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5-2007

SP418-X-Healthy Children: 31-32 Months

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"SP418-X-Healthy Children: 31-32 Months," The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, SP418-X 3M 5/07(Rep) E12-5315-00-044-07 07-0264, http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_agexfami/29

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UT Extension
SP418-X

PARENTS COMMUNITIES

Healthy Children Ready to Learn

31 AND 32 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . . Your child enjoys special adults

Have you noticed how much your child enjoys other special adults—grandparents, aunts, uncles, older friends and neighbors? You are the most important adult in your child's life, but your 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 to teach.

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

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.

Suppose Susie runs up to you happily to show you that she has learned to take the arms off her doll. Do you think first of the armless doll or do you see the world through Susie's eyes? Can you share her happiness and show her how proud you are of her newfound skill?

Jimmy has just learned to 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?

Susie and Jimmy love to learn. Encourage this learning now. Repairing the doll and quieting the banging can come later.

It's not always easy to set aside your own feelings 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.

THE CHILD CARE CHALLENGE

getting off to a good start

Leaving your child in day 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 they may ignore or hurt her. You may worry 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 that 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

Q&A

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

Children your son's age 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 gentle 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. 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 finding 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 of 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.

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.

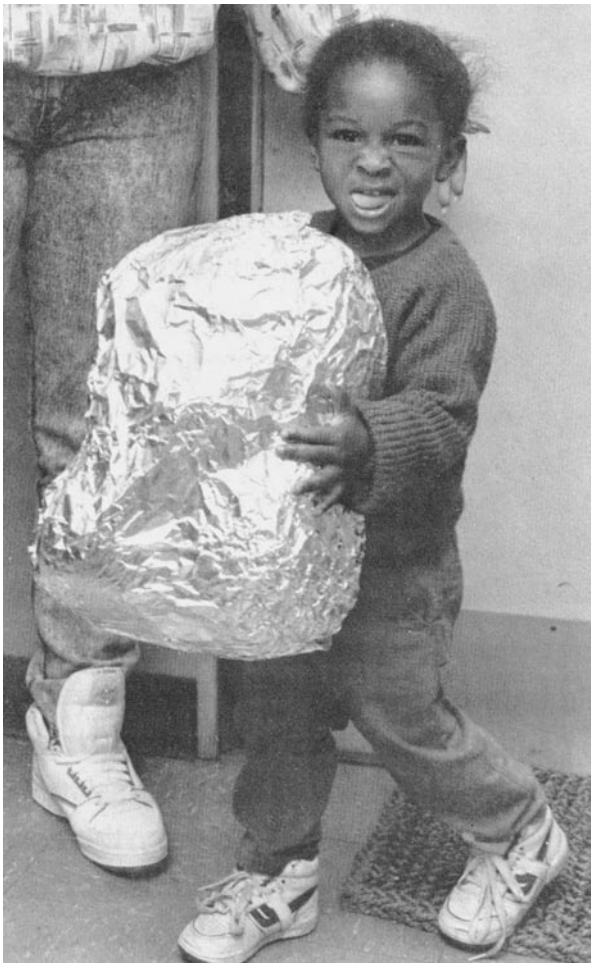
Of course your child may cry, scream, kick or retreat to a corner with her thumb in her mouth. She may like this place, but she wants you with her and needs to say so. Even though it is very hard, keep walking. Remember that you trust the teacher and trust your child. It may help to call the teacher 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 both of you 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 they can blow off steam). After starting child care, some children change their eating and sleeping patterns. Some children need more time curled up in their parents' laps or sucking their thumb. These behaviors will change as your child becomes more comfortable in the child care program.

You can help 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!



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 plastic foam; children can easily break off and swallow pieces)
- Poster paint or crayons
- Magazine pictures

Making the Toy

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.

NUTRITION: snacks with appeal

Your child was born with a liking for sweet things. This is why snacks like fruit-flavored drinks, cakes, cookies and candy are so appealing. They are all high in sugar and very sweet. But these snacks offer little in the way of good nutrition. They provide energy but almost no vitamins, minerals or protein. However, there are many nutritious foods that are naturally tasty and will appeal to your child. Here are some suggestions:

- Fruit juice. Instead of fruit drinks offer fruit juice. Full strength fruit juice may be too strong tasting. When you use frozen fruit juice, add an extra can of water. If you buy bottled or canned fruit juice, add a cup or more of water to each quart of juice. This will give it a milder flavor, and it will stretch your food dollar.
- Frozen juice bars. Almost all children like fruit juice bars. Pour fruit juice into small paper cups and stick plastic spoons in as handles. Cover with aluminum foil to hold the spoon handles in place. Then place in your freezer.
- Frozen yogurt treats. If you have a blender, you can make frozen yogurt treats. Drain the liquid from a 16-ounce package of defrosted frozen fruit. Place the fruit into a saucepan. Add a tablespoon of unflavored gelatin. Heat slowly, stirring until the gelatin dissolves. Place this in a blender with 16 ounces of plain yogurt. Blend together. Pour into paper cups. Insert plastic spoons as handles. Put in the freezer until frozen.
- Snack-size pizza. For a snack-size pizza, take an English muffin and spread about 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce on top. Grate some cheese and sprinkle that over the top. Put your mini-pizza under the oven broiler or in a toaster oven until the cheese melts.
- Quesadillas. Very popular snacks for children, quesadillas are easy to make. Sprinkle cheese on half of a flour tortilla. Fold the other half over the cheese half. Heat in a skillet at low heat until the cheese has melted.
- Cheese and crackers. Cheese is a healthy snack for toddlers because it provides both protein and calcium needed for growing bones, teeth and muscles. Cut cheese into bite-sized cubes. You can serve it with a couple of crackers or bite-sized pieces of apple or pear.

GAMES for GROWING

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.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 2 1/2 AND 3 YEARS OLD?

How I Grow

- I can walk on tiptoe pretty well now.
- I can stand on one foot for about 2 seconds.
- I can run pretty well, but I'm not able to start and stop very quickly.

- I'm really unpredictable and have to be watched constantly.
- 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 my clothes, especially my shoes.
- I like bedtime rituals; I don't like it when you change them.

How I Talk

- I can say my full name easily.
- I am learning lots of words, about 50 new words a month.
- 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 can understand cold, tired and hungry.
- I get angry and unhappy when adults don't understand my words.
- I like to have you talk to me about when I was a baby.
- I enjoy rhyming words and I'm interested in how words sound.
- I can tell you where things are, like where the 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.
- I may be able to tell people my last name as well as my first name.

What I Have Learned

- I'm good at matching shapes on a form board.
- I can match some colors.
- I love to learn and I ask questions almost constantly.
- I can draw a cross on paper if you show me how.
- 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 like doing things for others sometimes.
- 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 love to give orders.
- 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.
- I act angry when you don't let me do what I want to do or when you interrupt my play.
- I'm beginning to learn about sex and the differences between boys and girls; I'm very curious about sex organs and like watching others in the bathroom or when they are undressing.
- Most of the time I don't like to share my toys with others.

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 feed myself at least part of a meal without too much spilling, but when I get tired I want help.
- Sometimes I want to do everything for myself and sometimes I want you to do everything for me.
- 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 hear stories read just as they are written, and I don't like it when you skip parts.
- I like 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 mud pies.
- I like to make block houses and I like knocking them down.
- I like to march to music.

HEALTH: Developmental Assessments

How do we know if our toddlers are learning what they need to become healthy 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 directions. The purpose of a developmental assessment is to review the toddler's developmental achievement. The assessment compares this achievement with that 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.

Doctors or nurses do an initial developmental assessment as part of the physical examination and health history. They will observe and talk to the toddlers. Information provided by the parents is especially important, since the parents have the most complete knowledge of the children and are better able to comment on their growth and development. If you think you child is delayed in some area, ask you doctor about it. If developmental lags or delays are identified as part of the health assessment, additional developmental testing should be done by experts in child growth and development. Parents should ask for this service.

In Tennessee, the agency that provides services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays is the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS). There are nine TEIS offices that serve all 95 counties in Tennessee. To learn more about the services and to locate an office, call their toll-free number at 1-800-852-7157 or visit their Web site at http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced/TEIS/. TEIS services are offered at no cost to eligible families, so don't delay having your child assessed because you are worried about the cost of services. The earlier you start getting treatment for developmental delays, the more likely your child will be to overcome those delays and reach her full potential.

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

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 important, 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. Most important, 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.

PARENTS COMMUNITIES Healthy Children Ready to Learn

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 Janie Burney, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences and others. Contact Denise Brandon, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences, for information about this publication.

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 (3rd 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 Extension, 2004.

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

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

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

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://fcs.tennessee.edu

www.cyfernet.org

www.parentsaction.org

www.civitas.org

www.zerotothree.org

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

SP418-X 3M 5/07(Rep) E12-5315-00-044-07 07-0264

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