

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:

25 & 26 Months

Twos are Terrific!

Twos are terrific, tender, trying, taxing, and very, very exciting. Your little one has come a long way in two short years and so have you. As a parent of a 2 year old, these are some things you will need this next year:

- Patience to help you cope with your child's mood swings, from very cooperative to highly unreasonable.
- Awareness to help you see that your child's surroundings are safe.
- Loving firmness to help you gently apply rules in a consistent way so your child can learn responsibility and self-sufficiency.
- Humor to help you laugh at yourself and with your child
- Wonder to help you see your 2 year old as the creative, special person she really is.
- Enthusiasm to enjoy and celebrate your toddler's many accomplishments during this year.



Watch Out

For cuts and scrapes!

Small children get minor cuts and scrapes very often. These injuries happen when children fall, run into things, or step on sharp objects.

- Do not let your child play where there is sharp-edged furniture.
- Do not let your child play where she can climb to high places.
- Close doors to rooms that are not safe and doors that go out to your yard.
- Put shoes on your child when she plays outdoors.

Health

Regular Health Checkups

Toddlers grow fast. As they grow, they need regular health checkups. Your child's health examination will give the doctor an opportunity to spot problems early. This way, problems can be taken care of before any serious or long-term effects occur. The record from the health checkups provides information about your child's health and immunization. You will need this record when you enroll your child in day care, nursery school, or kindergarten. If your child needs special food or medication while away from home, the health record gives caregivers the correct medical information. Be sure you keep your child's health record in a safe place where you can find it easily.

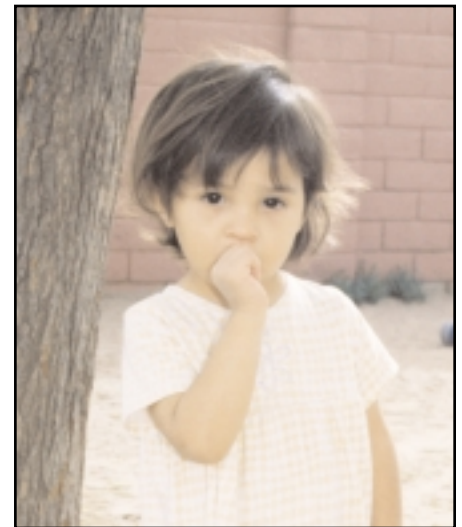
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a well child examination include the following:

- History of how the child is growing and developing
- Physical examination
- Dental examination
- Nutritional examination
- Vision and hearing tests
- Hemoglobin or hematocrit test
- Urine test
- Tuberculin test
- Immunizations

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends toddler checkups at about 12 months, 15 months, 24 months, 36 months, and after age 3, every 2 years. Of

course if parents or doctors have special concerns about the child, examinations will be more frequent.

If you do not have a doctor for your child, ask your local health department. They can give you the name of a physician or health department clinic where you can get a complete examination.



Questions Parents Ask Why Does My Child Still Suck Her Thumb?

Q. My son is 2 and still sucks his thumb. Is this ok?

A. Yes, thumb sucking is a very common behavior of children under 6 years old. It's one way a young child has to comfort himself. Many doctors believe that if you keep a child from sucking his thumb or fingers, he may develop sleeping problems or begin to wet his bed. Thumb sucking usually disappears on its own, especially if the child is not pressured to give it up.

Sometimes parents pull thumbs and fingers out of their young children's mouths, because they are worried about dental problems. Dental problems do not usually occur until the child's permanent

teeth erupt at 5 or 6 years of age. Even then, there may be no ill effects from casual thumb sucking.

If you are worried about your child's thumb sucking, keep track of how often he sucks and for how long. Take these notes for several days. This record will help you and your doctor or dentist discuss the situation and decide what to do about it.

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.

Games for Growing

What's Your Name?

Purpose of the Game

To give your child practice saying his first and last name and to help him feel good about himself.

How to Play

When you are with your child, say his name to him in songs and stories, using his last name too. Make up games where he tells his name. Show him how much you enjoy it when he names himself in his photographs.

Happy Face Colors

Purpose of the Game

To help your child learn to solve problems and to match colors.

Materials Needed to Make the Game

- Sheet of cardboard about 11 by 16 inches or one regular size manila file folder
- Ten sheets of different colored paper or 10 different colored crayons to color white paper
- Pencil
- Drinking glass
- Scissors
- Child safe glue (check the bottle to be sure it says nontoxic or child safe)
- Marker pen for drawing simple faces

How to Make the Game

- Make your happy face circles by drawing around a water glass. Make two circles of each color of paper or color two circles with each crayon.
- You will have 10 pairs of circles, each pair a different color. Draw happy faces with eyes open on one set of circles. On the matching circle, draw happy faces with eyes closed.

- Cut out all of the circles, stack them in two separate piles: one with eyes all open, one with eyes all closed.
- Glue all of the happy faces with open eyes to the cardboard or to the file folder. Put the happy faces with closed eyes in an envelope.

How to Play

Place the happy face cardboard or opened manila file folder in front of your child on the floor, or at a table.

One by one, give him different colored happy face circles. Encourage him to put each one on the same colored happy face glued to the cardboard. Say the name of the color as your child puts each happy face on the correct color.

When all the faces have been matched, have your child pick up the happy face circles one by one

and hand them back to you. Say the color of each circle as your child hands it back to you.

Fun Drummer

Purpose of the Game

To help your child learn about different sounds and rhythms and to build coordination.

How to Play

Show your child how to make different drumming sounds by hitting things with a spoon or a fork. He can hit a pan, a chair, the floor, his shoe, a bottle, and so forth. You can take turns leading the game, with each of you hitting one thing after another in sequence. You also can try drumming to singing or music, or you can mix fast and slow drumming sounds.



What's It Like To Be 2 and 2 1/2 Years Old?

How I Grow

- I often have to look at my feet to keep from stepping on things that are in my way.
- I like to do things in the same way each day.
- I like to walk by myself; I don't like being carried or pushed in a stroller.
- I can walk backwards for about 10 feet.
- I can jump with both feet off the ground.
- I can balance on one foot for about a second.
- I'm interested in lots of things but usually just for a few minutes.
- I get into things and make messes.
- I can take lids off jars. Be sure things you don't want me to open have safety caps.
- I may have learned from adults to fear snakes, mice, and spiders.

How I Talk

- I like to learn words that describe things like high, big, wet, hard.
- I can understand sentences, but I can't say long sentences yet.
- I like books. I can point to pictures and name them.
- I usually give information in two or three-word sentences like "all dirty," "go to store," "that mine."
- I can sing parts of songs or all of very short songs.
- I'm learning what front, back, side, and under mean.
- I am paying more attention now to what people say.
- I can use plurals like dogs,



books, cups.

- I can imitate my parents' voices.
- I talk mostly to myself and adults, not much to other children.

What I Have Learned

- I can draw a pretty good circle.
- I understand why some things happen, like turning on a switch makes the light come on.
- I'm getting better at remembering and keeping my attention on things.
- I can sometimes understand "today" and "pretty soon," but I don't understand "yesterday."
- I can sort silverware in a drawer.

How I Get Along With Others

- I'm good at getting your attention.
- Mostly, I'm still just interested in myself.
- I don't usually share toys or play well with other children my own age.
- I may hit other children not

because I don't like them, but because I just don't know what else to do.

- I stare at other people and like being looked at.
- I may call other children "baby," men "daddy," and women "mommy."
- If you ask me to do something simple I can usually do it.
- I am now more willing to be away from you.
- I want to do things my own way by myself.
- I say "no" a lot and often do what you want me not to do just to show you how independent I am.
- It helps me to feel important if you admire what I have learned to do.
- I like our routines like the story and hug you give me before I go to sleep.

What I Can Do For Myself

- I can use a spoon and fork pretty well. I still spill some.
- Sometimes, I can ask to go to the toilet. I like to wash my hands, but not my face.
- I'm ready to learn to brush my teeth but you will need to help me until I am older and better coordinated.
- I'm still better at undressing than dressing.
- I like to help you put things away and clean things up.

Play I Enjoy

- I like to talk to myself when I play.
- I like wheel toys like kiddie cars. Be sure I ride these safely.
- I like to play in the bathtub and often don't want to leave it.
- I like stories you tell me about myself and my things.
- I like to run, gallop, and sway to music.
- I like toys that I can pile up or nest or sort by color or size.
- I sometimes act silly just to make you laugh.
- I like to paint with large paint brushes and finger paint; I'm pretty messy.



Toilet Training

During their second year, most children become interested in learning to use the toilet on their own. A potty on the floor that the child can use herself helps her to get started. Learning to use the toilet is important to the child, and of course, to her parents. Give her lots of praise for every success.

Don't scold for accidents. Praise successes. Most children will stop dirtying before they stop wetting. Most will be able to stay dry during the day before they can stay dry at night. Many children cannot stay dry at night until they are about 3 years old.

Sometimes children seem to be toilet trained and then they start wetting or soiling again. This can happen when the children are upset about something like a new baby in the family, pressure from adults to stay dry, or family stress. Again, be patient and caring, and praise successes.

Sure, you're eager to be rid of diapers, but if you don't rush toilet training, there will probably be less stress on everyone. Don't start toilet training until your toddler shows she wants to use the toilet. Then it should go quickly and smoothly. Toilet training should not be upsetting to parents or their children. If it is, wait a few weeks and try again.



Be Good to Yourself When You're All Tied Up in Knots

Stress can make your body feel bad. Over the long term, stress can cause physical damage. Over the short term, you may feel headaches, tight muscles, backaches, or a stiff neck. Here are some exercises you can do any time to relieve the physical effects of stress:

- Sometimes stress makes us breathe poorly, and we don't get enough oxygen. Deep breathing can make you feel better, and it can give you a sort of "time-out" to help you handle whatever is causing the stress. Close your eyes and sit up straight. Breathe in, slowly and deeply. Count silently to two—hold the air in for another count—then let the air out slowly. Repeat this slow, deep breathing for 5 to 10 minutes if you can. You should be more relaxed when you finish.
- When your muscles are sore but you don't have time to go swimming or walking, try these exercises wherever you are. Try to raise your shoulders up to your ears. Hold for a few seconds, then drop your shoulders back down. Repeat a few times. Try rotating your shoulders around, one at a time, then together. With your shoulders relaxed, move your head slowly from side to side, then around in a circle. Make sure to keep breathing deeply while you exercise.

For more information on toilet training, call your county extension office and ask for the publication, "Toilet Training for Toddlers."

Homemade Toys That Teach

Feelie Bag

Why?

Children learn by touching things around them. They learn that some things are soft and some are hard, some cool and others warm. Some things are rough and some smooth, some light and some heavy. This toy can help your toddler learn to tell one kind of feel from another.

Materials

- Paper bag
- Assorted small objects to feel
- Crayon

Making the Toy

Write your child's name in large letters with crayon on the paper bag. This lets her know that the bag is hers and gives her the idea of writing.

Choose some things she might enjoy feeling, and put them in a bag. Examples would be a smooth rock, a rough rock, a piece of wood, a piece of paper egg carton, some pieces of cloth, a feather, and so on. Be sure the things you put in the bag are not sharp or dangerous.

Playing

Close the top of the bag, leaving a hole just big enough for the child's hand. Ask your toddler to reach in and find something soft or hard or smooth or rough. Ask her what she has found and help her learn to say, "I have found something hard" or "I have found something rough."

You can turn this into a guessing game. Have your toddler reach in and touch something. Have her say, "I have found something soft. What is it?" or "I have found something hard. What is it?" Then you guess what it is. You can take turns guessing. This is a good

game for two or three children to play together. Your toddler can help you change the game by putting different things in the bag.

Nutrition

Television Tells Toddlers about Cereals

Has this happened to you yet? You are pushing your grocery cart down the aisle of the supermarket. All of a sudden, your toddler sees a certain brand of breakfast cereal. He begins calling out the name of the cereal. He wants you to buy it. You are amazed. You've never bought this kind of cereal, and he's never eaten it. How did he find out about it?

Probably from television. Toddlers don't seem to pay much

attention to television, but they are often aware of what is happening on the screen. Commercials are very appealing because of the action and the noise. The food most often advertised during children's television programs is cereal. Some of these cereals are nutritious, others are not. In fact, some of these cereals have more sugar than cereal in them. They are more like candy than cereal.

How can you tell if a cereal is high in sugar? Look for the list of ingredients on the cereal box. They are listed in order of amounts. The first ingredient is what there is most of in the cereal. The last ingredient is what there is least of in the cereal. If the first ingredient in the list is sugar, there is more sugar in the cereal than anything else. You will want to choose another cereal lower in sugar.

What do you tell your child when you decide not to buy the cereal? Say, "This is not a 'good-for-you' cereal. We want to buy a 'good-for-you' cereal to help you grow healthy and strong." Check labels on other cereals and let him choose from the cereals that are low in sugar. If your child is unhappy because you aren't going to buy the cereal he wants, move away from the cereal display. Go on and do the rest of your shopping. You can spend time reading cereal labels when you are shopping alone.



What We Know Successful Parenting

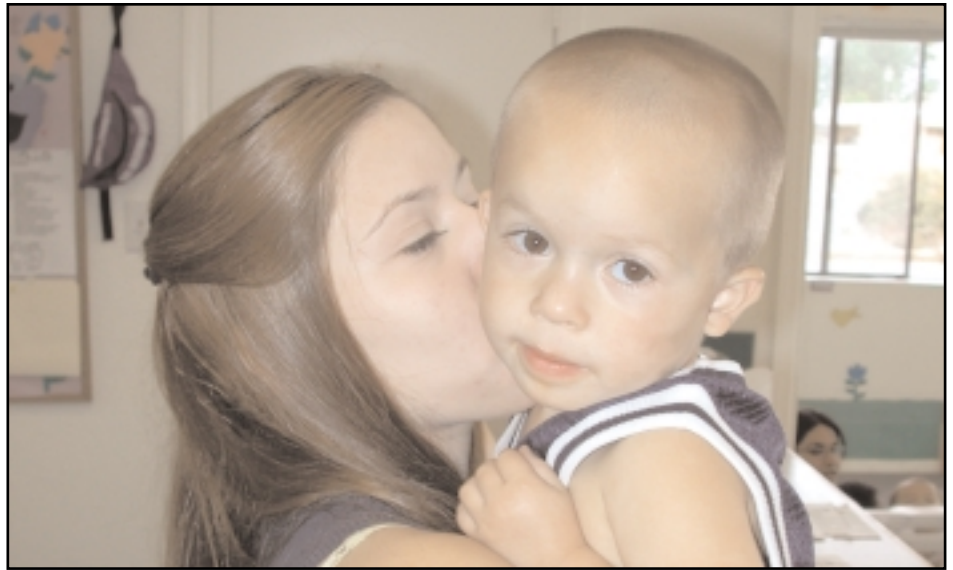
We know that what parents do for and with their young children shapes their children's development. Studies of parenting and child development show how parents of competent toddlers behave with their children. Toddlers who were most competent were the ones whose parents:

- Carefully organized their children's routines.
- Encouraged their children to help a lot with household chores.
- Allowed their children to do some messy things, such as washing dishes.
- Read to their children daily.
- Severely limited and supervised their children's television viewing.
- Observed their children closely to keep them safe and to fit activities to their developmental level.
- Had firm, consistent household rules and gave children reasons for these rules.
- Saw themselves as teachers of their children and actively helped their children learn.
- Played with their children frequently including pretend play.

Guidance and Discipline

Guidance and Self-Esteem

We all want our children to grow up feeling they are capable and lovable. One of the trickiest and most important skills parents must learn is guiding their children in ways that control naughty behavior and help the children feel good



about themselves. This is hard to do when you are angry or upset because your child is causing a problem. You need practice and a lot of patience at these times not to be critical or accusing.

Unfortunately, a young child who lives with criticism can come to feel hopeless, and may stop trying to cooperate. When your child misbehaves, she needs "help-outs" instead of "put-downs." "Help-outs" make her feel you love her and you know she can learn to do better. "Put-downs" do just the opposite.

The following is a list of "help-out" comments:

- Here's a sponge. I'll help you clean it up.
- That's hard to do. Let me do it with you.
- I'm proud of you for trying that. Hold it with both hands next time and it may not fall.
- That is a dangerous thing to do. You could fall. Let me hold your hand.

The following are destructive "put-downs":

- I knew that would happen if I let you do it alone.
- Can't you do anything right?

- You're being a brat.
- Why do you always drop things?
- You never pick up your clothes.
- Won't you ever learn?
- Can't you see that's dangerous? Listen to yourself. Try to substitute "help-outs" for "put-downs."

Toddler Talk

I Like Learning New Words

You can help me learn words.

- When we go for walks, take along a bag to collect treasures like leaves, rocks, flowers, and pieces of wood. We can look at these treasures and name them when we get back home.
- Repeat the names of things over and over again, using simple words and short sentences. Talk to me about what I am doing and what you are doing. Don't use baby talk.
- Let me get things for you. Name what you want and I will even go to other rooms to find it.

Coming Next: Food Rewards Can Backfire; Discipline with "Time Out"

Baby's First Wish

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Baby's First Wish was adapted from Parent Express, California Cooperative Extension, by Dr. Wendy Hamilton and Dr. Diana DelCampo, New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service.



Another 4-H Prevention Program

Order Alert: *Baby's First Wish* is an educational program from NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service. This newsletter series is designed for parents with young children. To order the series, contact your county Extension office. 2002

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25 & 26 Months

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