

The Growing Years

Healthy Start...where good results begin

Months 31 and 32

Your Child Wants You To Know

How I Grow:

- I can walk on tiptoe pretty well now.
- I can walk upstairs alternating feet, but when I come downstairs alone I usually put both feet on each step.
- I can kick a ball pretty well.
- I like bedtime rituals; I don't like it when you change them.

How I Talk:

- I can say my full name easily.
- I make four- or five-word sentences like "Get some for me," "Get out of my way."
- I use "I" instead of my name when I refer to myself.
- I enjoy rhyming words, and I'm interested in how words sound.
- I can tell you where things are, like where birds live, where the table is, where my bed is.
- When I am 3 years old, I will understand almost all the words I'll ever use in ordinary speech but won't yet be able to say all these words.

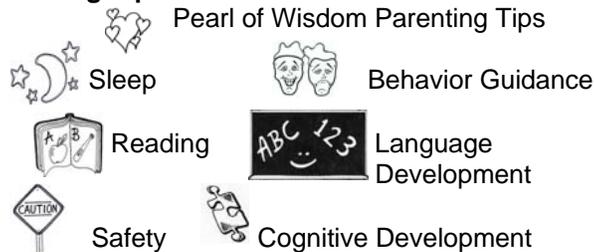
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Your Child Enjoys Special Adults

Have you noticed how much your child enjoys other special adults: grandparents, aunts, uncles, older friends, and neighbors? Parents are the most important adults in a child's life, but a child learns from other caring adults that he can trust, love and enjoy. They make your child's world more varied, interesting, and exciting. Each one has something important and different to share and teach.

Your toddler needs these adult relationships. Do all you can to encourage them. They are a precious part of your child's life.

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



Toddler Talk: I'm Learning about Sounds and Weights



- Let me hold heavy and light things. Use the words "heavy" and "light" when you tell me about them so I can learn the difference. Ask me to pick up the heavy thing or the light thing so I can practice what I have learned.
- Help me learn about the sounds of things. Ask me to close my eyes. Ring a bell, shake a rattle or jingle some coins, and let me guess what is making the sound.

Try on Your Child's View of the World

Sometimes, it's easier to understand and guide toddlers if we try to see the world as they see it. Most of us don't remember what it was like to be a toddler, so we have to use our imaginations.

Jimmy has just learned he can hit two pans together and make a beautiful, loud noise. Is your first thought to stop the terrible noise or to show him your pleasure with his new discovery? Jimmy loves to learn. Encourage this learning now.

It is not always easy to set aside your own feeling to appreciate your toddler's



achievements, but try it. You may find it makes life with your child richer and more pleasant for both of you.

Your Child Wants You to Know (Continued)

What I Have Learned:

- I'm good at matching shapes on a form board.
- I'm learning about sequence, like "When daddy comes home, then we eat," or "After I have a bath, I go to bed."

How I Get Along With Others:

- I may order others around or threaten to hit them if they don't do what I say.
- Once in a while, I can be kind and polite with other children.
- I have trouble getting along with my brothers and sisters.
- When I want something, I really want it, but sometimes I can't make up my mind about what I want.

What I Can Do For Myself:

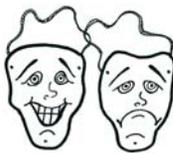
- I am beginning to control my bowel and bladder movements during the day. I probably won't be able to control them at night until I am 3 or 4 years old.
- I can button my clothes.
- By the time I'm 3 years old, I'll probably be able to pick out and put on my own clothes.

Play I Enjoy:

- I like to pretend play, like feeding my toy bear or sweeping the floor.
- I like to play with clay; I can make long snakes.
- I like to make blockhouses, and I like knocking them down.

Discipline Is Not Punishment

When children misbehave we need to stop them, let them know what they have done wrong and tell them why it is wrong. Most importantly, we need to teach them the right thing to do. When we punish children, we expect to make them suffer physically or emotionally in "payment" for doing something



wrong. Punishment usually does stop the unwanted behavior for a while, but it tends to have other effects that can cause problems. Punishment may cause children to fight back with aggressive or more naughty behavior. It may teach them that they can do what they want as long as they are willing to "pay the price" of punishment. They could come to feel like "bad" children, unloved and unlovable and give up trying to please you. More importantly, punishment usually does not help children know what they should do; only what they should not do. It does not guide or teach. It does not build a sense of personal responsibility.

A young child who has done something wrong may simply not know what he should have done differently. If Johnny throws a toy truck at his sister because she won't let him play with her ball, he needs to learn why he should not throw trucks. He also needs to learn how to manage without having the ball. This calls for guidance, not punishment. Of course you need to keep Johnny from throwing trucks. You also need to tell him in simple words why he should not throw the truck and how he can play with other toys until it is his turn to play with the ball. If you are patient and persistent, Johnny will learn eventually to cooperate. Punishment alone could not have taught him this.

Health: Developmental Assessments

How do we know if our toddlers are learning what they need to become healthy and normal children? A developmental assessment measures the progress of toddlers as they learn to walk, feed themselves, listen to stories and understand them, say words, ask for toys and follow simple directions. The purpose of a developmental assessment is to review the toddlers' skills with the skills of children of similar ages and backgrounds. This helps in identifying possible developmental delays. Even though there are normal variations in children's development, infants and toddlers tend to learn similar tasks at similar ages. If a toddler lags behind, she may have a problem that requires special help.



in control of your life. Here are some techniques for problem solving. You can work on them alone or with another person.

- Start by choosing one problem to work on. Pick a problem that you can identify exactly. Maybe it will be a problem that always happens at a certain time or with a certain person. An example might be that you can't look for a job because you don't have any child care.
- Gather all the information you can about your problem. Think about what seems to cause the problem, what happens when the problem comes up, and how you would know if the problem was solved. Think about all the possible ways you could solve the problem. For example, you could ask someone to help with child care in exchange for a service you can offer them.
- Pick the solution that is most possible. Maybe you can afford to pay a babysitter for just a few hours if you know in advance when a job interview is scheduled.
- Decide exactly what you're going to do. Think about the steps you must take to make the solution work. Maybe you need to find a babysitter first, and then ask an employment counselor to help you arrange interviews on a certain time schedule. Write down the steps. Plan a time in the future when you can take another look at the problem and decide whether you've solved it.

Solving problems one at a time may seem slow, but each problem you solve makes your stress a little smaller. Each one helps you feel more in charge of your life.

Sun Safety: Family Protection Year Round

- Seek the shade, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Do not burn.
- Avoid tanning and UV tanning booths.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day for all children over 6 months of age.
- Apply 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside.



- Reapply every two hours or after swimming or excessive sweating, even if the label on the sunscreen says it's waterproof.
- Don't forget the nose, lips, ears and backs of hands and feet.
- Cover up with clothing, including a broad-brimmed hat and UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Wearing a white t-shirt isn't good enough- a wet light colored shirt transmits almost as much light to a child as his or her bare skin.
- Wear dark colors with long sleeves and pants whenever possible.
- Keep newborns and babies under 6 months out of the sun. Sunscreens may be used on babies over the age of six months. Babies need hats, long sleeves and sunglasses, too!

Help Your Child Get Off to a Good Start in a Child Care Program

Leaving your child in child care or preschool for the first time may be hard for both of you. Your child will face new adults, new children, new places, new things, new routines, and new limits. She is used to your comfort, help and protection. She may be scared about being alone and angry with you for leaving her. You may be worried that the teachers won't care for your child the way you would, or that she will embarrass you by crying or misbehaving. These feelings are normal responses to beginning something new. Some planning may reduce them.

You have taken the first step by carefully selecting child care that you think is right for your child. You have found child care workers whom you like and can begin to trust. Now you should talk with your child about what is going to happen. She may not understand everything you say, but she certainly will pick up your feelings of confidence. If possible, visit the program with your child before her first full day. Let her watch and explore with your help and protection.

Talk with the teacher about your child before she begins the program. Tell the teacher about your child's eating and sleeping schedule, allergies, and other health concerns. You will want to talk about what upsets your child and how she can be comforted.



On the day your child starts in the program, be sure you bring all the forms, clothes, equipment, and food that the teachers request. Bring one of your child's favorite things, such as a stuffed animal, a blanket, or a toy car. Arrive a few minutes early so you can talk with the caregiver, put away your child's things, and sit with your child to watch what is going on. With a calm face and hugs and kisses, say "Goodbye" when it is time to leave. Tell her when you will return.

Of course your child may cry, or scream, or kick or retreat to a corner with her thumb in her mouth. She may like this place, but she wants you with her and needs to say so. Even though it is very hard, keep walking. Remember that you trust the teacher and trust your child. It may help to call the teacher in an hour to learn how your child is doing.

When you pick up your child, greet her with warmth and words that show you know it was hard for her. Tell her that you are proud that she made it through the day. Don't be surprised if she is both glad to see you and mad that you left her.

Learning how to say "goodbye" to people we love is difficult. Most of us struggle with this all our lives. This may be your child's first experience in saying "goodbye" to you on a daily basis, and it will take time for you both to learn how to do this easily.

Long after your child can say "goodbye" without tears or anger, she may show signs of this stress when she is with you. Children often are angels at school (where they want to please these new adults) and are terrors at home (because you are safe, and home is where she can blow off steam). After starting child care, some children need more time curled up in their parents' laps or to suck their thumb. These behaviors will change as your child becomes more comfortable in the child care program.

You can help most by trusting the caregiver's ability to teach, care for, and comfort your child. Trust your child's ability to learn these new and difficult skills. Trust yourself and the decisions

you have made about the caregiver. Remember that you are helping your child learn how to adjust to changes that may be frightening. We all need to learn how to do this!

Raising Confident Kids

It takes confidence to be a child. Whether going to a new child care or stepping up to bat at T-ball for the first time, kids face a lot of uncharted territory.

Naturally, parents want to instill a can-do attitude in their kids so that they'll bravely take on new challenges, and over time, believe in themselves. While each child is a little different, parents can follow some guidelines to build kids' confidence.

Self-confidence rises out of sense of competence. In other words, kids develop confidence not because their parents tell them they're great, but because of their achievements, big and small. Sure, it's good to hear encouraging words from mom and dad. But words of praise mean more when they refer to a child's specific efforts or new abilities.

When kids achieve something, whether it's brushing their own teeth or riding a bike, they get a sense of themselves as able and capable, and tap into that high-octane fuel of confidence.

Building self-confidence can begin very early. When babies learn to turn the pages of a book or toddlers learn to jump, they are getting the idea "I can do it!" With each new skill and milestone, kids can develop increasing confidence.

Parents can help by giving kids lots of opportunities to practice and master their skills, letting kids make mistakes and being there to boost their spirits so they keep trying. Respond with interest and excitement when kids show off a new skill, and reward them with praise when they achieve a goal or make a good effort.



Of course, supervision is important to ensure that children stay safe. But to help them learn a new skill, it's also important not to hover. Give kids the opportunity to try something new, make mistakes and learn from them.

For instance, if your son wants to learn how to make a peanut butter sandwich, demonstrate, set up the ingredients, and let him give it a try. Will he make a bit of a mess? Almost certainly. But don't swoop in the second some jelly hits the countertop. In fact, avoid any criticism that could discourage him from trying again. If you step in to finish the sandwich, your son will think, "Oh, well, I guess I can't make sandwiches."

But if you have patience for the mess and the time it takes to learn, the payoff will be real. Someday soon he'll be able to say "I'm hungry for lunch, so I'm going to make my own sandwich." You might even reply, "Great, can you make me one, too?" What a clear sign of your faith in his abilities!

Beyond 1, 2, 3...

Enriching a child's interest and knowledge in math has little to do with structured math activities. The best way to help a child learn is to nurture and stimulate natural abilities, not turn the dining room into a classroom.



As a parent, you are your child's first teacher, and you have the unique opportunity to introduce activities that can build on your child's natural abilities. Children learn best from hands-on experiences, by imitating and expanding on their ideas. Casual, everyday activities can have a dramatic impact on your child's interest in learning.

Opportunities for children to explore and develop math concepts occur naturally throughout daily routines and activities. Mealtime can be a math learning experience. At dinner time you may count how many peas are on your child's spoon or how many parts her sandwich has been cut into.

Children become intrigued when we give them daily opportunities to associate numbers with concepts such as length, quantity, time, space, and money. They learn math concepts by telling how old they are. Children hold up their fingers indicating their age. When you pay attention to their personal numbers such as their age and phone number, your child's interest will be sparked.

Chances are you have included your child in more math activities than you are even aware. In turn, you have introduced concepts of space, time, and number. Every time you do something, math plays a part. Give your child a chance to see how. Watch for clues from the child. Your comments will be most helpful when a child shows an interest in numbers.

You can help make the most of these opportunities by encouraging a child's curiosity and problem solving. This doesn't require buying packaged parent/child interaction programs. Quality education need not come from a box with a big price tag. It comes from the loving interaction of parents and children sharing stories, work, play and life. Time, patience, and positive reinforcement cannot be purchased.

Homemade Toys That Teach Egg Carton Fun

Purpose: This toy can help toddlers learn about shapes and colors, and teach them to understand similarities and differences.

Materials:

- Cardboard egg carton (don't use styrofoam: children can easily break off and swallow pieces)
- Poster paint or crayons
- Magazine pictures

Making the Toys: Color the inside cups of an egg carton different colors with crayon or with watercolor paints. Use bright colors: red, blue, green, yellow. Cut circles out of cardboard small enough to fit into the cups. Color the circles with colors that match the painted cups.

Playing: Place the circles on the table or floor. Ask your toddler to put the circles in the cup of



the same color: the red circle in the red cup, the blue circle in the blue cup, and so on.

Children can learn the names of objects with a different egg carton game. Put pictures of things cut out of magazines into each egg carton cup. Choose pictures of things familiar to your child such as a dog, house, car, cup, ball or tree. Be sure your child knows the name of each item. Ask him to find them and take them out as you name them.

To teach shapes, you can paste or color a triangle, a square, a circle, a diamond and a star inside different cups. Hand your toddler a set of these shapes and ask him to match the shapes to those in the cups. For an older toddler, you can print numbers or letters in each egg carton cup. Hand him a set of numbers or letters on cards for matching.

Games for Growing

Surprise Path

Purpose of the Game: To encourage your child's physical development and to help her learn how to follow a path.

How to Play: This game can be played indoors or out. When you child isn't looking, make a path marked out in some way by a rope, chalk, garden hose or ribbon. Be creative. Lay out the path so it goes around in circles, over rocks, upstairs, under boards and tables, through tunnels and so on. Let your child follow the path alone or you and she can take turns leading each other.

Copy Cat

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn and practice body movements and increase her ability to observe.

How to Play: This game can be played indoors or out. Stand facing your child and make different body movements for her to imitate, such as jumping, bending, turning, stretching, hopping. Take turns leading the game. Other family members can join in to add to the fun.

Doesn't Belong

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn about similarities and differences and to increase his observation skills.

How to Play: Draw four or five pictures or cut out four or five shapes that are all alike except one. Start with pictures or shapes obviously different, such as four pictures of trees and one picture of a house or four red triangles and one white circle. Later you can make "different" pictures more like the others; for example, four dogs and a cat or four small red triangles and one large red triangle. Ask your child to show you the one that is different from the others. Take turns. You can also play this with actual objects found around the house and in the yard, such as four bottle caps and a rock, four spoons and a fork, four red flowers and a white one.

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



Pearl of Wisdom Fingerplays

Up To The Ceiling

Up to the ceiling (raise hands up)
Down to the floor (put hands down)
Left to the window (point left with the left hand)
Right to the door (point right to the door)
This is my right hand –
Raise it up high (raise right hand)
This is my left hand
Reach for the sky (raise up left hand, while right is still up)
Right hand, left hand (twirl hands one over another)
Twirl them around.
Left hand, right hand
Round, round, round. (continue to twirl hands)



Rain Fingerplay

Pitter Pat, pitter pat (drum fingers on floor)

The rain goes on for hours.

And though it keeps me in the house,

It's very (hold hands palm up and close into fists in front of you)

Good for (open fists)

Flowers. (lift hands imitating flower growing up)

Questions and Answers

Q. My little boy sometimes lies to me, and yesterday he stole a toy from his cousin's room. What should I do?

A. Children your son's ages do not understand about lying or stealing. It is common for them to say things that may not be true and to take things they want even if these things do not belong to them. Your son is not trying to misbehave. What he needs from you now is gently teaching, not punishment. Tell him you do not want him saying things that are not true or taking things that are not his. Explain why this is so. Let your son return the toy he took. Do what you can to keep him from taking other

things. When he lies to you, remind him that you want him to be truthful. Do not call your child a liar or a thief. He could come to believe these labels and feel there is nothing he can do to change. Moreover, he might begin to feel special and decide he does not want to change. Your child is learning about right and wrong.

He is find out the difference between make believe (which may become lying) and reality. He is learning that he cannot get what he wants by taking it. This kind of learning and self-control takes time. You will probably find you are helping him with it for the next couple years. Be patient, firm and loving. Show him that you do not lie or steal. In time, your son will come to imitate you, not because he's afraid of punishment, but because he wants to do what is right.

For more information on children learning the difference between reality and make believe and/or lying, visit our website:
www.HealthyStartAnokaCounty.org

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

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

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