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SP418-Y-Healthy Children: 33-34 Months

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Healthy Children Ready to Learn

33 AND 34 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . . This is the time for memories



Children love to learn about themselves and their past. It helps them to feel important and special. A very nice thing you can do for your child and yourselves is to collect and organize reminders of these early years.

Chances are you have some memory makings already. You can use photographs, birthday cards, certificates and so forth to start a memory book or a memory box. Add pictures your child draws, a piece of her favorite blanket, an outline of her hand

or footprint, her holiday cards, newspapers published on her birthdays, notes from favorite relatives — and anything else you and she want to save. Let your child know this is a special book you want to keep for both of you. Let her look at it only with you so you can keep it from getting torn and dirty.

All too soon, these early years pass. A memory book will help you and your child enjoy remembering these special years.

Some Toddlers Don't Get Enough Iron

The nutrient that is often low in the diet of toddlers is iron. Iron is a very important nutrient for healthy red blood and for energy. You can make sure that your toddler is getting enough iron by giving her foods that are good sources of it.

Look over the list of food below and ask yourself, "Does my child eat at least two or three of these foods every day?" If he doesn't, he may not be getting enough iron.

- Foods with lots of iron include:

Lean meat like beef, pork and lamb

Organ meats like liver and heart

Iron-fortified cereals such as those available from WIC

- Foods with some iron include:

Beans, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, red beans, great Northern beans, black-eyed peas, navy beans, small white beans and lima beans

Fish

Chicken and turkey

Enriched bread

Nuts and seeds, such as pumpkin, filbert, cashew, almond, sunflower, walnut (remember to break these into small pieces to prevent choking)

Dark green vegetables like peas, spinach and collard greens

Pasta (noodles, macaroni, spaghetti)

Dried fruits like apricots, prunes, raisins, figs, peaches

Vitamin C helps your body use iron, so offer some orange juice when you serve iron rich food. As an infant, your child probably ate iron fortified baby cereal. Now she probably eats adult cereal. To find out if a cereal is high in iron, look for the nutrition label on the side of the box and see how much iron each serving of cereal has. Take your child to a clinic or doctor for regular checkups to see if your child is getting all the iron he needs.





Being Strict and Being Loving

Many parents are afraid to be strict with their children. They fear that if they are strict, their children will love them less and will feel less loved by them. This is simply not true. Good discipline is fair,

sensitive and consistent, and it is guided by the parents' love and desire to help the child grow. With this kind of discipline, the child will feel loved and valued. The child can easily understand limits imposed for her own safety, such as not playing with knives. She can also come to understand and accept limits set to keep her from disturbing others or destroying property.

Children need to learn that their rights are important, but no more important than the rights of others. If she doesn't learn this now, your toddler may become the kind of child who actually is less lovable.

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 this publication. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your doctor.

GUIDANCE and DISCIPLINE

All parents want to discipline their children in ways that encourage them to become cooperative and responsible. Theresa and Frank Caplan of the Princeton Center for Infancy and Early Childhood have this to say about research on discipline: "One of the most widely discussed topics in the field of child behavior covers discipline techniques. Many years of research and study have gone into most professional opinions. Gradually, trial-and-error child rearing is being replaced by more developmental and humanistic approaches. Especially reassuring is the fact that the experts are in agreement in many important areas concerning the nurturing of good mental health and a sense of responsibility in children. They view discipline as guidance that corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects. It encompasses the child's ongoing learning of socially useful behavior. Discipline is something you do for and with your child, not to him."

Q&A

My little girl is 33 months old and uses a lot of words now, but I've noticed that when she is tense, she stutters. What can I do about this?

Your daughter, like all toddlers her age, is learning language fast. She is learning about 10 to 15 new words each week, but she may not be learning words as fast as she wants to use them. She wants to make herself under-

stood but sometimes she simply doesn't know all the words she needs to do this. This can cause her to stutter, especially when she is upset or excited or when those she is talking to try to rush her.

The best thing you can do to help your daughter overcome her stuttering is to be patient and relaxed with her. Don't rush her speech or criticize her stuttering. It is not easy to learn language. If her stuttering persists in spite of your patience and help, discuss it with her doctor.

HEALTH

Vision Testing

Vision testing should be a part of every child's regular health checkup. A vision test determines each eye's ability to see "sharply." When a child is under 3 years of age, his vision is tested by his ability to follow an object moving from about 12 to 15 inches from his face to a few inches from his nose. Each eye is tested separately, by covering one eye and observing the other eye as it follows the vision tester's finger. At 3 years of age, most children can learn how to take a formal vision screening test. The most widely used vision screening test is called the Snellen test and uses a wall chart headed with a large letter E. Some wall charts use pictures of things that are familiar to the child. The child covers each eye in turn and identifies what he can see.

Some toddlers have a "lazy eye." These children need regularly scheduled vision tests to make sure that eye problems are identified early. An early discovery, followed by prompt medical care, may prevent permanent loss of vision.

Vision problems often go unnoticed by parents, and since the small child has no knowledge of what good vision is, he does not complain. Your child's ability to see is essential for learning. You can provide your child with a head start for preschool and kindergarten if you make sure his eyesight is normal.

GAMES FOR GROWING

TAKE AWAY

Purpose of the Game

To encourage your child's attention to detail and memory.

How to Play

Put several different things on the table or floor. Ask your child to close her eyes as you take one thing away. Then ask her to open her eyes and guess which one was removed. You can play the game at first using only two items. Later, to make the game harder, you may use more things. Let your child have a turn at taking things away for you to guess which one has been removed. Stop playing when the game is no longer fun for you or your child.



WHERE IS IT?

Purpose of the Game

To help a child learn the very important words for position, such as in, under, beside, on top of, behind and so on.

How to Play

Ask your child to move something to a different position. For example, using a ball and a basket, ask him to put the ball in the basket or behind it or under it or on top of it. You can ask him to put his hat on his head, beside his head, under his plate, behind his back and so forth.

MATCHING PAIRS

Purpose of the Game

To help your child learn how things can be the same or different.

How to Play

Collect pairs of things that are the same, such as two spoons, two bars of soap, two playing cards, two plates, two toothbrushes. Mix the sets up, then hold one and ask your child to pick another just like it. You can take a turn at guessing. To make the game more difficult, choose pairs of pictures, numbers, letters, or playing cards and ask your child to match the one you hold up. As always, take turns leading and stop before your child loses interest in the game.

HOMEMADE TOYS THAT TEACH Costume Box

This box of costume makings will encourage your toddler's imagination, creativity and pretend play.

Materials

- Large, cardboard box
- Cast off clothing, hats, scarves, shawls and so on

Playing

Your toddler will know what to do with this box of costumes; he has lots of imagination. Encourage his pretend play by suggesting people he can pretend to be. Suggest that he act out characters you've read about in stories or ask you to guess who he is dressed up to represent. Sometimes, he'll enjoy having you dress up and pretend with him.

Look at me!

Your child is still developing her own idea about who she is. Give her a chance to see and talk about herself with the following activity.

The only special equipment you'll need is a large sheet of paper.



Butcher paper works well, and you can probably get a big piece from any butcher shop. Ask your child to lie down on the paper that you have spread out on a smooth surface like the floor. Now, use a crayon or marking pen to draw all around her from head to toe. Don't forget to draw in between fingers and around ears — get as much detail as possible! When you have finished the outline, you and your child can fill it in.

Name the body parts and items of clothing as you color them. Let your child look in a mirror so she can draw her eyes, nose and mouth into the picture. Don't be afraid to be imaginative! Green hair is okay! When your child's picture is finished, hang it up where everyone can admire it. You can repeat this activity every few months, or at each birthday, so you can see changes and talk about them — "see how much bigger you are getting" or "your hair is getting longer" or "you're wearing a dress here."

Magic Closet

The magic closet (or box or basket) is a place full of happy surprises for your child. You can rotate your child's toys through the magic closet. You can bring out one thing at a time when your child is sick, or bored on a rainy day, or when you and she need something very special to do. Children like to rediscover old toys. A few new toys can be kept in the magic closet, too. Surprises are fun for everyone, and you will enjoy seeing your child playing with her magic closet discoveries.

Help Your Child Reduce Stress

As your child grows, she will encounter more and more situations that cause stress. It is not too early to help her learn to recognize and manage stress.

Show your child how to relax by sitting quietly and paying attention to her breathing. Most children like to use their imaginations. Encourage your toddler to think about something calm and pleasant when she is tense — soft rain, a sleeping kitten, a quiet meadow. Help her picture a place she especially likes — a park or a beach — and tell her to think about that place. Suggest she can go to that place in her imagination when she is upset.

By teaching your child to relax, you'll be giving her a skill that will help her all her life. Try some of these ideas yourself — they work for everybody.

Problem Solving Starts Early

One of the most valuable skills we have as adults is the ability to solve problems. Through training and experience we have learned what is best to do when there is trouble, how to avoid problems or how to fix something that needs to be fixed. Some people go through life solving problems well. Others go through life solving them poorly.

Very young children are learning how to solve problems and developing their very own style

of problem solving. Whether they learn to solve problems well or not so well depends largely on the help and encouragement they get as toddlers.

Every day toddlers face problems and have a chance to practice solving them. For example, suppose Jimmy and Julie are building block houses, but neither has enough blocks to finish. Mother could suggest how they can solve this problem, but it is better if she helps them learn to solve the problem themselves.

To do this, she can describe what she sees. She can say that they both want to finish their houses and neither has enough blocks. Then she can ask them for ideas on how they might solve the problem. In doing this, she does two important things. She shows them that she expects them to be able to solve problems and she gives them a chance to practice doing so. At first, she might need to help them come up with ideas. Later, they'll be able to do more problem solving on their own.

A 3-year-old's Birthday Party . . .



The basic rule for a young child's birthday party is KEEP IT SIMPLE. Children at this age can easily be-

come overexcited at their own parties. Too much activity can turn a fun event into a disaster.

Some child development experts recommend inviting the same number of children as your child's age. Sometimes parents try to combine a toddler's party with an adult party. Remember that gives you twice the work of preparation and cleanup. It's also hard to supervise toddlers when you are talking to other adults.

Keep food and party games simple. Plan games in which everyone wins or at least gets some kind of prize. Three-year-olds aren't very skilled at entertaining themselves,

so plan 1 1/2 to 2 hours of structured activity. Alternate quiet activities, such as a story time, with active games like a peanut hunt, balloon chase, or bean-bag toss. Plan a quiet activity like drawing or a guessing game just before serving the cake and ice cream. This way, the children aren't overexcited when they eat. Children don't always understand that presents are meant for the birthday child, so it's a good idea to have a small, inexpensive party favor wrapped for each child to open.

Finally, try to keep your sense of humor if your child is overwhelmed and bursts into tears or hides.

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

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 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.



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From the Internet

www.utextension.utk.edu

www.cyfernet.org

www.iamyourchild.org

www.civitas.org

www.zerotothree.org

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

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Agricultural Extension Service Charles L. Norman, Dean