

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: Build Your Child's Self-Esteem

23 & 24 Months Old

A child's self-esteem is his overall judgment of himself. It determines whether or not he likes, accepts, and respects himself. One of the greatest and most important challenges you face is to help your child feel good about himself.

Children begin very early to form either positive or negative pictures of themselves. You can help your child feel good about himself by telling him that you like who he is and you like the way he does things. Let him know when you think he does a good job of putting blocks in a bucket—or dumping them out of the bucket. Thank him for putting napkins on the table, or hanging his towel up. Show him with smiles as well as words. Tell your child what to do rather than what not to do. Instead of saying, "Don't carry the cat that way" say, "Carry your cat



like this." That way, he'll feel like a success rather than a failure.

Listen to what he says and respond to his questions. Take time to understand his feelings, his joys, and his fears. You are showing him that his ideas and feelings are important. All this will help him to feel important and capable. You are helping him develop the self-confidence to become the

responsible, successful person you want him to be.

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.

Homemade Toys That Teach

A Shape Board Why?

This toy can help children learn about shapes and about things that are alike and things that are different.

Materials

- Cardboard sheet about 8 1/2 by 11 inches
- A bright colored crayon
- White paper

Making the Toy

Draw and color in simple shapes on the cardboard with a colored crayon, a circle, a square, a triangle, and a star. Then draw, color and cut out matching shapes from white paper.

Playing

Show your child how to match the cut-out shapes to the shapes drawn on the board. Talk about the pieces, naming their shapes. Ask her to put the star on the star, the circle on the circle, the square on the square, and so on. Remember, play this and any game only as long as it is fun for both of you. Praise your child's efforts; do not point out her failures.



Be Good to Yourself Good Parent-Bad Parent

Parents often think they aren't doing a "good" job if their children don't act the way they "should." No matter how good you are as a parent, your child will misbehave. If you feel responsible for all your child's misbehavior you will feel stress. That stress is hard on you and can cause you to be hard on your child. This will make things worse for both of you. Instead of putting yourself down, try to give yourself some helpful messages.

For example, sometimes parents think, "If I were a good mother or father, my child wouldn't be having so many tantrums." How about telling yourself and your child, "We got through that trip to the store without any fussing at all!"

Young children need parents who try their best, but that doesn't mean we can succeed 100 percent of the time. We all make mistakes. When you're not feeling OK, do try your best but don't worry that you are not a super parent.

Give yourself and your child credit for the good times and know that nobody is perfect.

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.

Toddler Talk

Give Me Lots of Experiences

- Make up a song or a story. Use my name and change the words to match my actions or feelings. This may help me calm down when I am cranky.
- Sing songs like “Rain, Rain, Go Away” and “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” These simple songs will be easy for me to copy. I won’t really be able to sing until I am closer to 3 years old.
- Let me smell some sweet smelling spices like cloves, curry powder, and cinnamon. Watch me closely so I don’t eat them.
- Look at the sky at night with me. Point out the clouds, the moon, and the stars.
- Keep me interested in my toys by putting them into two boxes and switching boxes every week.



Guidance and Discipline

Limits Show Love

Sometimes between 15 and 24 months, toddlers may become resistant and defiant. You will probably hear them say “no” a lot. All this is perfectly normal. They are more aware of their individuality and more able to do things for themselves. They want to test their independence and power and to

show you how important they are. They may do this by being negative, but that is a sign that they are growing up.

Be patient. These can be trying times for parents. You need to decide early on some reasonable rules—a few, not too many. Make rules that your toddler can understand and follow.

Explain in simple words why you have the rule. Say something like, “You always hold my hand when we cross the street so I can keep you from being hurt.” This helps your toddler learn that rules have a purpose. Studies show that children follow rules better when they are given reasons for the rules. This understanding will help him follow rules and make good decisions later.



What's It Like To Be 23 and 24 Months Old?



How I Grow

- I can pedal a small tricycle.
- I can throw a ball into a basket.
- I can walk down stairs alone, both feet on one step at a time holding on to the railing.
- I like to run more than I like to walk.
- I like to walk on low walls with one hand held.
- I can walk a few steps on tiptoe.
- I might be afraid of the noise of trains, trucks, toilet flushing, and the vacuum cleaner. I might also fear rain, wind, and wild animals. Be patient with me.

How I Talk

- I can ask questions just to keep you talking with me.
- I can answer some questions, such as "What is your name?" "What does the dog say?" "What does the cat say?"

- I can name many things that I see often, such as things in my house, my preschool, or neighborhood.
- I'm learning the meaning of "soon" and am learning to wait.
- I can ask for food and drink.

What I Have Learned

- I can sit and "read" picture books, turning the pages for myself.
- I can put together a puzzle of three to six pieces.
- I know pretty well where things are located in and around my house.
- I can make a tower of eight blocks.

How I Get Along with Others

- I still don't understand sharing, but I like to be with other children sometimes.
- I like to please others.
- I am interested in babies and their mothers.
- I am afraid of rejection.
- I like to order other people around.
- I sometimes show my anger by slapping, biting, and hitting.
- I want my way in everything.
- I am sometimes stubborn, and I use words like, "It's mine," "I don't like it," "Go away," "I won't," and "No" a lot.

What I Can Do for Myself

- I can take off all my clothes and I can put most of my clothes back on.
- I like to unwrap packages.
- I know what a toilet is, but I may not want to use it yet.
- I can turn doorknobs and open doors. Keep dangerous things out of my sight and out of my reach.
- I want to do a lot of things myself

Play I Enjoy

- I like to play simple chase games like tag.
- A teddy bear or soft doll is still my favorite toy.
- I like to take things apart and put them together. Watch out that I don't play with small pieces that could choke me.
- I can stack five rings on a peg toy in the right order.
- I like to be pushed on a swing.
- I mess happily with soft play dough.



Games for Growing

Color Learning

Purpose of the Game

To help your child learn to match colors and begin to learn their names.

How to Play

- Sit on the floor facing your child.
- Select five blocks or other objects of different colors. Place two blocks of different colors in front of your child.
- Point to a block and say, "This is red."
- Ask your child to give you the red block.
- Ask your child to say the color of the block she handed to you.
- Use only two colors at a time, but change the colors. Start with blue and red together, then switch to blue and green.
- Tell your child the name of the new color only. See if your child can remember the name of the other color.

put the name of the object together with the way it feels.

How to Play

- Ask your child to sit on your lap facing away from you.
- Place a blindfold on your child; if the blindfold is scary to your child, just ask him to close his eyes or to turn his head.
- Bring together objects the child knows well like a spoon, rattle, or small stuffed toy.
- Give your child different things one at a time to feel and ask him to guess what he is holding.

Other Blindfold Guessing Games

Put familiar things in a box or paper bag and ask your child to put his hand in the box or bag. Have him tell you what he feels or ask him to take out of the box or bag the items that you name without looking at them.

What We Know

Toddler Mental Development and Home Experiences

What kinds of daily experiences will help in the learning and mental development of young children?

Studies show that the way parents and caregivers help their children develop language skills does affect their children's ability to learn. Those children who were most intelligent had parents or other caregivers who talked to them a lot, encouraged their use of language and did things with them that helped them learn and practice language.

When parents talk to their children, they can say the names of things and describe in words what they are doing. They can also ask children questions about what they are doing. This is how children learn language and adds to their mental development.

Other Color Games

Have your child tell you the names of colors in stoplights or on television, in magazines, or on signs. Put together different things that are of the same color and ask your child what is the same about them. Help your child use crayons or colored pictures to learn the names of the colors.

Blindfold Guessing

Purpose of the Game

To help your child name objects he cannot see. This way, he learns to





Nutrition

New Foods Are Strange Foods

It isn't easy for a toddler to switch from baby foods to adult foods. Your toddler probably won't be happy when she finds a new food on her plate. In fact she, like most toddlers, may not eat a new food the first time it's given to her. When your child rejects a new food, it doesn't mean she doesn't like it. It means she's a little afraid of it and needs some time to get used to it. Here are some things you can do to help:

- Serve yourself the same food and eat it to show that you like it.
- Suggest that she might want to taste it, but don't force, bribe, or punish her if she refuses.
- Serve the new food again within a week or two. The second time, it won't seem so new to her. Again, don't make a fuss if she doesn't eat it. Sometimes it will take four or five tries before a toddler will even taste the new food.

Most toddlers would be happy to

just eat three or four favorite foods. For good nutrition, they need a lot of different foods. Fix many different kinds of food for your toddler, not just a few favorites. Help her enjoy foods like milk, yogurt, cheese, fruits, vegetables, breads, rice, cereals, fish, chicken, meat, eggs, peanut butter, and beans.

Get Ready for Toilet Training

Most girls are ready for toilet training or potty training at about age 2, most boys at about 2 1/2. You should not rush toilet training, but there are some things you can do when you think your child is ready to be trained to use the toilet.

Teach your child the words he needs to ask to go to the toilet. A good time to do this is when you change his diaper. Tell him why you are changing him, "You peed and made your diapers wet" or "You had a BM (or pooped or bowel movement)." Show him

and tell him the word for the toilet or potty chair you will want him to use.

Some children will let you know when they need to go to the toilet by saying the words, pulling your hand, or tugging at their diaper. When they are ready for training, it helps to dress them in loose-fitting training pants they can pull off easily.

When your child shows he wants to go to the toilet, sit with him at least the first few times. Don't give him toys to play with and don't insist that he sit on the toilet when he wants to get off—even if he has not "done" anything. Always praise him for his successes by saying things like, "You made it to the potty!" Don't punish his accidents.

Watch Out

Keep Your Child Car-Safe

Your child moves around quickly now. He may like to run more than he likes to walk. He doesn't know what things could hurt him and may do something dangerous. Don't let him play near the street. Always hold his hand when you are in a parking lot or crossing a street or driveway. Use a car safety seat every time your child is in the car. Buckle the safety seat in the car with the car's seat belt. Never leave your little one alone in the car.

**Coming Next
Guidance and Self-Esteem;
Toilet Training**

I'm So Glad You Asked

Toddlers Learn about Sex

Your toddler is learning fast. You love his curiosity and you want him to ask questions because you know it means he is learning. Do you listen to his questions about sex?

Sexuality is important. Your toddler will have questions about where babies come from and why boys and girls look different from each other. Sure, these questions can be embarrassing, especially when they come when you are in public.

Whenever you see your little one wondering about sex, you have a good chance to help him. You can show your toddler you like his curiosity and you want him to learn about all kinds of things, including sex.

If you can talk to your child now about sex, it will be much easier for both of you to talk about it later. As he grows, the way he thinks and acts about sex will become more important to him and to his relationships with others.

You can expect your toddler to wonder about babies and where they come from. Tell him the truth in words that he knows, something like "Babies grow in a special place inside the mother's body." Show him you are glad he asked the question. If he asks, "how babies get inside the mother, you may simply say that babies are made by mothers and fathers together. You could explain that the father's sperm comes into the mother through the father's penis.

Your child's early questions about sex may be about the differences between men and women. Little girls may wonder why they have no penis; boys may worry that they could lose their penis. You can help your child learn that

boys and girls are born with different genitals or private parts. Your toddler should know the correct names for his body's sexual parts. Teach him these as you teach him the names of other body parts.

All young children handle their genitals. Most children like to explore all parts of their bodies. When they handle their genitals, and find that this feels good; they may rub them. They may rub them when they feel bored or upset.

Some exploring genitals does no harm. It is normal and it is best for you to ignore it. If you try to stop it and tell your children that they have done something wrong, they might think that sex and sexual feelings are bad.

Bedtime Talk

You might enjoy starting bedtime talk as part of your bedtime routine with your toddler. Bedtime is a good time to talk to your toddler without interruption in a cozy, private place. Review the best things that have happened that day and talk about plans for tomorrow. The sound of your soft comforting voice will help your child ease into sleep.

You'll probably find yourself doing much of the talking at first, but you're setting the stage for later talk. As your child grows, she'll want to have private talks with you about important things. You are practicing for these conversations with your bedtime talks. Some nights you may be in a hurry and skip your talk. Don't be surprised if your child says "You forgot to talk to me about today and tomorrow."

Questions Parents Ask

Help! Why Does My 2-Year-Old Bite?

Q. What do I do about my almost 2-year-old who bites and hits other children? Should I hit and bite her back?

A. Sometimes, when young children play together, they push, hit, slap, or bite. Biting and forceful hitting must be stopped right away. Most children bite and hit when they are feeling angry. When your little one bites you or another child, say firmly, "No. Biting hurts." Move her to a safe place, look her in the eyes and say, "Stay here until you feel calmer. I cannot let you bite."

After a minute or two (never more than two minutes), ask her if she is ready to play again without biting or hitting. If she says yes, let her return to her play.

Never bite or hit your daughter back. This does not stop the behavior. In fact, it may make her believe that biting is all right. Most children who bite do so for only a short time. Hitting may continue for a longer time than biting. Help your toddler learn better ways to handle her anger. Teach her to use words like "Stop that," "Go away," "I don't like that" instead of hitting and biting.

When your little one uses words for hurting, praise her with words and hugs and say, "You did a good job of using words instead of hurting." As your daughter learns to say her feelings in words, hitting and biting will decrease.

Baby's First Wish

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