

# Baby's First Wish

Cooperative Extension Service  
New Mexico State University

A happy & healthy life

Dear Parents:

21 & 22 Months

Your Little One Is Interested In Other People-But You Are Still No. 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.

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 toys than in other children. Poking, touching, and pushing are her ways of showing interest in other children. She may be interested 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.

# What We Know

## Day Care Can Be Good for Children

Do children who are cared for in day care centers or day care homes develop more poorly than those who are cared for at home by a parent? This question concerns many parents. Studies show that few negative effects of out-of-home child care have been found. In other words, as far as we can tell, children cared for outside their home generally do as well as those cared for at home by parents. Some children develop better in out-of-home child care, some do better with in-home parent care.

What is best for your child? That depends on your child at home, and the quality of out-of-home child care near to you. It is important that you choose day care carefully. If you would like help on choosing child care, call your county Extension office for more information.

## Choosing Child Care

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

There are two things to ask yourself before you decide on a caregiver. First, does she or he like your child? Toddlers need lots of love



and attention.

Second, will the caregiver be there when you need him/her? 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 kind caregiver at home or 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 child care:

Does the caregiver—

- Have child-rearing attitudes like yours?
- Know what children can and want to do at different ages?
- 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?

Does the home or center have—

- A clean and lived-in look?
- Equipment that is safe?
- Nutritious meals and snacks, if provided by 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 senses of touch, sight, and hearing?
- To learn language! Does the caregiver talk to the children, name things, talk about what she or he is doing?

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. Perfectly normal 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.

# Homemade Toys That Teach:

## A Simple Puzzle

### Why?

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 it into two or three pieces.

### Playing

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

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## Toddler Talk

### Help Me Play with Another Child

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 like 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.

## Helping at Home

Teach your child to become a helper in your family. Even young children can help with some household jobs. In helping, your child will begin to learn responsibility and will feel useful. Begin by helping your child with the job. Keep each job simple. Tell your child what good work he's done. Here are some jobs a toddler can do:

- Pick up toys and put them away.
- Put books and magazines on the shelf.
- Put napkins and silverware on the table.
- Clean up the floor after eating.
- Help wipe up after spills.

Remember, don't expect a perfect job from your toddler. Do expect him to help and do praise what he does.

## Happy Days

If you can do the same thing 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 ideas that are not too hard to stick to.

Have quiet time and bedtime at the same time everyday. You can help your little one by telling him that when he is done with lunch, it will be time to rest; after you read one more book, it will be time for bed. Other things 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 time).
- Saying good night to every member of the family, maybe including dogs, cats, and some toys before going to bed.

You can help your child learn about time by letting him know that the mail comes at 10 a.m., or we go to the grocery store on Saturday, or mommy or daddy comes home at 6 p.m.

# 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 while holding on.
- I may use one hand more than the other.
- If you fold a paper, I can copy you.
- I can obey about three directions.

## How I Talk

- I can say about 20 words.
- I like to have you sing songs to me.
- I like to look at books, but if you don't watch me, I may 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 jobs.

## What I Have Learned

- I like very tiny things like bugs. Watch what I put in my mouth.
- I can name people I know from pictures.
- I can put together a 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 curious about people, ani-



- mals, birds, and everything that I see.
- I like listening to nursery rhymes, and I can say them.
- I know when a picture in a book is upside down.
- I can build a tower of four or five blocks.

## How I Get Along with Others

- I have a mind of my own, so I don't always do what you ask. I 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 understand

other people's feelings; I can sometimes cooperate.

- I can show love to you and other favorite people.
- I'm becoming easier to get along with, but I can still be hard to live with sometimes.

## 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.
- I test the limits you set and try to get my own way.

# Games for Growing



- are hard. Put them in one pile.”
- Put the objects 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.

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## 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 and rocks as hard objects and soft toys, cotton balls, 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

## Play and Playthings

We write a lot about play and toys in *Baby's First Wish*. We do this because parents and children enjoy play so much. Playing times are special. They help you and your child to share love. Play is not just a way to have fun. It is also one of the best ways to help children learn.

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 happy person you want him to be.

Set things up so your child can 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. 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.

### Coming Next:

- Toddlers learn about sex
- Bedtime talk



## Nutrition

### Chewing Isn't Easy

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. She might swallow large pieces of food that could choke her. Choking is a real danger for toddlers. Grind meat and cut all food into small bite-size pieces. The foods toddlers choke on most often are hot dogs, candy, nuts, and grapes. 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 starts to choke on something, pick her up and lay her chest down across your lap. Then

tap on her back to get the food out. Don't pound or slap your child too hard, you can break your toddler's ribs. While you are doing this, have someone call the emergency number (911 in many areas) just in case she continues to choke.

### 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, he uses his mouth and tongue to put words to your actions, and he uses his small and large muscles to copy 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. Hot water, sharp kitchen utensils, and heavy objects can hurt your child. Always watch him when he is in the kitchen.

## Be Good to Yourself

### Give Yourself A Pat On The Back

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

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 poison control center telephone number (1-800-432-6866) and your doctor's telephone number near your telephone. Have syrup of ipecac on hand, but don't use it unless poison control, a doctor, or a nurse tells you to.

**Automobiles:** Do not hold your child in your lap. Always put your child in a car seat and buckle both the seat and your toddler. When a car stops suddenly, children and adults continue moving until something stops them. 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.

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 may not act well in public, so be sure you have explained to your toddler before you go out what you will be doing together. Tell her how you want her to behave, and what will happen if she doesn't mind you. You could tell her how you will reward her good behavior. This reward could be a hug or a story on your way home. If you expect her to be bored, hungry, or restless, take food or toys to keep her happy.
- Follow through. If your toddler is acting well, praise her good behavior. If she is not acting well, try to keep calm (not easy to do) and follow through as you had discussed with her earlier. Try not to embarrass her or yourself in front of others. If possible, take her aside and tell her how you want her to act. Don't give in to her. If you do, you are rewarding poor behavior and she will be more likely to do it again.
- Redirect. When your toddler acts out suggest a new activity. Telling her "no" or "don't" is not enough. In the supermarket, for example, if she fusses, ask her to help you find her favorite cereal or the apples. If this doesn't work, tell her you will take her to the car. Remain there with her until she calms down.
- Have patience. No one said parenting was easy. Remember, using good parenting skills now will pay off later. Life will become easier and more enjoyable for both you and your child.

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## Guidance and Discipline Hassles In Public

Have you ever noticed that your toddler seems to act up when you really want her to behave well? You are not alone. Although there are no perfect solutions, 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 *Baby's First Wish* may give you clues

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## Questions Parents Ask

### What Can I Do About Soft Teeth?

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

**A.** 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 blanket, or stuffed animal.

NMSU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE OFFICES

# Baby's First Wish

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21 & 22 Months

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