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13 Months

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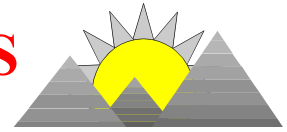
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GREAT BEGINNINGS

A Series for Parents of Young Children



13 MONTHS

Toddlers Are in Prime Time

Your baby will be growing fast and learning a tremendous amount this next year. This is a very important time. It is a time when your child:

- Moves from babyhood into childhood.
- Learns new skills such as feeding herself.
- Can do a lot of things but does not always know how these actions could hurt her or others.
- Will develop curiosity that will delight as well as frustrate and tire you.

Guiding your child this next year will be an exciting challenge. She'll need a lot of attention and encouragement from you.

You'll need a sense of humor, some time for yourself, and lots of common sense. Knowing that your child's behavior is both normal and temporary can help you during this time.

Surviving the 12- to 18-Month-Old

You've probably heard people talk about the "terrible two's," but sometimes we forget about the really important things that happen between 12 and 18 months. Your baby will get a lot of practice in learning "how to learn."

Toddlers are a big challenge. This period will truly test your flexibility, patience, understanding, and sense of humor. Why? Because there's no simple

way to make a baby this age explore safely or obey your requests.

Be kind to your child and yourself: Baby-proof. Your child loves to explore and he needs to explore to learn, but he can so easily get into trouble. It takes a lot of time and energy to watch him and keep him and your belongings safe from harm. This is **not** easy.

Baby-proof your home by removing anything he can hurt himself with, and anything he can damage. This may mean storing the coffee table and removing the plants for a while. When accidents do happen, understand that your baby is not trying to be mean. He may be a little too enthusiastic, but he is not deliberately trying to be naughty.

Today's sacrifices are an investment in your child's future. Think about the sacrifices you make in your lifestyle today as an investment in your child's future. What your child learns today can set the stage for a lifetime of loving to learn. Find time for yourself. When you need some peace of mind and quiet, beg or borrow someone to watch your child, put your little one in a playpen for a short time, or take him for a walk or a ride. Take advantage of your child's nap to get some rest and relaxation for yourself.

Research in Brief: Children's Fears

According to Dr. Marion Hyson, University of Delaware, children have a special way of

understanding the world. Their ideas of real and pretend, cause and effect, alive and lifeless are all very different from those of adults, so sometimes children see danger in places that appear harmless to parents.

Here are a few common fears children may develop some time before they are five.

1. Fear of Separation:

From six months on, many children become upset when a parent or caregiver leaves—even if it's just to go to the bathroom. From the child's viewpoint, this reaction is very reasonable. The child has begun to associate protection and security with one special person. When that person leaves, the child doesn't know if the person will ever come back. He's only sure of what he can see and touch. It takes time, and many positive experiences of separation and reunion (including games like peek-a-boo) to relieve this fear.

2. Fear of Change:

Many toddlers feel uneasy about even slight changes in familiar people or objects. One boy refused to play with a beloved teddy bear after his well-meaning grandmother sewed on a new nose. If daddy comes home with glasses or mother gets a haircut, the child may refuse to speak to the *new* parent. To a young child, a thing is what it looks like. If mommy's looks change, the child isn't sure she's really mommy any more.

While parents can't shield children from all changes, they can try to make changes as few and gradual as possible. Sometimes big changes are necessary, like a move to a new house. At such times, young children need the comfort of the familiar: favorite toys and clothing, and regular mealtime and bedtime routines.

3. Fear of Inanimate Objects:

Some toddlers fear *harmless* objects like toilets, vacuum cleaners, or garden hoses. Once again, these fears make sense to the child. Children often believe that everything else in the world is

just like them: the sun wakes up, and trucks want to go fast. In other words, children believe lifeless objects are alive. That can be pretty scary if the object is a roaring-hungry vacuum cleaner or an all-devouring toilet.

4. Fear of Animals:

In some ways, fears about animals (dogs, cats, snakes, insects) are the same as fears of lifeless objects. Children assume that animals also have human intentions and needs. A person who makes loud noises is angry—so isn't that barking dog angry, too? Many young children have trouble handling their own angry feelings, so fierce animals may be especially fascinating and frightening to them. As they learn to express anger in acceptable ways, their fear often fades.

5. Fear of Imaginary Creatures:

“There's a giant in my closet!” Almost every parent has had to banish nighttime intruders from a frightened child's bedroom. Some of the creatures are leftovers from a TV program or movie. Others are simply products of a child's imagination. The dividing line between what's real and what's pretend is unclear to a young child. This is one more reason for parents to limit and monitor their children's television time.

Occasionally a toddler may awaken screaming in the middle of the night after a bad dream, but can't explain what's wrong. Children are convinced that dreams are real, so it's not surprising that they flee to a parent's bed for safety. It's probably best not to encourage this on a regular basis. Instead, wake up the child completely and sit by the bed until he goes back to sleep. Many children feel more secure with a night light, and a favorite stuffed animal or blanket close by.

Many fears are normal by-products of a child's development. They're signs that a child is becoming more aware of the world, and is trying to make sense out of it.

What's It Like to Be 13 Months Old?

How I Grow

- I can climb onto a low ledge or step.
- I don't like any kind of restraint; I want to explore everything.
- I poke, bang, turn, and twist everything I can reach.
- I can probably stand alone and walk pretty well.

How I Get Along With Others

- I love to have people watch me and I like to hear them clap for me; I am beginning to do cute things just to get your attention.
- I show I love you with hugs and kisses... sometimes.
- I still like to keep my mother and father in sight when I'm exploring.
- I'm beginning to adjust to babysitters, but I'm still shy with strangers.

How I Talk

- I am learning simple words.
- I can look in the right direction when you ask where's daddy, where's the ball, where's the kitty.
- I will respond to my name.
- I will wave bye-bye if you ask.
- I have begun to understand the names of some people, animals, and things that are important to me.

What I Have Learned

- I am learning what you will let me do and what you won't let me do.
- I will empty anything I can get to—dresser drawers, kitchen cabinets, trash cans, laundry baskets.
- Sometimes I like to put things back in containers.
- I like to imitate your actions.
- I have learned how to get you and other adults to help me do things.

What I Can Do for Myself

- If you help me, I can hold a cup and drink from it.
- I like taking off my hat, shoes, socks, and pants, but I can't put them back on.

Play I Enjoy

- I like to push a rolling toy and put things in piles.
- I can play alone, but mostly I like to play with you; especially chase-me, catch-me, find-me games and gentle rough-housing.

Children can be very different from each other. Don't worry if your child is *early* or *late* in growth. Look for your child's growth in each area. Encourage each new ability. If you are concerned about your child's development, talk with your doctor.

Nutrition: Sometimes It's Hard to Give Up the Bottle or Breast

Weaning your child from bottle or breast should be done slowly. Most babies aren't ready to give up the bottle or breast one day and begin drinking from a cup the next.

Drink milk in a cup. By now, your child has probably been drinking from a cup for a while. If you've also been giving milk in a bottle or from the breast, now is the time to give milk in a cup at mealtimes. Your child will drink less milk as she begins eating more solid food.

Keep the bottle out of bed. Some children may still want the bottle or breast when they wake up, or when they go to sleep. It's okay to give it as long as your baby doesn't go to sleep sucking on a bottle. Sucking on a bottle all night can hurt baby's teeth.

Gradually give up the bottle or breast. After a while your child will forget about the bottle or breast. Don't offer it. Let your child ask for it and then give it only if she really seems to need it. See if your baby won't settle for something else to drink

instead. Limit the time the child has the bottle or breast. If you let your little one carry a bottle around during the day, it will be harder for her to give it up.

Don't put fruit drinks in bottles. Fruit drinks, soft drinks, fruit punches, or beverages other than milk are not nutritious. They are mostly sugar and water. When your child is thirsty, offer tap water, milk or real fruit juice in a cup.

Some toddlers drink from a bottle longer than others. Be patient. Don't force your child to give up the bottle or breast before she seems ready.

Copy Play: An All-Time Favorite

You may have seen how your little one likes to copy what you do. She may try to feed you pieces of food the way you feed her. If you accept the food and show you enjoy it, she will laugh gleefully. This makes her feel important.

You copy Baby. You will enjoy seeing your child try to copy the things you do—eating, washing, cooking, cleaning, and so forth. Your little one will especially enjoy having you play games in which **you copy her**. When you do, you are being responsive. She likes that because it shows her that what she does is important to you. This helps build her self-confidence.

Try copying her hand movements, her play activities, her body movements, or her language. She'll giggle happily and she'll be learning how her own movements look to you.

Mirrors are fun. Mirror play is fun for your little one. She likes to watch you in the mirror while you copy her. She'll also enjoy just watching herself in the mirror. She'll laugh at her smiling reflection and may pat or kiss it.

“Let me show you how.” You can use imitation to help your little one learn. When she is learning to drink from a cup, you can drink to show her how. When you want her to pick up toys, you can set an example.

Other Imitation Games

You can have your child build with cans, boxes, or other similar objects. You can have him build designs by imitating what you do. You can build pyramids, trains, or two towers together.

Games for Growing: Building a Tower

Purpose of the Game: To help your child build a tower by himself so that he can understand that things can be combined to make other things.

How to Play:

- Sit on the floor or at a table by your child.
- Place blocks in a pile in front of you and your child.
- Build a tower with two or three of the blocks.
- Don't knock down the tower. Take it down, one block at a time.
- Ask your child to make another tower.
- If your child doesn't start to make a tower, hand the child a block and say, “See, we can put one on top of the other.”
- When your child puts one block on top of another say, “You can do it.” (Note: If the tower falls, don't make a big thing out of it.)
- Some children cannot do this until they are older. Don't worry if your child needs more time or more practice. Be patient and encouraging and stop the game before your child is bored or frustrated.

Questions

- Q:** “I am new to this country and I don't speak English well. Should I talk to my son in my own language or in the little bit of English that I know?”
- A:** Children learn language best from someone who speaks it well. Since you can speak your native language well, speak to your son in your native language. Help him learn it as well as he can. Later, when he has a chance, he can learn English from someone who speaks English well.

He will learn to speak English more easily after he has become skilled in your language.

Be Good to Yourself: When You Feel Like Screaming

Raising a toddler can make you feel really uptight sometimes. Your child is becoming more and more of a challenge every month.

It's hard to be the one who is always responsible. Your body may get tense and you may feel like screaming or hitting something.

When you think you just can't stand it one more second, STOP. **Take time out.** Here are a few time out relaxers to try:

- Close your eyes and take long, deep breaths.
- Make sure your child is in a safe place, then close yourself in a room for just a few minutes until you calm down.
- If you've become involved in an argument with adults around you, tell them when you've reached your limit and need to have some time alone.
- Ask a friend or relative to watch your child for a short time.
- Look in the front of your telephone book and see if there is a parental stress hotline. Call the number. Keep it posted near your telephone with other emergency numbers.

When you take time out to handle your stress, you're doing yourself AND your baby a big, big favor. Besides saving your child from painful words and actions, you'll be showing your child a good way to handle stress.

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