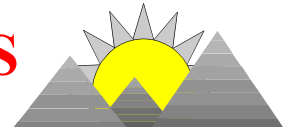


GREAT BEGINNINGS

A Series for Parents of Young Children



20 MONTHS

Secure Toddlers Are More Compliant

The relationship between parents and their young children can be close and loving, or it can be tense and uncomfortable. In a close relationship the child feels secure. She feels she can count on her parents for affection, care, and protection.

Dr. Alice Sterling Honig concludes that a close, secure relationship between parent and child occurs when parents are aware of their child's distress and are able to quickly and successfully comfort the child. Children are more likely to obey if they have a positive, loving relationship with their parents.

Toddler Talk: Let Me Play in Water and Sand

Let me play in sand, dirt, and mud even if I get dirty. A pile of sand or dirt in the corner of the yard will be great. You can make a sandbox by filling an old tire with clean sand. Keep the sandbox covered when it's not in use to keep out cats and dogs.

Let me play with water. Bathing, filling and emptying containers, and washing dishes are great fun. Give me a plastic bucket or can filled with clear water and an old paintbrush. I will paint the sidewalk, the house, and everything I can reach. Put a small dishpan of water on the kitchen floor or outdoors. Add a funnel, sponge, measuring spoons and cups, a washcloth, and a plastic squeeze bottle. I'll enjoy pouring, squeezing, washing and squirting.

All this is teaching me about the world I live in—and it's lots of fun. Remember, don't leave me alone with water; I can drown in less than 2 inches of water.

Games for Growing: Touch a Word

Purpose of the Game: To help your child point to objects named and learn the words for these objects.

How to Play:

- ◆ Sit with your child.
- ◆ Turn pages in a baby's picture book and say to your child, "Where's the car? Touch the horse."
- ◆ Then say, "Now look at this. This is the word for car." Point to the word and then say, "Point to the car. Touch the word for car."

Remember, play this and any game only if it is fun for both you and your child.

Watch Out: Avoid Burns

Burns are among the most serious and painful injuries to children. The problems, pain, and disfigurement from a burn could last the rest of your child's life. Most burns to children occur between birth and 4 years of age.

Most burns to children are caused by:

- ◆ Scalds from hot liquids and foods such as coffee, tea, and grease.
- ◆ Contact with hot surfaces such as stoves, irons, and heaters.

These burns occur most often in the kitchen when hot liquids are spilled while you are cooking and serving, and when appliances are hot.

During this early age children grow so fast parents are often not prepared for what a baby can do. Toddlers can pull hot food off a table or touch a hot stove while they are trying to walk. A 2-year-old will get underfoot in the kitchen and you can spill hot food on him.

Never eat, drink, or carry anything hot when you are carrying your child; you can't handle both!

Never leave anything hot on the edge of a table or counter. Be especially careful when your child is with you in the kitchen. Don't let him play in the kitchen when you are not there.

Parents often change their habits and household after the burn to their child has happened rather than before. Remember that your child will surprise you with his ability. Expect him to change overnight. Be prepared.

What's It Like to Be 20 Months Old?

How I Grow

- ◆ I can run without falling too often.
- ◆ I can stand on either foot holding on.
- ◆ I still like to climb on everything.
- ◆ I don't know about safety so I count on you to keep things safe for me to explore.

How I Talk

- ◆ I can say about 15 words.
- ◆ I like to listen to nursery rhymes.
- ◆ I ask a lot of questions, mostly by saying "why?" or "what's that?" Be patient with me. I am just trying to learn.

What I Have Learned

- ◆ I'm beginning to know what things are for, like a hammer is for banging.
- ◆ I can draw an up and down line pretty well.

How I Get Along with Others

- ◆ I want to keep my toys to myself and I may hide them so others can't play with them.
- ◆ I need time to get to know people; I'm afraid of some people.
- ◆ I like to do things without adult help.
- ◆ I may be less friendly to adults but this is just temporary.

What I Can Do for Myself

- ◆ I can let you know when I need dry clothing.
- ◆ I go to bed without complaining.
- ◆ I can feed myself pretty well.

Play I Enjoy

- ◆ I like to have you sing to me.
- ◆ I like making mud pies and pretending to eat them.
- ◆ I like to take toys apart.
- ◆ I like rides and walks.
- ◆ I like to look at myself in the mirror.

Guidance and Discipline: Temper Tantrums

Sometimes children between the ages of one and three have temper tantrums. They may cry, shout, hit, bite, throw themselves on the floor, and kick. Some hold their breath. You may not know what started the tantrum. You certainly know you want to stop it!

Some children have tantrums because they have learned it is a way to get attention or to get something else they want. Others imitate parents who have quick tempers.

Tantrums probably mean that the child is overcome by anger or frustration. Maybe she has been told too often what she cannot do.

Children seem to have temper tantrums most often when they are overtired, hungry, or very excited. Although temper tantrums are normal for children this age, they don't happen as often if the child feels loved and important.

There is no magic way to handle tantrums, but here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Try to remain calm—often hard to do.
- ◆ Keep your child from hurting herself or others.
- ◆ Separate her from other children or from the place where she’s having her tantrum or just hold her in your arms.
- ◆ When your child has calmed down, comfort her and try to understand the reason for the tantrum.
- ◆ If you give the child what she wants when she has a tantrum, she might learn to use tantrums to get her own way.

Health: Give Your Child a Lifetime of Happy, Healthy Smiles

Your child’s first teeth are important for:

- ◆ Helping your child chew and talk.
- ◆ Saving space for permanent teeth to grow in straight.
- ◆ Helping your child feel good about her smile.

By following a few easy steps you can avoid dental problems in your child’s future:

- ◆ Gently clean your baby’s teeth and gums daily with a damp cloth, gauze, or toothbrush.
- ◆ Feed only formula, milk, or water from a bottle. Do not add sugar.
- ◆ Offer the bottle only at feeding time.
- ◆ If you use a pacifier to comfort your baby, never dip it in any sweet substance.

- ◆ If your drinking water is fluoridated, make a habit of encouraging your child to drink it. If your child’s drinking water is not fluoridated, ask your doctor about fluoride supplements.
- ◆ Take your child for a dental checkup when she is between 2 and 3 years old.

Questions

Q: I’ve heard about the terrible twos. What are they and how do I cope with them?

A: Terrible twos may not be terrible, but they can be difficult. Most toddlers go through a period at

about 2 1/2 years old—some as early as 18 months, some much later—when they seem to delight in doing just what you do not want them to do. This happens because toddlers are learning independence at this age.

Toddlers have the physical ability to do things on their own and are learning that they can have some power over others. They have learned to say “no” and “I want.” To practice all these new abilities, they want what they want right now, and they let you know this very clearly. Sometimes they demand things they shouldn’t have; sometimes they demand things they don’t even want just to show how powerful they are.

Remember, when your toddler reaches this stage, he is not being deliberately nasty. He’s just showing that he is growing up. Be patient. Use the guidance ideas we have discussed in this series. In a few months, your toddler should be moving out of this difficult period.

Ideas for Successful Toddler Social Play

Here are some guidelines for helping your toddler learn to play with others:

Keep the group small. At home have no more than three or four toddlers and at least one supervising adult.

Have familiar adults nearby and available. Toddlers feel more secure when they can check in occasionally with an adult they know. They may need only a smile of reassurance, a hug, a lap to rest on briefly, or a bit of help when frustration mounts.

Allow children to choose their own activities and to interact with others at their own pace. Don’t push! Don’t dominate!

Provide toys, including some duplicates. Toys are an important “go between” in early play. Some examples:

- Susie pretends to eat a plastic apple. Billy approaches. She holds out a toy banana. He takes it and pretends to eat. They *eat* together.
- Meg watches Tom struggle to turn over a large

plastic barrel, then helps push it. They both fall backward as it turns upright, look at each other and laugh. One begins to drop things into the barrel; the other joins in.

Ignore conflicts unless someone is about to be hurt or one child always dominates. Children learn to accommodate each other with practice, sometimes winning, sometimes losing. Sometimes it's a draw. Even a shy child can learn how to avoid interference.

- Seventeen-month-old Jenny was hugging a large, soft ball when a little boy approached with hand outstretched. Jenny picked up a smaller ball from the floor and handed it to him. He accepted it and walked away.

If it is necessary to separate two children, do so calmly but firmly and suggest another activity to one or both. Distraction works well if you are imaginative and enthusiastic for the new ideas. Rather than saying, "No! Stop that!" suggest something that is okay to do.

"Mark is using the rocking chair now, Lea. You can have a turn later. But your dolly looks sleepy. Why don't you get her a blanket and put her to bed for a nap?"

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