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17 Months

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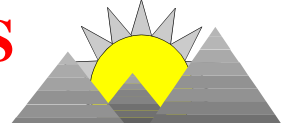
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G R E A T B E G I N N I N G S

A Series for Parents of Young Children



17 MONTHS

Emotions Are Blossoming

You have probably noticed that your little one can show intense feelings. You may have seen him become suddenly very excited, frustrated, happy, angry or fearful.

Name feelings. You can help him understand his feelings by giving them each a name. When a box won't open or a car won't roll, your little one may drop it or throw it in anger. Hold him and say calmly that you know it makes him angry when the toy won't work.

These words show your toddler that you understand his anger. They also give him words that help him understand his feelings.

Show him how to cope. Show him how the toy works, substitute another toy or hold him gently. He will know you care about his feelings and he will begin to learn to handle them.

Build a strong foundation. It takes many years for a child to understand and cope with his feelings. The help you give him now will make this learning easier.

Keep Exploring Safe for Your Toddler

Your child must explore to learn. Help her explore safely. She will explore everything around her. She will put everything into her mouth and reach

everything she can see. She will crawl or climb onto, into, above, or below anything. She does not know what is dangerous. She cannot remember "no." It is up to you to think ahead for her, to understand that at any time, she may suddenly do something that will put her in danger.

Questions

- Q:** "How can I keep my child from being spoiled?"
- A:** Most of us think a *spoiled* child is one who expects always to get her own way, even at the expense of others. She is demanding, self-centered and most unpleasant to be around.

We have said before that you cannot spoil a young baby by giving her care, comfort and attention when she wants it. One-year-olds who have been well cared for are generally secure and trusting. Babies who have uncertain care during their first year may become fearful and more demanding.

During a child's second and third years, *spoiling* can happen if parents don't set limits or don't enforce limits consistently. Children become spoiled when parents give in to unreasonable demands, fail to limit annoying behavior or allow their children's minor needs to inconvenience others.

When limits are clear and enforced all the time, children learn how to succeed within these limits. This builds self-esteem. Children need and want

reasonable limits and rules. These should be rules your child can understand and follow.

Don't be afraid that your toddler will dislike you if you don't always give her what she wants. Let her know you love her, but will not let her misbehave.

Help her understand what the rules are, why they are needed and what will happen if she does not follow them. Setting and enforcing limits shows your toddler that you will help her to grow up safely, competently and *unspoiled*.

What's It Like to Be 17 Months Old?

How I Grow

- I like to lug, tug, and drag things.
- I want my own way almost all the time.
- I can walk upstairs if you will hold one hand.
- I like to run, but I fall or bump into things sometimes.

How I Talk

- I understand more words than I say.
- I'm getting good at imitating words.
- I often have long, babbling conversations with myself.
- Sometimes I will do what you ask me to do.

Play I Enjoy

- I like playing with nesting toys and stacking toys.
- I often run around without any particular plan.
- I like pushing wheel toys and large toy boxes and other things like that around the floor.

What I Have Learned

- I can fit a round block into a round hole.
- I can point to one or two parts of my body if you name them.
- I can copy the simple lines you make on paper.
- I may be able to match circles and squares on a form board.

How I Get Along with Others

- I'm still mostly just interested in myself.
- I may be grabby and greedy.
- Sometimes I'm stubborn and bossy and sometimes I'm loving; in a few months I'll be calmer and friendlier.

What I Can Do for Myself

- I can help put toys away.
- I may be able to turn on some faucets.

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.

Be Good to Yourself: When It Seems Everyone Is Against You

Sometimes the other adults in your life seem to be criticizing you all the time. It's hard to be calm when someone is putting you down, but the way you respond can make a big difference. You can let them know that you **ACCEPT** what they say, but you don't have to **AGREE** with them.

By accepting, you're simply saying, "I hear you." Here are some accepting words you can use to give yourself a little breathing room and avoid arguments.

- So you think I...
- I'll think about what you said...
- I can see how you might feel that way...

If you don't argue, it's hard for others to keep putting you down.

Homemade Toys that Teach: Toss Bags

Toss bags can help your child develop muscles and coordination.

Materials:

- Clean scraps of cloth, old adult socks
- Crumpled paper or short strips of cloth

Making the Toy: Make the bag by sewing squares or other shapes out of cloth or by tying ends of adult socks. Fill your bag with crumpled paper or torn rags and sew up or tie the opening. For safety, double the bag covers and make the bags at least as big as tennis balls.

Playing: Toss bags are fun just to throw. They can also be thrown at targets or into wastebaskets or tossed to other people. You can tie a string to the toss bag for drop-and-pull back games.

Games for Growing: Sounds Things Make

Purpose of the Game: To help your child pronounce difficult words and learn to connect objects with sounds.

How to Play:

- Sit together in any relaxed position.
- Imitate sounds for your child. Use your body to show action, like when a jet goes “zoom,” a duck goes “quack,” a fire engine goes “ding-ding-ding,” a train goes “choo-choo-choo,” a dog goes “wuuff-wuuff.”
- After each sound you make, ask the child, “How does a jet go?” or “How does a dog go?”
- You can use a picture or model of the objects when you play this game.

Health: Toddler Immunizations

Every child needs immunizations during infancy and early childhood. Some of these immunizations are given in the first 6 months, but others are not given until the child becomes a toddler.

The MMR

The first toddler immunization protects against measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles) and is called the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) shot. It is given at 15 months and 4-6 years of age. Just one shot protects against all three of these childhood diseases.

DPT

Two of the immunizations given to toddlers—polio and diphtheria, pertussis or “whooping cough,” and tetanus (DPT)—are more of the same ones your child received as a baby. This series of immunizations is very important to protect against dangerous diseases like polio and whooping cough.

Often, doctors and clinics give the polio and DPT immunizations at 15 months of age, along with the MMR immunization. Some doctors may delay the polio and DPT immunizations until the child is 18 months of age.

Keep a record. Keep a written record of your toddler's immunizations so you can be sure she has the ones she needs. You will need to show proof that your child has been immunized before she can go to school.

The following chart can help you decide if your child is up-to-date on immunizations. Ask your doctor for more information.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Immunization</u>
2 months	DPT, OPV, Hib
4 months	DPV, DPT, and Hib
6 months	DPT and Hib
15 months	MMR, DPT, OPV & Hib
16-60 mo.	Hib one time only (if <u>not</u> done previously)
4-6 years	DPT, OPV, and MMR
14-16 years	TD every 10 yrs. (throughout life)
DPT	Diphtheria, pertussis, & tetanus
OPV	Oral Polio Vaccine
Hib	Hib Meningitis (vaccine mandatory for all children)
MMR	Measles, mumps, and rubella
TB	Tetanus booster

Guidance and Discipline

Those who study the development of young children generally agree that spanking and other physical punishment (like shaking, pinching, and hitting) are not necessary for discipline and may be harmful to children.

Hitting doesn't teach good things. Physical punishment, or the threat of it, is not likely to teach children to control themselves. In fact, it may teach them to be sneaky, aggressive, and fearful. It can also teach that hitting or hurting others is okay.

Threats don't help. It is also harmful to punish a child by telling him you will leave him or stop loving him. Such threats can cause your toddler to feel he can't trust you or that he is not important to you. He may feel fearful and insecure, and he may be less willing to cooperate with you.

Here are some discipline ideas that work for many parents:

Catch your toddler being good and praise him. Praise will encourage him to be good, and will help him to understand which of his actions you like. Don't let him think that you will only pay attention to him when he is being naughty.

Tell your toddler what he should do instead of what he should not do. "Carry your coat this way," not "Don't drag your coat on the ground."

Plan ahead. Before special visits and trips (like visits to grandma, parties, or shopping), explain clearly to your toddler how you want him to behave.

Take toys along on trips to fight boredom and crankiness. Keep surprise toys or snacks in your purse for hungry or fussy times.

Set things up to encourage good behavior. Within reason, remove things you don't want your child to touch. Limit visits with other children if you expect squabbles. Be sure your little one gets enough rest to avoid fussiness.

Tell, don't ask. If you want your child to act in a particular way, tell him what you want; don't ask him. If you need to take him to the doctor say, "Now we are going to the doctor," **not** "Do you want to go to the doctor now?" If it's time to put toys away say, "Let's put the toys away now," **not** "Do you want to put your toys away?"

Help your little one want to do what he needs to do. If you want him to pick up his toys, make it a game that you play with him. If he resists bath time, tell him a story in the bath.

Offer alternatives. When your little one is doing something you don't want him to do, suggest or substitute something else that he might enjoy. "You can pour water in this basin, not on the kitchen floor." "You can throw the ball outside, not in the house."

Give choices. Sometimes you can help your toddler exercise his growing independence and get cooperation at the same time by giving him a choice. “Will you put your toys away in the basket or in the box?” or “Are you going to wear your sweater or your jacket when you go out to play?”

If you find yourself getting very angry at your child, take time out. Put your toddler in a safe place, tell him you are upset and that you need to be quiet for a few minutes. Then go to another place and try to relax. After this, it will be easier for you to guide him.

If you must discipline your child, have your little one spend a few minutes alone in his room and take “time out.” More about this later.

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