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14 Months

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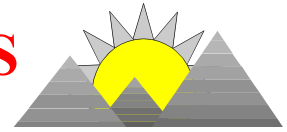
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GREAT BEGINNINGS

A Series for Parents of Young Children



14 MONTHS

Homemade Toys that Teach: A Chance to Create Together

Toys don't have to come from stores. Some of the best toys for your child can be those you make from things you have around the house.

Homemade toys can be great bargains. Homemade toys are almost free, and they give you and your child a chance to create something together. Let your child help you decide how to make the toy and let him help you put it together. This will encourage his creativity and help him learn new skills. Very young children can help by suggesting colors and choosing supplies; older toddlers can paste and color. I can help! Your child gets other special benefits from homemade toys. He is learning that he can make things for himself, that he doesn't need to buy all his fun from a store. This increases his sense of self-reliance while it helps him build his imagination and skill.

Careful! Watch your child and make toys that will fit his interests and skills. Remember to be careful about safety. Watch out for sharp edges, or other things that could choke or hurt your child if they are broken or go into his mouth.

What's It Like to Be 14 Months Old?

How I Grow

- I can probably stoop and stand up again.

- I'm very interested in small things like crumbs, bugs and pebbles.
- I spend a lot of time just staring at things; this is the way I learn.
- I may be afraid of the dark.

How I Get Along with Others

- I like to have you play with me.
- Sometimes I drop things just to get you to pick them up for me.
- I don't much like playing in a room by myself.
- I may have tantrums and throw things when I'm angry.

How I Talk

- I can let you know when I want something like a glass of milk.
- I like putting sounds together.
- I really try hard to make you understand me.
- I like to repeat words you say.
- Sometimes I like you to tell me the names of things pictured in a book but I don't much like stories yet.

What I Have Learned

- I have not yet learned what is dangerous for me to do.
- I may scream just to show you how powerful I am.
- I have learned pat-a-cake and like to show it off to appreciative audiences.

- Sometimes, not often, I will respond to a firm “no-no.”

What I Can Do for Myself

- I can hold a spoon, but I probably can't eat with it yet.
- I like to feed myself with my hands and smear food on my face and everything I can reach.
- I can open and close doors.

Play I Enjoy

- I like putting little things in big things.
- I like to listen to music and dance to it.
- I'm beginning pretend play like driving a pretend car.

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.

Television and Toddlers

Television is not a good babysitter. Most young children would rather be doing other things at this age. Watching television does not give your child the muscle exercise he needs. It does not give him a chance to explore or to be an active learner. And unless you're watching television with him, it's lonely.

Avoid too much television. Some parents try to have their children watch television to keep them quiet, but these children might become hooked on television. They might sit and watch for hours, even when they're older. Too much of this can keep them from playing and making friends.

Talking with real people helps toddlers learn. The television makes it hard for your little one to talk to you and hear you. This can delay the very important development of language skills.

Use television with care. Do your toddler a favor and turn off the television except for very special, occasional programs. When he does watch television, talk to your little one about what he is seeing. This talking may be the best part of the program for him.

Playing Responsively

Play is the way children learn. They love to play with their parents and other caring adults. Play with them in ways that don't take away their pleasure or their opportunities to learn. Here are some simple rules of play:

Watch. Watch your child without interrupting—observing his interests and his skill levels. You are learning about how he plays.

Let your child lead. Join in and play at the child's level, letting the child lead. If you try to teach complicated ideas too quickly, your child might be confused and disappointed.

Be accepting. Ask your child to tell you about what he's doing, but don't pass judgment.

Show him how to do something slightly more difficult. After playing for a while at your child's pace, you might introduce a slightly more difficult stage of play. For example, if your child can put together a two-piece puzzle, try one with three pieces. If your child likes building with blocks, you might show him how to combine block play with toy animals.

Watch again. Every now and then, stop playing with him and just watch your child play. Watch how he explores his new activity. After your child learns to do something new by himself, you can join in and suggest another new activity.

Remember, your child's attention span is very short. When he grows tired of playing, it's time to stop.

Games for Growing: Pop Goes the Weasel

Purpose of the Game: To help your child listen for a special signal and act on it. Your child will learn to listen for the POP and jump up without help when she hears it.

How to Play:

- Sit facing your child on the floor or on low chairs.
- Sing to your child:
“All around the carpenter's bench
The monkey chased the weasel,
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun!
POP, goes the weasel.”
- As you sing POP, take your child's hands and pull the child up. Then sit your child back down as you complete “goes the weasel.”
- Soon your child will listen for the word POP and have fun jumping up without your help.

Safety: Watch Out for Poisoning

Did you know that children between the ages of 10 and 20 months are far more likely than children of other ages to be victims of accidental poisoning?

Many things can poison children. Poisoning most often happens when children have learned to crawl. They get into things and are curious about the world around them, but they have not yet learned what kinds of things are dangerous. Many things can poison children, including:

- Garden and house plants.
- Colognes, perfumes, hair products and cosmetics.
- Tobacco, food flavorings and spices.
- Gasoline, insecticides, roach sprays and powders.

Garden and house plants can be poisonous. Many kinds of garden and house plants are poisonous if eaten; oleander and castor bean are especially dangerous and can be fatal. Some plants cause

vomiting, others cause changes in children's heart rate, body temperature or bowel movements.

Know the plants in and around your house. Be careful of plants that have hairy leaves, milky juice or sap, or thorny leaves, fruit or seed pods.

Keep cigarettes and liquids out of reach. If a child eats one cigarette, it can kill him. To young children, all colored liquid looks like juice and all white powder looks like sugar. Your curious explorer needs to be protected from these things.

Do regular safety checks. Give your house regular safety checks. Make sure everything dangerous is locked up or out of reach. Cover electrical outlets. As toddlers learn to climb, they can open cabinets that they could not reach before.

Keep emergency numbers handy. Keep the telephone number of the nearest poison control center, your doctor's number, and other emergency numbers posted close to your telephone. If your child eats any part of a plant or other poisonous substance, call the emergency number.

Have syrup of ipecac on hand, but don't use it unless the doctor or poison control center tells you to use it. If your child must have emergency treatment, bring a piece of the substance your child has swallowed or the container to the doctor or hospital with you.

Guidance and Discipline: Foundation of Cooperation

Do you know that by the time your baby is a year old, you have done many things already to help him behave well? Babies who are loved, protected and comforted during their first year feel safe and trusting. They have a close, loving bond with their parents.

During their second year, babies will want to follow their parents' simple requests. They will also come to imitate their parents' caring behavior. As a result, they will be more likely to accept limits, guidance,

and discipline during the sometimes rocky months ahead.

Discipline is difficult, but very important. Remember that discipline means helping children grow into responsible adults. Discipline may be the most difficult and the most important part of parenting. It is one way to show love.

Until his first birthday, you limited your baby's activities by distracting him, holding him, and putting harmful and breakable things out of his reach. Within the next couple of months, he will probably begin to understand “no” but don't expect him to respond to it very often yet.

Begin to use words to guide. You can begin now using words to guide and limit him. Set a few reasonable rules and stick to them. If he disobeys, stop him, tell him the rules again and why you have them—in simple words. Do not punish him. He will learn more quickly and easily with teaching and guidance than he will with criticism and punishment. Be patient with him now; it will pay off later.

Research in Brief: Children's Fears

Children's fears are different from adult fears, according to Dr. Marion C. Hyson, University of Delaware. Children seem to have more fears than older people.

In their early years most children go through brief periods in which they show definite fear of certain objects or events. Lack of experience explains many of these fears. Other fears grow out of terrifying events. For example, a child who almost drowned may refuse to go near the water.

Parents can do several things to help their fearful children.

Wait awhile! Many fears, like a fear of strangers, are outgrown within a few months. A child who's terrified of dogs at age two may be begging for a puppy by kindergarten.

Respect the child's feelings and insist that others do the same. Some people enjoy teasing children about their fears. Besides being unkind, this just strengthens the fear.

Desensitize your child by gradually exposing her to the feared object or situation. A child who is afraid of dogs could first play with a stuffed animal, then look at dogs from a distance, and slowly work up to petting a small, quiet dog.

Encourage your child to act out a feared situation. Play can help children control and master their environment. Use dolls, toys, or puppets to play “going to the doctor” or “staying with the babysitter.”

Talk with your child about situations that are likely to be worrisome. The most helpful information is specific and geared to the child's level. Suppose you're going out. You might leave your old pocketbook with a toddler, or (for an older child) set the hands of a clock to show when you'll be back. We all like to know what to expect.

Notice your child as much when she's not fearful as when she is. Most children aren't putting on an act when they seem afraid. However, adults often shower the fearful child with comfort and attention. Certainly parents shouldn't ignore a crying child, but should make sure the child also gets lots of hugs when she's not crying.

Although parents may sometimes be inconvenienced or annoyed by a toddler's fears, these normal childhood worries are quickly outgrown. Many parents wish their daredevil 10-year-olds were more fearful.

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