

# Baby's First Wish

Cooperative Extension Service  
New Mexico State University

A h a p p y & h e a l t h y l i f e

Dear  
Parents:

17 & 18 Months

## Use Words for Feelings

You have probably noticed by now that your little one can show intense feelings. You may have seen him become suddenly very excited, frustrated, happy, angry, or fearful.

You can help him understand his feelings by giving them each a name. When a box won't open or a car won't roll, your little one may drop it or throw it in anger. Hold him and say calmly that you know it makes him angry when the toy won't work. These words show your toddler that you understand his anger. It also gives him a word that helps him understand his feelings.

Show him how the toy works, substitute another toy, or just hold him gently. He will know you care about his feelings, and he will begin to learn to handle them.



It takes many years for a child to understand and cope with his feelings. The help you give him now will make this learning easier.

## Watch Out! Keep Exploring Safe for Your Toddler

Your child must explore to learn. Help her explore safely. She will explore everything around her. She will put everything into her mouth and reach everything she can see. She will crawl or climb onto, into, above, or below anything. She does not know what is dangerous. She cannot remember "no." It is up to you to think ahead for her, to understand that at any time, she may suddenly do something that will put her in danger.

Remember, *Baby's First Wish* describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special and each child develops at his or her own pace. Children may do things earlier or later than those described in *Baby's First Wish*. If you are concerned about your child's development, see your doctor.

# Questions Parents Ask

## How Can I Avoid Spoiling My Daughter?

**Q. How can I keep my daughter from being spoiled?**

**A.** Most of us think a “spoiled” child is one who always expects to get her own way, even at the expense of others. She is demanding, self-centered, and most unpleasant to be around.

We have said you cannot spoil a young baby by giving her care, comfort, and attention when she wants it. One-year-olds who have been well cared for are generally secure and trusting. Babies who have uncertain care during their first year may become fearful and more demanding.

During a child’s second and third years, “spoiling” can happen if parents don’t set limits or don’t enforce limits regularly. Children become spoiled when parents give in to unreasonable demands, and allow annoying behavior. When limits are clear and enforced all the time, children learn how to succeed within these limits. This builds self-esteem.

Children need and want reasonable limits and rules. These should be rules your child can understand and follow. Don’t be afraid that your toddler will dislike you if you don’t always give her what she wants. Let her know you love her, but will not let her misbehave. Help her understand what the rules are, why they are needed, and what will happen if she does not follow them. Setting and enforcing limits shows your toddler that you will help her to grow up safely, capable and “unspoiled.”

# Learning by Helping

Children learn best when parents are willing to share simple tasks with them like cooking, cleaning, and other household jobs.

When your child tries to help you, remember to look for ways you can make helping fun for both of you. That way, your child will enjoy helping and will want to help more.

Children can learn how to pour milk from a small pitcher by watching you. They can learn how to sweep the floor, pick flowers, and hang up clothes.

Toddlers spend up to 20 percent of their time just watching, listening, and staring at you. They’re learning how to copy the things you do. When you let your little person help you, you are giving him a chance to practice what he has learned. He will



make mistakes of course, but don’t yell at him for these. Instead say, “That was a good try. Maybe it would work better if you did it this way.”

Take the time to help him succeed now, and later he will be able to do more things for himself and for you. This is time well spent for both of you.

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## Be Good to Yourself

### When It Seems Everyone Is Against You

Sometimes the other adults in your life seem to be criticizing you all the time. It’s hard to be calm when someone is putting you down, but the way you respond can make a big difference. You can let them know that you ACCEPT what they say, but you don’t have to AGREE with them. By accepting, you’re simply saying, “I hear you.” Here are some accepting words you can use to give yourself a little breathing room and avoid arguments.

- So you think I ....
- I’ll think about what you said ....
- I can see how you might feel that way ....

If you don’t argue, it’s hard for others to keep putting you down.

# Homemade Toys That Teach

## Toss Bags

### Why?

Toss bags can help your child develop muscles and coordination.

### Materials

- Clean scraps of cloth, old adult socks
- Crumpled paper or short strips of cloth

### Making the Toy

Make the bag by sewing squares or other shapes out of cloth or by tying ends of adult socks. Fill your bag with crumpled paper or torn rags and sew up or tie the opening. For safety, double the bag covers and make the bags at least as big as tennis balls.

### Playing

Toss bags are fun just to throw; they can also be thrown at targets or into wastebaskets or tossed to other people. You can tie a string to the toss bag and attach it to a playpen or a high chair for drop-and-pull-back games.

## He or She? Him or Her?

*Baby's First Wish* gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "he" or "she." Please note: when we use he or she, we include all children

# Play Is Fun, Not Work

In each issue of *Baby's First Wish*, we describe games you can play with your toddler for enjoyment and for growth. These games will help him solve problems, understand the world, and learn the things he will need to know to succeed in school. Remember these games should be fun for both you and your child. If you turn the games into work or into contests, your toddler will not want to play them. He might not want to learn new things or feel like a failure. This will rob both you and your little one of the enjoyment and learning you can have together.

Play the game only when you and your toddler both want to play it. Stop the game before your child gets tired or bored. This may mean playing the game only for a few minutes. Don't criticize your child for mistakes or failures; do praise his efforts and his successes.

Change the games so that they are more fun; help your little one to do the same. Make the play fun but not too hard for your child.

Play and learning go together, especially for your toddler. Keep play light, creative, and fun.

## Sharing Is Hard

"Mine! Mine!" Do you hear that a lot from your little one? Sharing is a very hard thing to learn. We don't expect children to be able to share until they are about 3 years old, but you can begin to teach sharing now.

How do you teach your child to share? Children probably learn best by having many good sharing experiences over a long period of time. You need to talk about what's mine and what's yours, what's daddy's, what's mommy's, and even what's doggy's. It also helps to show how to share. For example, you've just cut an apple in half. You can say, "I have a red apple, and I will share my apple with you."

If there are other children in your home, your child may need to learn sharing faster. Be sure she has some things that are just for her that she does not have to share. She will need a lot of help from you to learn to share. Be patient and don't expect true sharing until your young one is older.



# What's It Like To Be 17 and 18 Months Old?



## How I Grow

- I like to lug, tug, and drag things.
- I want my own way almost all the time.
- I can walk upstairs if you will hold one hand.
- I like to run, but I fall or bump into things sometimes.
- I'm beginning to use one hand more than the other.
- When things don't go the way I want them to, I get angry.
- I'm learning to crawl backward downstairs.
- I like to grab anything I can reach.

## How I Talk

- I understand more words than I can say.
- I'm getting good at copying words.
- I often babble to myself.
- Sometimes I will do what you ask me to do.
- I try to sing, and I like to have

you sing to me.

- Sometimes I can ask you for what I want like a cookie by naming it.
- I can say about ten words, but mostly I use the word "no."
- I am beginning to understand the meaning of "now."

## What I Have Learned

- I can fit a round block into a round hole.
- I can point to one or two parts of my body if you name them.
- I can copy the simple lines you make on paper.
- I may be able to match circles and squares on a form board.
- I am beginning to remember where things belong. I can use a stick to get a toy. I can build a tower of two or three blocks.
- With your help I can turn pages of a book.

## How I Get Along with Others

- I'm still mostly just interested in myself.
- I may be grabby and greedy.
- Sometimes I'm stubborn and bossy and sometimes I'm loving; in a few months I'll be calmer and friendlier.
- I may be afraid of some things, like thunder and lightning and large animals.
- I may have temper tantrums when I'm tired or angry.
- I still love to show off and get attention.

## What I Can Do for Myself

- I can help put toys away.
- I may be able to turn on some faucets.
- When I'm ready for bed, I may bring you my pillow or my favorite stuffed toy.

## Play I Enjoy

- I like playing with nesting toys and stacking toys.
- I often run around without any special plan.
- I like pushing wheel toys and large toy boxes and other things like that around the floor.
- I may be able to string large, colored, wooden beads.
- I like blowing bubbles. I still don't play very long with any one thing.

# Games for Growing

## Sounds Things Make

### Purpose of the Game

To help your child say hard words and learn to connect objects with sounds.

### How to Play

- Sit together.
- Make sounds for your child. Use your body to show action like when a jet goes “zoom,” a duck goes “quack,” a fire engine goes “ding-ding-ding,” a train goes “choo-choo-choo,” and a dog goes “wuuff-wuuff.”
- After each sound you make, ask the child, “How does a jet go?” or “How does a dog go?”
- You can use a picture of the objects when you play this game.

can it is under.

- Change the position of the cans but always put the toy under the same can.
- When your child guesses the right can say, “Good, let’s try it a few more times to see if you know where the toy is always hidden.”



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Remember—when playing any game with your child, be flexible. Change the way you play it and encourage your child to change the game too. Games should be fun for both of you.

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## It’s Always in the Same Place

### Purpose of the Game

To help your child pick the can that a toy is under three times in a row so that he can learn to use clues like sizes, shapes, and so on to solve problems.

### How to Play

- Sit with your child at a table or on the floor.
- Tell your child to turn around and not to peek.
- Put a toy under one of three different size tin cans.
- Ask your child to guess which



# Health

## Toddler Immunizations

Every child needs immunizations during infancy and early childhood. Some of these immunizations are given in the first 6 months of life, but others are not given until the child becomes a toddler.

The first toddler immunization protects against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles) and is called the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) shot. It is given at 12 to 15 months of age. Just one shot protects against all three of these childhood diseases.

The diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis or “whooping cough” (DTP) shot is more of the same immunization your child received as a baby.

Immunizations are very important to protect against dangerous diseases like polio and whooping cough. Frequently, doctors and clinics give the DTP immunization at 15 months of age, along with the MMR immunization.

Keep a written record of your toddler’s immunizations so that you can be sure she has the ones she needs. You will need to show proof that your child has been immunized before she can go to day care or school. The following chart can help you decide if your child is up-to-date on immunizations. Ask your doctor or health department for more information.

## Nutrition

### It’s OK to Eat a Little or a Lot

“You have to eat everything on your plate.” Is this something you were told as a child? After all, no one wants to see food wasted. It’s really unfair to ask your child to eat about the same amount every day. Some days your child will be very hungry and will want more than you’ve put on his plate. Other days he will be less hungry and won’t want as much. Only

your child knows how hungry he is, so let him decide how much to eat. Let him eat until he isn’t hungry anymore, then let him stop.

Many parents worry that their toddler isn’t eating enough, but most toddlers eat enough for growth and health. They don’t need to be bribed or rewarded to eat more.

Don’t punish your child for eating too little or for eating too much. If you do, your child will feel ashamed of his appetite and will begin to feel guilty about food. If there is food left on his plate, put it away for another meal or snack. If you find there is always food left on his plate, you may be giving him too much food and need to give less.

If your child asks for more of a certain food and you don’t have any more of it, say you’re sorry there isn’t anymore. Then offer more of the food that is still left. It takes a lot of patience to help children this age learn to eat well.

Age Vaccine	Birth	1 mo	2 mo	4 mo	6 mo	12 mo	15 mo	18 mo	4-6 yrs	11-12 yrs	14-16 yrs
Hepatitis B <sup>3</sup>	Hep B-1		Hep B-2		Hep B-3					Hep B <sup>3</sup>	
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis <sup>4</sup>			DTaP or DTP	DTaP or DTP	DTaP or DTP		DTaP or DTP <sup>4</sup>		DTaP or DTP	Td	
H. influenzae type b <sup>5</sup>			Hib	Hib	Hib <sup>5</sup>	Hib <sup>5</sup>					
Polio <sup>6</sup>			Polio <sup>6</sup>	Polio		Polio <sup>6</sup>			Polio		
Measles, Mumps, Rubella <sup>7</sup>						MMR			MMR <sup>7</sup> or MMR <sup>7</sup>		
Varicella <sup>8</sup>						Var				Var <sup>8</sup>	

Approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

# Guidance and Discipline

Those who study young children agree that spanking and other physical punishments (like shaking, pinching, and hitting) are not necessary for discipline, and hurt children. Physical punishment, or the threat of it, is not likely to teach children to control themselves. In fact, it may teach them to be sneaky, aggressive, and fearful. It can also teach that hitting or hurting others is OK.

It is also harmful to punish a child by telling him you will leave him or stop loving him. This can cause your toddler to feel he can't trust you or that he is not important to you. He may feel fearful and insecure, and he may be less willing to do what you want.

Here are some discipline ideas that work for many parents:

- Catch your toddler being good and praise him. Too often, parents forget to do this. Praise will help him to be good and will help him to understand which of his actions you like. Don't let him think that you will only pay attention to him when he is acting badly.
- Tell your toddler what he should do instead of what he should not do. "Carry your coat this way," not "Don't drag your coat on the ground."
- Plan ahead. Before special visits and trips (like visits to grandma, parties, or shopping), explain clearly to your toddler how you want him to act.
- Take toys along on trips to fight boredom and crankiness. Keep surprise toys or snacks in your purse for hungry or fussy times.
- Set things up to guide good behavior. Within reason, remove things you don't want your child to touch. Limit visits with other children if you expect fights. Be sure your little one gets enough rest to avoid fussiness.
- Tell, don't ask. If you want your child to act in a certain way, tell him what you want; don't ask him. If you need to take him to the doctor say, "Now we are going to the doctor" not "Do you want to go to the doctor now?" If it's time to put toys away say, "Let's put the toys away now," not "Do you want to put your toys away?"
- Help your little one want to do what he needs to do. If you want him to pick up his toys, make it a game that you play with him. If he resists bath time, tell him a story in the bath.
- Offer alternatives. When your little one is doing something you don't want him to do, suggest something else that he might enjoy. "You can pour water in this basin not on the kitchen floor." "You can throw the ball outside, not in the house."
- Give choices. Sometimes you can help your toddler try out his independence and get cooperation at the same time by giving him a choice. "Will you put your toys away in the basket or in the box?" or "Are you going to wear your sweater or your jacket when you go out to play?"
- If you find yourself getting very angry at your child, take time out. Put your toddler in a safe supervised place, tell him you are upset and that you need to be quiet for a few minutes. Then try to relax. After this, it will be easier for you to guide him calmly and sensitively. If you must discipline your child, have your little one spend a few minutes alone in his room and take "time out." More about this later.

## Show Your Toddler He's Important to You

We feel better about ourselves if we think we are important to others. This is also true of toddlers. They are forming opinions about themselves.

Whether they feel loved, capable, and important depends on how they are treated by people who care for them. Show your toddler you care about him and respect him. Let him know you love him just for being himself, not for what he does. Tell him you thought about him during the day while you were gone. Tell him that you like his smile, his laugh, his toes, and ears. Show him you're proud of all the things he is learning to do. Tell him how much you enjoy doing things with him.

Don't think he knows all this just because you take care of him. Take the time to put your affection into words. Loving words that come from the heart can never be said too often.

### Coming Next:

- Temper Tantrums
- What Are The Terrible Twos?

NMSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE OFFICES

# Baby's First Wish

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Another 4-H Prevention Program

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