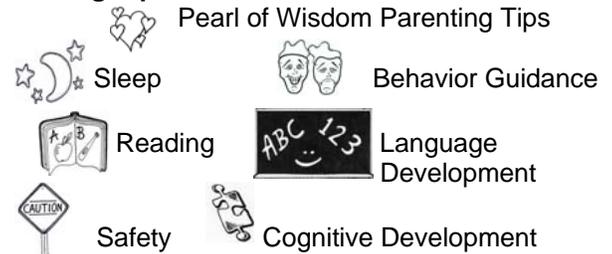
Continued on page 2.

Twos Are Terrific and...

Twos are terrific, tender, trying, taxing, and very, very exciting. Your toddler has come a long way in two short years, and so have you. As a parent of a 2 year old, these are some things you will need this next year:

- Patience to help you cope with your child's mood swings, from very cooperative to highly unreasonable;
- Awareness to help you see that your child's surroundings are safe;
- Loving firmness to help you gently apply rules in a consistent way so your child can learn responsibility and self-sufficiency;
- Humor to help you laugh at yourself and with your child;
- Wonder to help you see your 2 year old as the creative, special person she really is; and
- Enthusiasm to enjoy and celebrate your toddler's many accomplishments during this year.

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



Toddler Talk

Toddlers love learning new words. You can help your toddler learn words by doing some of these ideas when you are together:

- When you go for walks, take along a bag to collect treasures like leaves, rocks, flowers, and pieces of wood. Look at these



treasures and name them when you get back home.

- Repeat the names of thing over and over again, using simple words and short sentences. Talk to your child about what he is doing and what you are doing. Don't use baby talk.
- Let your toddler get things for you. Name what you want and he will even go to other rooms to find it.

Research in Brief: Successful Parenting

We know that what parents do for and with their young children affects their children's development. Dr. Alice Sterling Honig reviewed studies of parenting and child development to find out how parents of competent toddlers behaved with their children. She writes that toddlers who were most competent were the ones whose parents:

- Carefully organized their children's routines.
- Encouraged their children to help a lot with household chores.
- Allowed their children to do some messy things, such as washing dishes.
- Read to their children daily.
- Severely limited and supervised their children's television viewing.
- Observed their children closely to keep them safe and to fit activities to their development level.
- Had firm, consistent household rules and gave children reasons for these rules.
- Saw themselves as teachers of their children and actively helped their children learn.
- Played with their children frequently including pretend play (Honig 1981, pp. 25-26).

Your Child Wants You to Know (Continued)

What I Have Learned:

- I can draw a pretty good circle.
- I understand why some things happen, like turning a switch makes the light come on.
- I'm getting better at remembering and keeping my attention on things.

- I can sometimes understand "today" and "pretty soon" but I don't understand "yesterday."
- I'm beginning to understand the difference between one and two.
- I can sort silverware in a drawer.

How I Get Along With Others:

- I'm good at getting your attention.
- Mostly, I'm still just interested in myself.
- I don't usually share toys or play well with other children my own age.
- I may hit other children, not because I don't like them, but because I just don't know what else to do.
- I stare at other people and like being looked at.
- I may call other children "baby," men "daddy," and women "mommy."
- If you ask me to do something simple, I can usually do it.
- I am now more willing to be away from you.
- I want to do things my own way by myself.
- I say "no" a lot and often do what you want me not to do just to show you how independent I am.
- It helps me to feel important if you admire what I have learned to do.
- I like our routines, like the story and hug you give me before I go to sleep.

What I Can Do for Myself:

- I can use a spoon and fork pretty well. I still spill some.
- Sometimes, I can ask to go to the toilet.
- I like to wash my hands, but not my face.
- I'm ready to learn to brush my teeth, but you will need to help me until I am older and better coordinated.
- I'm still better at undressing than dressing.
- I like to help you put things away and clean things up.

Play I Enjoy:

- I like to talk to myself when I play.
- I like wheel toys like kiddie cars. Be sure I ride these safely.
- I like to play in the bathtub and often don't want to leave it.
- I like stories you tell me about my things and myself.



- I like to run, gallop, and sway to music.
- I like toys that I can pile up or nest or sort by color or size.
- I like to hear favorite songs over and over again.
- I sometimes act silly just to make you laugh.
- I like to paint with large brushes and fingerpaint; I'm pretty messy.

Guidance and Self-Esteem

We all want our children to grow up feeling they are capable and lovable. One of the trickiest and most important skills parents must learn is guiding their children in ways that control unwanted behavior and help the children feel good about themselves. This is hard to do when you are angry and upset because your child is causing a problem. You need practice and a lot of patience at these times so you aren't critical or accusing. Unfortunately, a young child who lives with criticism can begin to feel hopeless, and may stop trying to cooperate. When your child misbehaves, she needs "help-outs: instead of "put-downs." "Help-outs" make her feel you love her and you know she can learn to do better. "Put-downs" do just the opposite.



The following are "help-out" comments:

- Here's a sponge. I'll help you clean it up.
- That's hard to do. Let me do it with you.
- I'm proud of you for doing that. Hold it with both hands next time and it may not fall.
- That is a dangerous thing to do. You could fall. Let me hold your hand.

The following are destructive "put-down" comments.

- I knew that would happen if I let you do it alone.
- Can't you do anything right?
- You're being a brat.
- Why do you always drop things?
- You never pick up your clothes.
- Won't you ever learn?
- Can't you see that's dangerous?

Listen to yourself. Try to substitute "help-outs" for "put-downs."

Watch Out: Prevent Cuts and Scrapes

Small children get minor cuts and scrapes very often. These injuries happen when children fall, run into things or step on sharp objects.

- Do not let your child play where there is sharp-edged furniture.
- Do not let your child play where she can climb to high places.
- Close doors to rooms that are not safe and doors that go out to your yard.
- Put shoes on your child when she runs outdoors.

Health: Regular Health Checkups Are Important

Toddlers grow fast. As they grow, they need regular health checkups. Your child's health examination will give the medical provider an opportunity to spot problems early. This way, problems can be taken care of before any serious or long-term effects occur. The record from the health checkups provides information about your child's health and immunization. You will need this record when you enroll your child in child care, preschool or kindergarten. If your child needs special food, or medication while away from home, the health record gives caregivers the correct medical information. Be sure you keep your health record in a safe place where you can find it easily.



The American Academy of Pediatrics Standards for Child Care recommends that a well-child examination include the following:

- History (which includes a brief developmental assessment)
- Physical examination
- Dental assessment
- Nutritional assessment
- Vision and Hearing tests
- Hemoglobin or hemotocrit test
- Urine test
- Tuberculin test
- Immunizations

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends toddler checkups at about 12 months, 15 months, 24 months, 36 months, and



after age 3 every two years. Of course, if parents or medical providers have special concerns about the child, examinations will be more frequent.

If you do not have a medical provider for your child, ask your local health department (763-422-7030). They can give you the name of a physician or health department clinic where you can get a complete examination.

Toilet Training

During their second year, most children become interested in learning to use the toilet on their own. A potty on the floor that the child can use herself helps her to get started. Learning to use the toilet is important to the child, and of course, to her parents. Give her lots of praise for every success.

Don't scold for accidents. Praise successes. Most children will stop dirtying before they stop wetting. Most will be able to stay dry during the day before they can stay dry at night. Many children cannot stay dry at night until they are about 3 years old. Sometimes, children seem to be toilet trained, and then they start wetting or soiling again. This can happen when they are upset about something like a new baby in the family, pressure from adults to stay dry, overtiredness or family stress. Again, be patient and caring, and praise successes.

Sure, you're eager to be rid of diapers, but if you don't rush toilet training, there will probably be less stress on everyone. Don't start toilet training until your toddler shows she wants to use the toilet. Then it should go quickly and smoothly. Toilet training should not be upsetting to parents or their children. If it is, wait a few weeks and try again.

Nutrition: Televisions Tells Toddlers About Cereals



Has this happened to you yet? You are pushing your grocery cart down the aisles of the grocery store. All of the sudden, your toddler sees a certain brand of breakfast cereal. He begins calling out the name of the cereal. He wants you to buy it. You are amazed. You've never bought that kind of cereal, and he's never eaten it. How did he find out about

it? Probably from television. Toddlers don't seem to pay much attention to television, but they are often aware of what is happening on the screen. Commercials are very appealing because of the action and the noise. The food most often advertised during children's television programs is cereal. Some of these cereals are nutritious, others are not. In fact, some of these cereals have more sugar than cereal in them. They are more like candy than cereal.

How can you tell if a cereal is high in sugar? Look for the list of ingredients on the cereal box. They are listed in order of amounts. The first ingredient is what there is the most of in the cereal. The last ingredient is what there is least of in the cereal. If the first ingredient is sugar, there is more sugar in the cereal than anything else. You will want to choose another cereal lower in sugar.

What do you tell your child when you decide not to buy the cereal? Say "This is a not a 'good-for-you-' cereal. We want to buy a 'good-for-you' cereal to help you grow healthy and strong." Check labels on other cereals and let him choose from the cereals that are low in sugar. If your child is unhappy because you aren't going to buy the cereal he wants, move away from the cereal display. Go on and do the rest of your shopping. You can spend time reading cereal labels when you are shopping alone.

Childhood Obesity

According to recent studies, the incidence of obesity in our children has shown a dramatic increase. While only four states had 14 percent of their children labeled as obese in 1991, 47 states, reported the same number in 1998. People are obese if they weigh significantly more (>20%) than their ideal body weight, the weight that maximizes the life span for a person of a given height.



Our society fosters obesity in children who are genetically predisposed toward the condition. Children are eating more fats and sugars, eating fewer fruits and vegetables, and leading more inactive lives than ever before. The



availability of fast food and snacks and the number of hours spent with television and computers have a direct impact on children's growth and development.

Our beliefs about food and health affect our children's weight as well. Some families view a fat baby as a healthy one; some use food for comfort, reward or bribery. These ideas can support unhealthy food habits. In addition, some young children spend the majority of their day with a caregiver other than their parent, and this person can also influence his or her development.

Why is obesity a problem?

Obesity is dangerous because it can set the stage for adolescent and adult health problems such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol. It is linked with the early onset of puberty.

What can parents do to prevent childhood obesity?

Be aware of and respond to your children's feeding cues. This means paying attention not only to when children are hungry, but when they are full.

Offer nutritious meals and snacks, such as fresh fruit, whole grain breads, leafy greens.

Reduce or eliminate the amount of time your child spends watching television or playing video or computer games.

Model good nutrition. Parents have a profound influence over children's development in the early years, including the formation of eating habits. As parents, we owe it to our children to learn more about nutrition and health and model healthy behavior.

Make active play with your children a daily habit. Daily planned play with children that requires being active indoors and outside, and involves adult family members, can help prevent obesity. Children need aerobic activity daily as well as free play. Try walking, running, marching, dancing, swimming, climbing, or any other activity that makes you breathe harder and makes your heart beat faster. Have fun!

When choosing child care, note that healthy habits are modeled there as well. Make sure that children have active play every day. The preschool years are important for learning movement and developing motor skills. Programs should ideally provide opportunities for active play and for practicing and learning physical skills in safe environments.

Taming Temper Tantrums

Toddlers throw tantrums for many reasons—some big, some small. A square block won't fit a round hole. Shoes feel funny, and socks don't seem to come off right. And to make matters worse, you won't let them climb on top of the kitchen table. Toddlers have tantrums because they get frustrated very easily. Most toddlers have trouble asking for things and expressing their feelings. Toddlers also have very few problem-solving skills. Tantrums are most likely to happen when toddlers are hungry, exhausted, or over-excited.

How to Handle a Tantrum:

- Try to Remain Calm: Shaking, spanking or screaming at a child only tends to make the tantrum worse instead of better. Set a positive example for children by remaining in control of yourself and your emotions.
- Pause before you act. Take at least thirty seconds to decide how you will handle the tantrum. Four possible ways to deal with a tantrum include:
 - **Distract-** try to get the child's attention focused on something else. If he screams when you take him away from something unsafe (like your purse), offer him something else to play with.
 - **Remove-** take the child to a quiet, private place to calm down. This should be a quiet "cooling down" place that is away from other children.
 - **Ignore-** older children will sometimes throw tantrums to get attention. Try ignoring the tantrum and going about your business as usual.
 - **Hold-** holding an "out of control" child calmly is sometimes necessary to keep him from hurting himself or



someone else. You might also say something like "I can see you are angry right now, and I am going to hold you until you calm down. I won't let you hurt me or anyone else." Often this approach can be comforting to a child. Children do not like to be out of control. It scares them.

- **Wait until the child calms down** – then talk. It's difficult to reason with a screaming child. Insist on a "cooling down" period and follow up with a discussion about behavior. Use this opportunity to teach the child "okay" ways to handle anger and difficult situations. With practice, children can learn how to ask for help, when to go somewhere to cool off, how to try more successful ways of doing something, and how to express feelings with words.
- **Comfort and reassure the child.** Tantrums really scare most kids. Often, they are not sure why they feel so angry and feel rather shaken when it is all over. They need to know that you disapprove of their behavior, but that you still love them.

Tantrums are a normal part of growing up. All children will have them sometime or another.

For more information on dealing with temper tantrums and power struggles visit our website at www.HealthyStartAnokaCounty.org.

Be Good to Yourself: When You're All Tied Up In Knots

Stress can make your body feel bad. Over the long term, stress can cause physical damage. Over the short term, you may feel headaches, tight muscles, backaches, or a stiff neck. Here are some exercises you can do any time to relieve the physical effects of stress:

- Sometimes stress makes us breathe poorly and we don't get enough oxygen. Deep breathing can make you feel better, and it can give you a sort of "time-out" to help you handle whatever is causing the stress. Close your eyes and sit up straight. Breathe in, slowly and deeply. Count silently to two, hold the air in for another count, then let the air out slowly. Repeat this slow, deep breathing for five or 10

minutes if you can. You should be more relaxed when you finish.

- When your muscles are sore but you don't have time to go swimming or walking, try these exercises wherever you are. Try to raise your shoulders up to your ears. Hold for a few seconds, then drop your shoulders back down. Repeat a few times. Try rotating your shoulders around, one at a time, then together. With your shoulders relaxed, move your head slowly from side to side, then around in a circle. Make sure to keep breathing deeply while you exercise.

Games For Growing

What's Your Name?

Purpose of the Game: To give your child practice saying his first and last name

and to help him feel good about himself.



How to Play: When you are with your child, say his name to him in songs and stories, using his last name, too. Make up games where he tells his name. Show him how much you enjoy it when he names himself in his photographs.

Happy Face Colors

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn to solve problems and to match colors.

Materials:

- Sheet of cardboard about 16 by 11 inches or one regular-sized manila file folder.
- Ten sheets of different colored paper or 10 different colored crayons to color white paper.
- Pencil
- Drinking glass
- Scissors
- Child-safe glue (Check the bottle to be sure it says nontoxic or child-safe.)
- Marker pen for drawing simple faces

How to Make the Game:

- Make your happy face circles by drawing around a water glass.
- Make two circles of each color of paper or color two circles with each crayon.



- You will have 10 pairs of circles, each pair a different color. Draw happy faces with eyes open on one set of circles.
- On the matching circles, draw happy faces with eyes closed.
- Cut out all of the circles, stack them in two separate piles, one with eyes all open, one with eyes all closed.
- Glue all of the happy faces with open eyes to the cardboard or to the file folder. Put the happy faces with closed eyes in an envelope.

How to Play: Place the happy face cardboard or opened manila folder in front of your child on the floor, or at a table. One by one, give the child different colored happy face circles. Encourage him to put each one on the same colored happy face glued to the cardboard. Say the name of the color as your child puts each happy face on the correct color. When all the faces have been matched, have your child pick up the happy face circles one by one and hand them back to you. Say the color of each circle as your child hands it back to you.

Fun-Drummer

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn about different sounds and rhythms and to build coordination.

How to Play: Show your child how to make different drumming sounds by hitting things with a wooden spoon. He can hit a pan, a chair, the floor, his shoe, a bottle, and so forth. You can take turns leading the game, with each of you hitting one thing after another in sequence. You can also try drumming to or singing to music, or you can mix fast and slow drumming sounds.

Homemade Toys that Teach: A Feelie Bag

Children learn by touching things around them. They learn that some things are soft, and some are hard, some cool, and others warm. Some things are rough and some smooth, some light, and some heavy. This toy can help your toddler learn to tell one kind of feel from another.

Materials:

- Paper bag
- Assorted small objects to feel
- Crayon

Making the Toy:

Write your child's name in large letters with crayon on the paper bag. This lets her know that the bag is hers and gives her the idea of writing. Choose some things she might enjoy feeling, and put them in a bag. Examples would be a smooth rock, a rough rock, a piece of wood, a piece of paper egg carton, some pieces of cloth, a feather, and so on. Be sure the things you put in the bag are not sharp or dangerous.

Playing: Close the top of the bag, leaving a hole just big enough for the child's hand. Ask your toddler to reach in and to find something soft or hard or smooth or rough. Ask her what she has found and help her learn to say "I have found something rough" or "I have found something hard." You can turn this into a guessing game. Have your toddler reach in and touch something. Have her say "I have found something hard. What is it?" Then take turns guessing, this is a good game for two or three children to play together. Your toddler can help you change the game by putting different things in the bag.

Questions and Answers

Q. My son is 2 ½ and still sucks his thumb. Is this OK?

A. Yes, thumb sucking is a very common behavior of children under 4 years old. It's one way a young child has to comfort himself. Many medical providers believe that if you keep a child from sucking his thumb or fingers, he may develop sleeping problems or wet his bed. Thumb sucking usually disappears on its own, especially if the child is not pressured to give it up.

Most children stop sucking their thumbs on their own between the ages of 2 and 4-years-old. The behavior lessens gradually during this time, as children spend more of their waking hours exploring their surroundings.



If a child does not stop of his own, parents should discourage the habit after age 4. However, excessive pressure to stop can do more harm than good.

- Instead of scolding the child for thumb sucking, offer praise for not doing so.
- Children often suck their fingers when feeling insecure. Focus on correcting the cause of the anxiety and comfort the child.

- Reward the child when he avoids thumb sucking during a difficult period, such as being separated from family members. The dentist can also encourage the child to stop sucking his thumb and explain what could happen to teeth if it continues.

Sources

"A Guide for Home Care and Prevention of Childhood Injuries," (1986). North County Health Services, Maternal and Child Health Department, San Marcos, California. Reprints by permission.

Ames, L.B. and F.L. (1976). *Your Two-Year-Old: Terrible or Tender*. New York: Dell Publishing Co. Inc.

Caplan. T. and F. Caplan (1983). *The Early Childhood Years: The Two- to Six-Year-Old*. New York: Bantam Books.

Honig, A.S. (1981). "Infants: Their Social Environments." *Recent Infancy Research*, B. Weissbourd & J. Musick (Eds). Washington, D.C., National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Lally, J.R. and I.J. Gordon (1977). *Learning Games for Infants and Toddlers*. New York: New Readers Press, Publishing Division of Laubach Literacy International. Reprinted by permission.

Lamberts, M. (1980). *Young Parent*. Cooperative Extension, Washington State.

White, B.L. (1985). *The First Three Years of Life*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Press.

Oesterreich, Leisa (1995), *Guidance and Discipline*, National Network for Child Care, Iowa State University Extension.

Graphics: Created and donated by Glen O. Jungamann and www.designedtoat.com.

Contributors

Happy Face Colors: Donna Daly, family day care provider.

Nutrition: Joanne Ikeda, M.A., R.D., nutrition education specialist, University of California Cooperative Extension.

Childhood Obesity: Gail Gonzalez, RN, California Childcare Health Program 10/01

Health: Joan Fenske, R.N., D.N.S., California Department of Health Services.

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 doctor.

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.

This developmental fact sheet was adapted and reprinted with permission from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension's Bulletin #4236, *The Growing Years*, Months 25 & 26. Produced for educational purposes by Healthy Start, Anoka County, Minnesota.

