UT Extension
SP418-S

PARENTS COMMUNITIES

Healthy Children Ready to Learn

21 AND 22 MONTHS

Dear Parents . . .

Your little one is becoming more sociable, but you're still #1



You know by now that the very best plaything your little one can have is a caring adult. In other words, she needs someone like you who will play with her and enjoy her explorations.

Your toddler will be watching other children playing and may even follow after them. At this age, though, your child is more interested in you, her own play and her own toys than in other children. Poking, touching and pushing are her ways of showing interest in other children. She may develop interest in a special friend her own age if that friend is with her a lot. You will notice your child will smile more and fight less with this friend than with a child who is a stranger.

From 2 to 3 years of age, your child will become more social and will enjoy playing with other children. Groups of children play best when they have the same toys or materials. They will fight less if there are two blue trucks the same size or two dolls instead of one doll and one truck.

Play is the main activity of childhood. It is the way children learn about themselves, their family and their world. Let your child play alone sometimes, but also make time to play with her. You'll learn about her, she'll learn about you and you will be helping her to grow.

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE UT
INSTITUTE of AGRICULTURE

Choosing Child Care

If you want to stay home to raise your baby and are able to do so, then you certainly should. You and your baby will gain from your time together. However, if you want to (or have to) work outside the home, then staying home with your baby might be a mistake.

There are two important questions to ask yourself before you decide on a caregiver. First, is she or he very fond of your child? Toddlers need lots of loving and attention.

Second, will she or he be there during the hours you need in the months to come? Toddlers need to form close bonds with people, and can suffer if they have too many caregivers.



Children do best when their parents are happy and when they have a caring, sensitive caregiver at home and in day care.

You may worry about leaving your child in someone else's care. The more you trust your caregiver the more secure you will feel. Here are some things to look for as you decide on a child care arrangement:

Does the caregiver. . .

- Have child-rearing attitudes similar to yours?
- Understand what children can and want to do at different stages of growth?
- Spend time holding, playing with, and talking to your child?
- Have enough time to look after all the children in his or her care?
- Welcome visits from parents?
- Have a clean and comfortable look?
- Have equipment that is safe and in good repair?
- Serve nutritious meals and snacks, if provided by the caregiver?

Are there opportunities for children. . .

- To be held, cuddled, rocked, smiled at, talked to?
- To relax and rest when they need to do so?
- To walk and explore safely?
- To play with things that develop their sense of touch, sight and hearing?
- To learn language? Does the caregiver talk to the children, name things, describe what she or he is doing, respond to the children's actions?

Child Care for Children

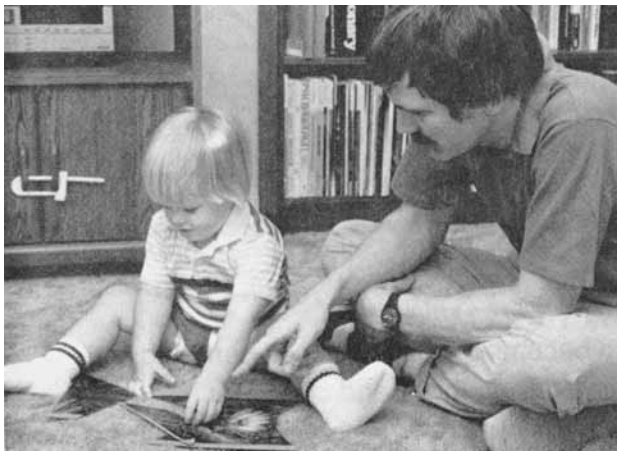
Do children who are cared for in childcare settings outside the home develop more poorly than those who are cared for at home by a parent? The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development conducted a study of 1,000 children under the age of 4½ years to learn more about this question. They found that children who were cared for exclusively by their mothers did not develop differently than those who were also cared for by others. In fact, how parents parented had a much greater impact on children's outcomes than whether or not the child was in child care. However, there were some small differences, based on the quality of the care received and the amount of time spent in child care. They found that children who were in high quality care settings did better mentally and emotionally than those in lower quality care. Also, children who stayed long hours in child care showed somewhat more behavior problems in the child care setting and in kindergarten than those who spent fewer hours in care.

What does this mean for you and your child? If you need to use out-of-home care, find the best quality program available that you can afford. Try to limit the time your child spends in out-of-home care as your schedule permits. Remember, it is what you do as a parent while you are with your child that has the most influence on her development.

Homemade Toys That Teach

A Simple Puzzle

This toy will help your child learn about shapes and sizes. It will also help him learn how to solve problems and to fit things together.



Materials

- Stiff paper
- Colorful, simple pictures from magazines or calendar
- Child-safe glue (Check the bottle to be sure it says nontoxic or child-safe.)

Making the Toy

Glue the picture on to the stiff paper and cut in into two or three pieces.

Playing

Help your child learn to fit the pieces together to make the picture. To make this more challenging, cut the picture into more pieces.

Happy Routines

If you can do the same things in the same order every day, your child is likely to feel more safe, comfortable and secure. He'll know what's coming next. He'll know what he should do. Here are some simple routines that are not too hard to stick to.

Have quiet time and bedtime at the same time every day. You can help your little one get used to routines by telling him that when he has finished lunch, it will be time to rest, or that after you read one more book, it will be time for bed. Other routines that you can set up are:

- Getting your little one dressed as soon as he gets up in the morning.
- Brushing his teeth after breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Washing his hands before he eats.
- Picking up his toys before dinner (or at some other convenient time).
- Saying goodnight to every member of the family, maybe including dogs, cats and assorted toys before going to bed.

You can help your child learn about routines and time by letting him know that the mail comes at 10 o'clock or we go to the grocery store on Saturday or mommy or daddy comes home at 6 o'clock.

Toddler Talk

Help me learn to play with another child. I may push or poke to say hello. You can show me how to touch gently or use words such as hello. Stay near me while I play with her so I can come back to you quickly. Don't force me to share my favorite toys. Help me look for toys that my friend can play with. I still may take the toys away. This isn't because I want to play with them, I'm just not sure I want the other child to have them. If we go to another house to visit, let me take a few of my own toys with me. I'll feel better if I know I can take them back home.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE 21 AND 22 MONTHS OLD?

How I Grow

- I'm becoming a little less self-centered.
- I love to run, throw and climb.
- I can walk upstairs with both feet on each step by holding a railing.
- I am probably using one hand more than the other.
- If you fold a paper, I can imitate you.
- I can obey about three directions.

How I Talk

- I can say about 20 words.
- I like to have you sing me rhyming songs.
- I like to look at books, but if you don't watch me, I will tear them.
- I try to follow directions.
- I like to hear stories.
- I can ask for things by name.
- I can point to five body parts on myself or my doll.
- I can help with simple tasks.

What I Have Learned

- I'm interested in very tiny things, especially bugs. Watch what I put in my mouth.
- I can recognize and name people I know from photographs.
- I can put together a simple picture puzzle if it has only two or three large pieces.
- I love to build and knock down, empty, pull apart, feel, twist and squeeze everything I can get my hands on.
- I am really curious about people, animals, birds and everything that I see.
- I like listening to nursery rhymes. If you help me, I can repeat them.
- I can recognize a picture in a book even when the book is upside down.
- I can build a tower of four or five blocks.

How I Get Along with Others

- I've developed a mind of my own, so I don't respond quickly to requests and often do the opposite of what I'm asked.
- I can understand what's mine and what's yours.
- I try to tell people what I have seen and done.
- I'm beginning to be sympathetic to other people, and I can sometimes cooperate with others.
- I can show love to you and other favorite people.
- I'm becoming easier to get along with, but I still get demanding at times.

What I Can Do for Myself

- I can wash and dry my hands.
- I can hold a cup and drink from it.
- I may be able to put on my shoes, but I still can't lace them, and I may put them on the wrong feet.
- I may be able to put things where they belong.
- I can pick up and put away my toys if you will help me.
- I like to sweep, dust, mop, hammer, vacuum, shovel, scoop or rake because I have seen you do these things.

Play I Enjoy

- I like to fit things together.
- I enjoy using a toy telephone.
- I like to pull things around in a wagon or cart.
- I like playing tag with you or an older child.
- I can put rings on a spindle toy.
- I like to pretend, like wrapping up my doll or stuffed animal and putting it to bed.
- My feelings are easily hurt by criticism.
- I am continually testing the limits you set and trying to get my own way.

Hard and Soft

Purpose of the Game

To teach your child to group objects by touch and learn words to describe the way things feel.



How to Play

- Sit on the floor or at a table by your child.
- Place hard and soft things together in a pile. For example, you may use blocks, bottles, rocks and so forth as hard objects, and soft toys, cotton balls and pieces of cloth as soft objects. Show her how to tell which things are soft and which are hard.
- Ask your child to place the hard things in one pile and the soft things in another.
- If your child cannot do this, take the hard things and say, "These are hard. Put them in one pile."
- Put the objects all together in one pile and repeat the game.

Other Grouping Games

You can ask your child to group fuzzy and smooth objects separately, or sticky and clean objects, or wet and dry, hot and cold, heavy or light things. Change the game to keep it fun for your child and you.

Paper Folding

Purpose of the Game

To teach your child to imitate and to use his small muscles.

How to Play

- Sit in any relaxed position.
- Fold a piece of paper a few times in front of your child.
- Give your child a new sheet of paper. Ask your child to fold it. If your child doesn't fold it, fold your sheet again step by step. Ask your child to fold as you do.
- When this is done, get new sheets of paper and do the same thing again.

Play and Playthings

We write a lot about play and toys in *HEALTHY CHILDREN*. We do this for many reasons, but probably the most important reason is that parents and children enjoy play so much. Playing times are special. They help you and your child share love and happiness, but play is not just a way to have fun. It is also one of the best ways we know to help children learn and grow.

When they play, toddlers learn how to use their bodies. They learn about the way things look, feel, stack, fall and fit together. Playing games helps them to figure things out and later helps them to share and cooperate. All this will help your child to become the friendly, intelligent and successful person you want him to be.

Set things up to encourage play. Keep a drawer of safe things for your child to play with in rooms you use a lot so he can play and be near you. Keep a box of tub toys in the bathroom for bath-time play. Change the things you let your toddler play with from time to time to give him variety. Remember, the best toys can be things you already have around the house like plastic containers, wooden spoons, pans, empty cardboard cartons, pillows and old magazines.

Putting Words to Action

You can help your little one learn words by talking about what you and he are doing. If you're making cookies and he's watching, tell him about what you're doing. For example, you might say, "First we sift the flour and put it in the bowl. Now we add the eggs. Plop! Plop! Now we mix and mix and mix. Then we'll scoop cookies out, plop them in the pan and pop them into the oven." Your child will hear the words "sift," which is very hard to say, "plop," "mix," "scoop" and "pop." These are fun words to hear and fun to say. Use words with your child just as you use toys. None of us grows and develops in only one area at a time. Your child uses his eyes to watch your actions, his mouth and tongue to put words to your action, and his small and large muscles to imitate your actions. Putting words and actions together can help him develop all these skills.

Your toddler's attention span is very, very short. A few minutes of the cooking lesson and he'll be up and away to bigger, better things. Remember, too, that hot water, sharp kitchen utensils and heavy objects can hurt your child. Always watch him when he is in the kitchen.

Nutrition

By now your toddler has some but not all her baby teeth. She probably will not have all 20 baby teeth until she is about 2 to 2 1/2 years old.

Your child doesn't have enough teeth to chew well, so she might swallow large pieces of food that could cause her to choke. Choking on food is a real danger for toddlers. For this reason, grind meat and cut all food into small bite-size pieces. The foods toddlers choke on most often are hot dogs, candy, nuts, grapes, raw carrots and apple chunks, and seeds. Hot dogs aren't a very nutritious food. If you do give them, cut them in quarter circles. Never cut them into full circles as they can get stuck in your child's throat. Cut grapes in quarter sections and break nuts into small bits. Don't give your toddler candy very often. When you do, be sure it is in small pieces that can't possibly get stuck in your child's throat.



Other foods that sometimes cause choking are popcorn, chewing gum and lollipops. Since these foods aren't very nutritious, don't give them to your toddler.

If your child chokes so that she can't breathe, cough, or make a sound, use high abdominal thrusts. The C.S. Mott Children's Hospital provides these directions:

- Grasp the child from behind, just below the lower ribs but above the navel, in bear-hug fashion.
- Make a fist with one hand and fold the other hand over it.
- Give a sudden upward and backward jerk (at a 45-degree angle) to try to pop the object out of the windpipe.
- Repeat this upward thrust 10 times in rapid succession, until the object comes out.
- If the child is too heavy for you to suspend from your arms, lay him on his back on the floor. Put your hands on both sides of the abdomen, just below the ribs, and apply sudden, strong bursts of upward pressure.
- Call 911 if she continues to choke.

Be Good to Yourself

Sometimes when life gets tough, we forget to look at the good things about ourselves. But we need to give ourselves credit, even if no one else does.

- Praise yourself often — not just for moving mountains, but for climbing molehills too. Say, "Good for me! I got through the day without yelling at anybody!"
- Talk to yourself when you know a tough situation is coming. Say, "I know I can get through this job interview. After all, I did call and make the appointment, and I've written a good application letter."
- Look at the good side. Say, "I didn't finish cleaning the whole house, but I got the downstairs done, and that's the hardest part."

Remember, no one is a perfect parent, daughter, husband or wife. Give yourself credit for all the good parts about you, and work on improving the others.

SAFETY

Injury Prevention

Your toddler is becoming a real explorer. She climbs, runs, walks and rarely sits. You need to protect her in special ways. There are three major dangers you can help your child avoid.

Poison: Your toddler explores with her mouth. Everything goes in her mouth. Keep all medicines and household products away from your child. All medicines should have safety caps. Keep the poision control center telephone number (1-800-222-1222) and your doctor's telephone number near your telephone.

Automobiles: Always put your child in a car seat in the back seat and buckle both the seat and your toddler. When a car stops suddenly, children and adults continue moving until something stops them. Do not hold your child in your lap. When you are taking your child to and from the car, make sure you are holding her hand. Toddlers are unpredictable and may quickly run in front of a car.

Water: Many children love to play in water. Never leave your toddler alone in the bathroom or tub. Your child can drown in a tub or a toilet bowl. Never leave your child alone near water for even a moment. Even if your child is learning to swim, he is not water safe. Water wings or other swimming aids do not make him safe alone in water. If you have a pool, there should be a 4-foot-high fence around it with a self-closing latch door.

HELPING
AT HOME

Help your child become a proud working partner in your family. Even young children can help with some household jobs. In helping, your child will begin to learn responsibility and will develop pride in being useful. Begin by helping your child with the task. Keep each task simple. Tell your child what a good job he's done.

Here are some tasks a toddler can do:

- Pick up unused toys and put them in proper places.
- Put books and magazines on the shelf.
- Put napkins and silverware on the table.
- Clean up the floor after eating.
- Help wipe up after accidents.

Remember, don't expect more than is reasonable from your toddler. Do expect him to help and do praise his accomplishments.

Q&A

Soft teeth run in my family. Is there anything I can do to protect my child's teeth?

Babies aren't born with soft teeth. Most dental problems in children under 3 years are caused by baby bottle tooth decay. Many parents don't realize that formula, juice and even milk contain some sugar. Cavities can begin when a baby carries a bottle around all day, nurses constantly or is allowed to sleep with a bottle.

To protect your child's teeth:

- Feed only formula, milk or water from a bottle.
- Limit bottle use to feeding time. Sleeping times are not feeding times. Do not put baby to bed with a bottle. If your child needs comforting at bedtime, put him to sleep with a favorite tape or CD of soothing music or read a favorite book to him.

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

GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE

Have you ever noticed that your toddler seems to be her naughtiest when you really want her to behave well? You are not alone.

Although there are no perfect solutions to this very common dilemma, the suggestions below may help:

Be reasonable. Don't expect too much. Try to avoid situations that toddlers are too young to handle. The "What's It Like..." section in each issue of HEALTHY CHILDREN may give you clues about what is reasonable to expect at each age level. If your toddler fits the description for months 21 to 22, you know, for example, that she likes to do things her own way, doesn't want to share toys and may tear books. This may mean that play with age mates should be brief and visits to the library well supervised.

Prepare. Toddlers this age can be disobedient and defiant, so be sure you have explained to your toddler before you go out what you will be doing together, how you want her to behave and what will happen if she misbehaves. You could tell her how you will reward her good behavior. This reward could be a hug or a promise to tell her a story on your way home. If you expect her to be bored, hungry or restless, take food or toys to keep her entertained.

Follow through. If your toddler is behaving well, compliment her on her good behavior. If she is misbehaving, try to keep calm (not easy to do) and follow through on the consequences you had discussed with her. Try not to embarrass her — or yourself — in front of others. If possible, take her aside and tell her in simple words how you want her to behave. Don't give in to unreasonable demands. If you do, you are rewarding undesirable behavior and she will be more likely to repeat it.

Redirect. When your toddler misbehaves, suggest a new activity. Telling her "no" or "don't" is seldom enough. In the supermarket, for example, if she whines or fusses, ask her to help you find her favorite cereal or the apples, or talk to her about what you are doing.

Have patience. No one said parenting was easy. Remember, your good guidance practices now will pay off later in making life easier and more enjoyable for both you and your child.

PARENTS Healthy Children Ready to Learn COMMUNITIES

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 Develoment 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.

From the Internet:

http://extension.tennessee.edu
http://fcs.tennessee.edu
www.cyfernet.org
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www.k-12.state.tn.us/smart/index.htm

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