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SP418-U-Healthy Children: 25-26 Months

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UT Extension
SP418-U

PARENTS COMMUNITIES

Healthy Children Ready to Learn

25 AND 26 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . .

Twos are terrific!

Twos are terrific, tender, trying, taxing and very, very exciting. Your little one 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.
- **Enthusiasm** to enjoy and celebrate your toddler's many accomplishments during this year.

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.

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE UT
INSTITUTE of AGRICULTURE

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.

Regular Checkups Are Important!

Toddlers grow fast. As they grow, they need regular health checkups. Your child's health examination will give the doctor 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 healthy checkups provides information about your child's health and immunizations. You will need this record when you enroll your child in child care, Headstart 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:

- Health and growth history
- Physical examination
- Dental assessment
- Nutritional assessment
- Vision and hearing test
- Recommended lab tests
- Immunizations
- Developmental Screenings

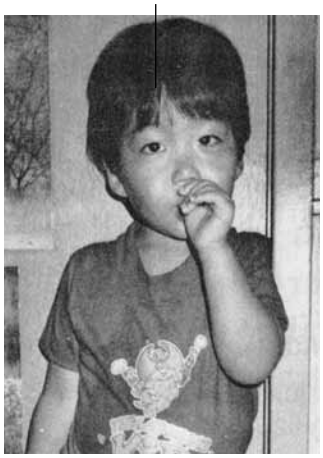
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends toddler checkups at about 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, 30 months, 36 months, and yearly through age 21. Of course if parents or doctors have special concerns about the child, examinations will be more frequent.

If you do not have a doctor for your child, ask your local health department. They can give you the name of a physician or health department clinic where you can get a complete examination.

Q&A

My son is 2 1/2 and still sucks his thumb. Is this okay?

Yes, thumb sucking is a very common behavior of children under 6 years old. It's one way a young child has to comfort himself. Many doctors believe that if you keep a child from sucking his thumb or fingers, he may develop sleeping problems or begin to wet his bed. Thumb sucking usually disappears on its own, especially if the child is not pressured to give it up.



Sometimes parents pull thumbs and fingers out of their young children's mouths because they are worried about dental problems. Dental problems do not usually occur until the child's permanent teeth erupt at 5 or 6 years of age. Even then, there may be no ill effects from casual thumb sucking. If you are worried about your child's thumb sucking, keep track of how often he sucks and for how long. Take these notes for several days. This record will help you and your doctor or dentist discuss the situation and decide what to do about it.

Toilet Training: Don't rush it!

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 the children are upset about something like a new baby in the family, pressure from adults to stay dry or family stress. Again, be patient and caring and praise successes.

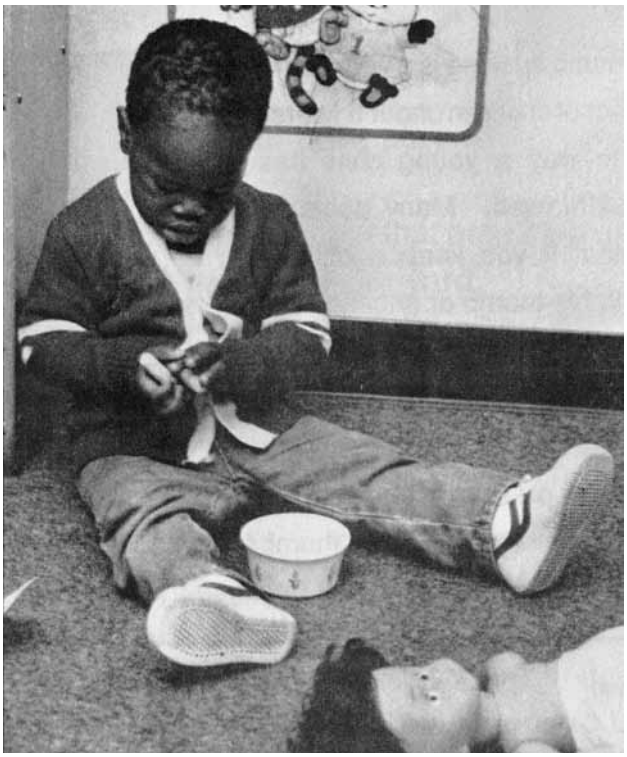
Sure, you're eager to be rid of diapers, but if you don't rush toilet training, there will probably be less stress on everyone. Don't start toilet training until your toddler shows she wants to use the toilet. Then it should go quickly and smoothly. Toilet training should not be upsetting to parents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

HEALTHY CHILDREN *gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." When we use gender terms, we're including ALL children.*

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 2 1/2?

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 high, big, wet and 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," "go to store" and "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 talk mostly to myself and adults, not much to other children.

What I Have Learned

- I can draw a pretty good circle.
- I understand why some things happen, like turning on 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 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 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 myself and my things.
- 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 paint brushes and finger paint; I'm pretty messy.

GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

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 naughty behavior and help the children feel good about themselves. This is hard to do when you are angry or upset because your child is causing a problem. You need practice and a lot of patience at these times not to be critical or accusing. Unfortunately, a young child who lives with criticism can come 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 trying 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 downs":

- 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?

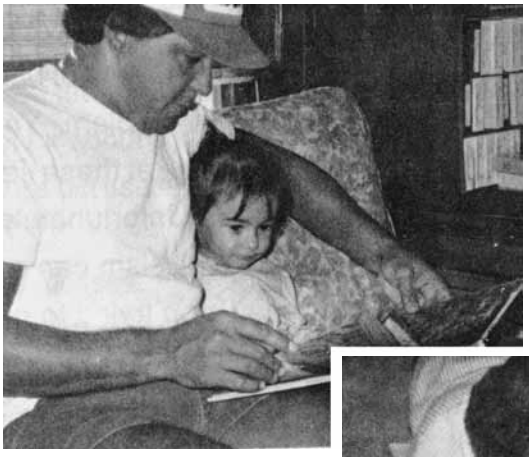
Listen to yourself. Try to substitute "help outs" for "put downs."

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 Needed

- Sheet of cardboard about 16 by 11 inches or regular size 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 file folder in front of your child on the floor or at a table.

One by one, give him 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.

HOMEMADE TOYS that TEACH

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 hard" or "I have found something rough."

You can turn this into a guessing game. Have your toddler reach in and touch something. Have her say, " I have found something soft. What is it?" or "I have found something hard. What is it?" Then you guess what it is. You can 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.

WHAT TO DO . . .

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 5 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.

If you have any questions or comments please contact the Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent at your county UT Extension office.

Successful Parenting

We know that what parents do for and with their young children shapes 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 developmental 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.

HEALTHY CHILDREN READY TO LEARN was originally developed as the Parent Express series by the University of California Cooperative Extension Service. The material was adapted for use in Tennessee by Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Janie Burney and others. Contact Family and Consumer Sciences Professor Denise Brandon for information about this publication.

RESOURCES

From a Bookstore or Library:

Touchpoints: Birth to Three: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development by T. Berry Brazelton and Joshua Sparrow, M.D., Da Capo Lifelong Books, Cambridge, MA, 2006.

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, 5th Edition: Birth to Age 5, by American Academy of Pediatrics, Bantam, New York, 2009.

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

Your Child's Weight: Helping Without Harming by Elyn Satter, Kelcy Press, Madison, WI, 2005.

From the Extension Office:

What You Should Know About Lead and Children, SP421, by Janie Burney, University of Tennessee Extension, 2004.

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

Selecting a Quality Child Care Center, SP455, by Matthew Devereaux, University of Tennessee Extension, 2002.

The Challenge of Being a Parent, SP487-A, Adapted for University of Tennessee Extension, 2007.

From the Internet:

www.utextension.utk.edu

http://fcs.tennessee.edu

www.cyfernet.org

www.zerotothree.org

www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/

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