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## SP418-T-Healthy Children: 23 -24 Months

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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# Healthy Children Ready to Learn

## 23 AND 24 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . . 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 his towel up. Shower 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.

Remember, HEALTHY CHILDREN 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 HEALTHY CHILDREN. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your doctor.

# WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 23 AND 24 MONTHS OLD?



## How I Grow

- I can pedal a small tricycle.
- I can throw a ball into a waste-basket.
- I can walk down stairs alone, both feet on one step at a time, holding onto 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 can name almost everything that I see often, such as things in my house, my preschool or my neighborhood.
- 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 eight blocks.

## 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 use words like, "it's mine," "I don't like it," "go away," "I won't" and "no" a lot.

## What I Can Do for Myself

- I can take off all my clothes, and I can put most of my clothes back on.
- I like to 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 enjoy making a mess with soft modeling clay.

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# Homemade Toys That Teach

## A Shape Board

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

### Materials

- Cardboard sheet about 8 1/2 by 11 inches
- A bright colored crayon
- White paper

### Making the Toy

Draw and color in simple shapes on the cardboard with 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, the 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.

## Daily Experiences Promote Learning

What kinds 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, 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 on the task with the child in labeling, describing, comparing, classifying and questioning support (the child's) intellectual development."

# HEALTH: Hib Immunization for Toddlers



Each year in the United States, thousands of children suffer from Hib meningitis, which is an inflammation of the covering of the brain caused by Hib bacteria. The disease is commonly called spinal

meningitis. It can cause brain damage and is believed to be one of the most common causes of mental retardation in young children who were normal at birth.

The Hib bacteria is spread from person to person. Hib meningitis can strike any child, but children who attend child care centers and have contact with more children are at greater risk than children who stay at home.

It is recommended that children receive this Hib meningitis vaccine at two, four and six months, with a booster dose at 15 months. If your child has not received this immunization, you should contact your doctor or clinic and make arrangements for your child to receive the vaccine.

## 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. I won’t really be able to sing until I’m closer to 3 years old.
- Let me smell some sweet smelling spices like cloves, curry powder, cinnamon. Watch me closely so I don’t eat them.
- Look at the sky at night with me. Point out the clouds, the moon, the stars.
- Keep me interested in my toys by dividing them into two boxes and switching boxes every week.

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# Be Good to Yourself

## Good Parent — Bad Parent

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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 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 okay, 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.

## GAMES FOR GROWING

### COLOR LEARNING

#### *Purpose of the Game*

The purpose is to help your child learn to match colors and begin to learn their names.

#### *How to Play*

- Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or sofa facing your child.
- 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 to 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.

### 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 to-

gether 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.



## Get Ready for Toilet Training

Most girls are ready for toilet training at about age 2, most boys at about 2 1/2 years of age. 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 diapers wet” or “You had a BM (or pooped or bowel movement).” Show him and tell him the word for the toilet or potty chair you will want him to use.

Some children will let you know when they need to go to the toilet by saying the words, pulling your hand or tugging at their diaper. When they are ready for training, it helps to dress them in loose-fitting training pants they can pull off easily.

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.

## Nutrition New Foods Are Strange Foods

It isn't easy for a toddler 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 four or five tries before a toddler will even taste the new food.

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

## 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 car safety seat every time your child is in the car. Buckle the safety seat in the back seat of the car with the car's seat belt. Never leave your little one alone in the car.

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# “I’m So Glad You Asked!”

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## Toddlers Learn About Sex

Your toddler is learning fast. You love his curiosity and you encourage his questions because you know it means he is alert, enthusiastic, and competent. Do you encourage his curiosity about sex?

Sexuality is important. Naturally your toddler will have questions about where babies come from and why boys and girls are physically different from each other. Sure, these questions can be embarrassing, especially when they come when you are in public, but whenever you see your little one curious or confused about sex, you have a very precious opportunity. You can show your toddler you admire his curiosity and you want him to learn about all kinds of important things, including sex.

If you can talk to your child now about sex, it will be much easier for both of you to talk about it later, as he grows and as his sexual attitudes and behavior become more important to him and to his relationships with others.

You can expect your toddler to wonder about babies and where they come from. Tell him the truth in words that he can understand, something like “Babies grow in a special place inside the mother’s body.” Show him you are glad he asked the question. If he

asks how babies get inside the mother, you may simply say that babies are made by mothers and fathers together. You could explain that the father’s sperm come into the mother through the father’s penis.

Your child’s early sexual concerns and questions may be about the differences between men and women. Little girls may wonder why they have no penis; boys may worry that they could lose their penis. You can help your child learn that boys and girls are born with different genitals. Your toddler should know the correct names for his body’s sexual parts. Teach him these as you teach him the names of other body parts.

All young children handle their genitals. Normal children like to explore all parts of their bodies. When they handle their genitals and find that this feels good, they may rub them. They may masturbate when they feel bored or upset.

Some masturbation does no harm. It is normal and it is best for you to ignore it. If you try to stop it and tell your children that it is bad, they may feel bad that they are naughty, or that sex or sexual feelings are bad.

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### Bedtime Talk

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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. You are practicing for these conversations with your bedtime talks. Some nights you may be in a hurry and skip your talk. Don’t be surprised if your child says, “You forgot to talk to me about today and tomorrow.”

If you have questions or comments, please contact your Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent at your county Agricultural Extension office.

# Q&A

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, "Stay here until you feel calmer. I cannot let you bite." 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 her play.

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

Never bite or hit your daughter back. This does not stop the 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.

Help your toddler learn better ways to handle her anger. Teach her to substitute words like "stop that," "go away," "I don't like that" for hitting and biting.

When your little one substitutes words for hurting, praise her with words and hugs and say, "You did a

 PARENTS  
COMMUNITIES  
**Healthy Children Ready to Learn**

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good job of using words instead of hurting." As your daughter learns to express her feelings in words, hitting and biting will decrease.

## RESOURCES

### From a Bookstore or Library

*Raising a Happy Unspoiled Child* by Burton L. White, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1994.

*Touchpoints: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development* by T. Berry Brazelton, Perseus Publishing, New York, 1992.

*What to Expect; The Toddler Years* by Arlene Eisenberg, et al., Workman Publishing Co., New York, 1996.

*Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) by Elyn Satter, Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 2000.

*How to Get Your Kids to Eat . . . But Not Too Much* by Elyn Satter, Bull Publishing Co., Palo Alto, CA, 1987.

### From the Extension Office

*What You Should Know About Lead and Children*, SP421, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 1994.

*Learning About Young Children*, PB1412, by Anna Mae Kobbe, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 1993.

*Child Guidance Techniques*, PB1161, by Denise J. Brandon and Clint E. Cummings, The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 2002.

*Babysitters: When You Are Not at Home*, SP305, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 1990.

*Selecting a Quality Child Care Center*, SP455, by Ron Daly and Eliza Dean, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 1995.

*Selecting a Quality Family Child Care Home*, SP456, by Ron Daly and Eliza Dean, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 1995.

### From the Internet

[www.utextension.utk.edu](http://www.utextension.utk.edu)

[www.cyfernet.org](http://www.cyfernet.org)

[www.iamyourchild.org](http://www.iamyourchild.org)

[www.civitas.org](http://www.civitas.org)

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

[www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/](http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/)

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