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SP418-Z-Healthy Children: 35-36 Months

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Healthy Children Ready to Learn

35 AND 36 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . .

Isn't it amazing how fast your child grows?

Your child is almost three years old and growing more independent and capable every day.

Your child can do many things by himself at this age. He can sort and put away forks and spoons; he can carry piles of clean clothes to the bedroom; he can set the table with napkins and silverware. It takes time and energy for you to show him how to do a new job, but it's worth the effort. He does love to help, doesn't he? Children often say, "Me do it" as they strongly promote their right to become their own person. "Let's do it together" or "I will help too" usually works better than "You can't do that" or "No, I'll do it," or "You're too little."

Encourage your child's cooperation; it will build his confidence and help him grow into a helpful, responsible person.



This is the last issue of Healthy Children. We hope the series has been helpful to you in your very important and exciting job as parents.

Q&A

My almost-3-year-old son is dry during the day, but still wets the bed at night. This worries me and besides, it's a real bother. What should I do about it?

Your toddler is right on schedule. Most 3-year-olds are dry during the day, but they usually continue to wet at night until they have passed their third birthday. Your little one doesn't want to wet his bed. He is simply not yet able to hold his urine, wake up and get to the toilet at night. Don't scold or punish him for bed-wetting. That could make him nervous and upset and then it would be even harder for him to become dry at night. If your child is more than 3 years old and you are concerned about bed-wetting, put your child in training pants covered by waterproof pants or use disposable training pants. Use a plastic sheet on the bed and leave the light on so he can find the bathroom. Be sure he goes to the toilet before going to bed. Meanwhile, try to be relaxed and understanding about his nighttime wetting. Praise his successes and calmly accept his failures. In the long run, this will be the best way to help him become dry at night.

HEALTH

Hearing Tests Are Important!

A hearing test is an important part of your child's regular medical checkup. When a child is under 3 years of age, hearing is tested by observing your child's response to sound and her ability to learn new words. Three-year-old children can learn how to take formal audiometric hearing screening tests. Be patient with them until they understand what to do and can cooperate fully.



Language is an essential tool for learning. It allows the toddler to store information, exchange ideas and express feelings. A hearing problem interferes with the development of normal language and learning.

Infants and toddlers frequently have colds that can lead to ear infections. If ear infections are not detected and treated, the toddler may have hearing problems. Early discovery of possible hearing problems is the key to successful treatment and the prevention of hearing loss. Parents can protect their child's hearing by making sure that infections are identified and treated and that hearing is routinely tested by their doctors or health care providers.

GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

From Discipline to Abuse

Cooperative, well behaved and responsible children get that way because they are taught and guided by their parents. In HEALTHY CHILDREN we have described the best ways we know to guide children, and none of these ways involve physical punishment. We believe, and studies show, that physical punishment does not teach children well; it usually hurts the child more than it instructs.

Physical punishment such as pinching, hitting, spanking or shaking can seriously hurt a child. This is abuse. Depriving a child of food or care, or keeping a child tied up or locked in a room is, of course, abusive. But you can also abuse a

child with words. Threats of physical or other feared punishment are abusive. It is abusive to threaten that scary things will happen to the child if he doesn't behave — that the boogeyman will take him, that loved ones will stop loving him or leave him or die. It is abusive to make a child believe he is unloved, stupid, wicked or hopeless.

Almost all parents want to do what is best for their child. Some may abuse their child thinking that this is the best way to help him learn. They may be copying what they have learned from their own parents. Other parents may abuse their child because they lose control of their feelings. Some parents

who abuse have such stressful and difficult lives that they do not have the will or patience to discipline their child without abuse.

Our suggestions on discipline are written to help parents learn to discipline effectively without abuse. Our stress management suggestions are to help parents control their tensions so that they do not take out their anger and frustration on their child. Children who are abused or unfairly or harmfully punished are more likely to become uncooperative than children who are guided and disciplined more gently and patiently.



Some Guidance Ideas

- Have a few simple rules, explain them to your child, and stick to them.
- Try to keep calm when disciplining your child.
- Praise your child's good behavior.
- Tell your child what to do, rather than what not to do.
- Give your child reasonable, limited choices.
- Prepare your child for new situations.
- Save your "nos" for times when your child is in personal danger or is in danger of hurting other people or damaging property.
- Change the situation whenever possible rather than trying to change your child's behavior.
- Remember, discipline is teaching; it's one way to show love to your child.

NUTRITION:

Use this daily food guide to plan a balanced day's diet for your toddler.*

Food Group	Suggested Daily Servings	What Counts as a Serving?
Vegetables Dark-green leafy Deep-yellow Dry beans and peas Starchy Other vegetables	3 servings from entire group. Include all types regularly. Serve dark-green leafy vegetables several times a week.	1/3 cup of cooked vegetables 1/3 cup of chopped raw vegetables 2/3 cup of leafy raw vegetables such as lettuce or spinach
Fruits Citrus Melon Berries Other fruits	2 servings from entire group	A small whole fruit such as a small apple, banana or orange A small melon wedge 1/2 cup of juice 1/3 cup cooked or canned fruit 3 tablespoons of raisins
Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta Whole Grain Enriched	6 servings from entire group. Include several servings of whole grain products daily.	1 small slice of bread 1/2 roll, biscuit or muffin 2-3 small crackers 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta 1/2 to 1 ounce of ready-to-eat breakfast cereal
Milk, Yogurt and Cheese	2 servings from entire group	1 cup of milk or yogurt 2 ounces of cheese
Meats, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans and Peas, Eggs and Nuts	2 servings from entire group	2 to 3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish The following count as 1 ounce of meat: 1 egg, 1/2 cup cooked dry beans or peas, 2 tablespoons peanut butter

*Adapted from "Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children: A Daily Guide for 2- to 6-Year-Olds," USDA Program Aid 1651, 2000.

Are You Really Listening?

Are you really listening to your toddler? Sometimes young children feel that instead of listening to them, their parents mostly interrupt, instruct, advise or criticize. Often, they are right! This can lead to misunderstanding, stress and anger. Children whose parents don't listen well can feel that they and their ideas are not very important. Check yourself: do you talk back before you listen? If so, try active listening.

Active listening is trying hard to hear and understand the other person without interrupting, jumping to conclusions, judging, preaching or getting

mad. It means showing respect for the other person and her ideas, even if you don't agree with them. It means waiting until others have finished before responding.



Listening is a vital part of the good communication you want to have with your child. It takes patience and practice to develop good listening skills, but try it. You may find your conversations with your child easier and less stressful. As an extra reward, your child may imitate your good example

and start listening more to what you have to say.

Talking to Children . . . and With Them

The way parents talk to their child influences their child's development. Talking to a child means using a lot of directions such as do's (Let's take the dishes off the table now), don'ts (Don't pull the cat's tail), and refusals (Not now). It also includes a lot of teaching, mainly in providing new knowledge (This cat is black), and asking questions (What shape is this block?). Talking to children is okay; all good parents talk to their children some. Studies show, however, that when parents

almost always talk to and not with their child, the child's language learning is limited.

Parents talk with their child when they match their comments and discussion to the child's questions and activities. This may mean continuing the topic the child has introduced or introducing a new topic based on what appears to be the child's interests.

In talking with the child, you show you care about your child's interest, experiences and needs,

and that you want to learn more about them. Such comments as "What do you want to do with that box?", "Tell me about your visit to Grandma" and "You seem to be sleepy" may start conversations.

Talking with children and listening to them increases their confidence and helps them feel important. It means to them they have something to say that is worth being listened to and responded to.

Sound match is an entertaining learning game toddlers can play with you or with an



older friend. The game helps toddlers learn to match sounds and tell one sound from another. It requires only simple, no-cost supplies, and it's very easy to make.

Materials

- Six plastic 35mm film containers (You can get

these free at stores that develop film or you can save them yourself if you are a photographer.)

- Fillings to make the containers rattle such as rice, ground coffee, dry beans, small pebbles and so forth.

Making the Toy

Partly fill two containers with something hard and rattly like beans. Be sure each container sounds like the other when you shake it. Then partly fill two more containers with grains of rice. Check to see that they sound the same. Partly fill the last two containers with ground coffee or some other filler. Ground coffee will make a soft, swishy sound. When you shake the three kinds of

containers, you will discover that each pair sounds different.

Tape the tops of the containers closed if you think your toddler will be playing with them alone.

Playing

Sit down with your toddler and give him three of the film cans, one with each kind of filling. Keep the other three for yourself. Take turns rattling one of the containers and having the other person find the matching sound in his own set.

Another way to play this game is to put all six film containers between you. Pick them up one at a time and shake them. Encourage your toddler to do the same. Together, pick up and shake, pick up and shake — until you have a sound match for each. Point out that these are the same sounds. Point out when the sounds are different. Your child will want to see what it is inside the containers making the noise.

The two of you can think of other sound making items to put into pairs of containers. In this way, you can work together in changing and enjoying this simple toy.

Remember, do not put anything in the containers that will hurt your toddler. If you think your toddler will be playing with the containers alone, be sure to tape the tops so that they cannot be removed.

Games for Growing

SILLY QUESTIONS

Purpose of the Game

To encourage your child's imagination and use of words.

How to Play

Ask your child to imagine what would happen if something silly occurred, such as what would happen if I put on my glasses upside down, or candy bars grew on trees, or people walked on their hands instead of their feet? Let your child make up some silly questions for you, too. Have fun guessing and acting out these silly questions. You might be pleased and surprised with your child's imagination.

WHAT IS IT?

Purpose of the Game

To help your child observe and understand the things in her world.

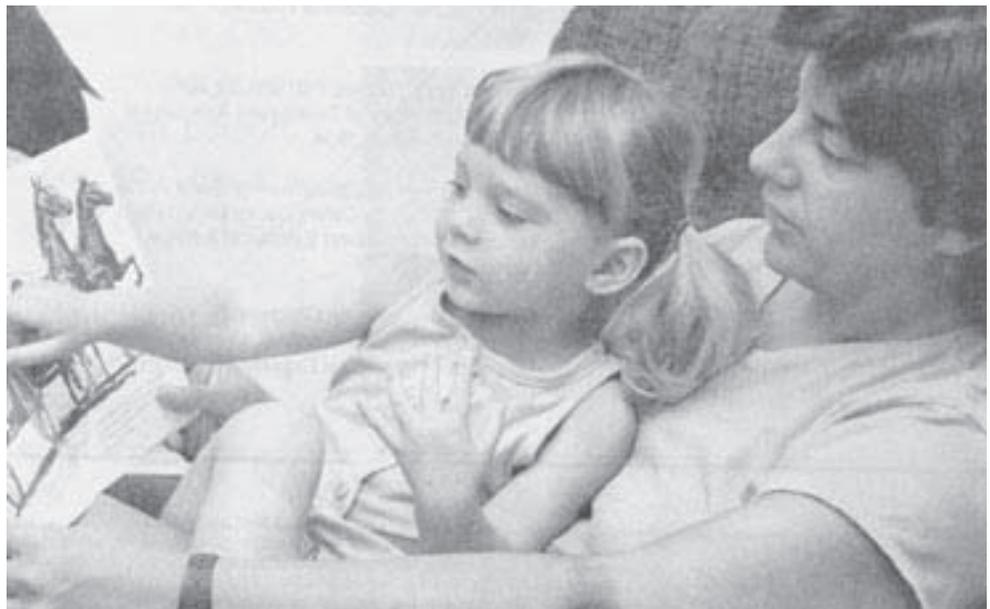
How to Play

Sitting in a familiar room with your child, look around the room and pick out something you can describe in two ways — what it looks like and what it does. Then giving these two descriptions, ask your child to guess what you are thinking of. For example, I can see something that is red and rolls along the floor, or I can see something that is white and you drink from it, or I see something that is tall and you sit on it. Remember to let your child have a turn at asking you to guess, too.

TODDLER TALK

Help Me Learn in Lots of Different Ways

- Share your interests with me. If you enjoy fishing, include me. If you like cooking or gardening, I'd like to help.
- Give me simple instructions such as, "Please put the paper in the trash can." After I do it, let me know how pleased you are by saying, "Thank you." I'll learn to be polite if you are.
- Show me how to take things apart and put them together. Give me an old coffee percolator or pieces of pipe with connecting joints to screw on and off. These things will keep me busy for quite a while.
- Make or buy me a small backpack. I'll wear it around the house and on walks. I will put my own special treasures in it. Wearing it makes me feel very grown up.
- Let me choose magazine pictures and help me make my own picture book. Let me change the pictures from time to time. I will like looking at the book and talking about the pictures.



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

LOOKING AHEAD

Your child is 3 years old — no longer a toddler. You may wonder what's ahead and what you can do to help your child grow up healthy, happy, and responsible. Your toddler is off to a good start already. During these first 3 years, you have helped your child feel important and successful. You have helped him learn about himself and his surroundings, and you have taught him to trust, respect and enjoy others. This foundation has prepared him to become the kind of person you want him to become. The good relationship you have will help you continue to sup-

port and guide him as he faces future decisions about school, friends, drugs, sex, and other important issues.

Building your child's self-esteem now will help him resist the negative pressures of other teens later on. Keeping the lines of communication open now will help him feel he can talk to you about difficult and confusing questions in the years to come. Encouraging your child's enjoyment of language and learning now will help him succeed in school.

Parenthood is a rich, exciting opportunity for you to grow with your



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child. Trust yourself. You can offer your child the support, values, and skills to handle whatever comes along in the future.

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.

From the Internet

www.utextension.utk.edu

www.cyfernet.org

www.iamyourchild.org

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www.zerotothree.org

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