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16 Months

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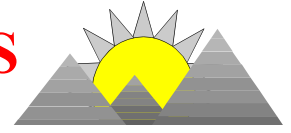
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GREAT BEGINNINGS

A Series for Parents of Young Children



16 MONTHS

Self-Esteem Starts Early

Your child's self-esteem is made up of the thoughts, feelings, and ideas she has about herself. All together, these shape her ideas about how important, lovable, and capable she is.

Help your child know she is important to you. Your child's view of herself—her self-esteem—is determined by the way you and others treat her. If she sees that she is treated as an important, competent young person by the people who are important to her, then she will feel she is valuable and competent.

Help your child feel accepted. Your child needs to know that you continue to love her even when you don't like what she does. She needs to know that you expect a lot from her, but that you are happy with her just the way she is. Everyone can have high self-esteem. It's not determined by your wealth, education, social class, or occupation. The basic foundation for your child's self-esteem is being built during the first years of her life.

Respond to your child's needs and interests. Because you and others care for her, play with her, and respond to her needs to grow and learn, she learns how precious she is to you. She also learns that you believe in her ability to learn and develop new skills. She needs this care, guidance, and respect from you as she continues to form her sense of self-esteem.

Building self-esteem is one of the most important jobs and greatest challenges of parents. The guidance ideas, play ideas, and feeding and language suggestions in this newsletter will help you encourage your young one to feel loved and competent.

What's It Like to Be 16-Months-Old?

How I Grow

- I like to carry things in each hand.
- I want to show you how independent I am by doing what I want, not what you want me to do.
- I am learning to walk backwards.
- I can turn pages in a book, a few at a time.

How I Talk

- I can understand simple directions such as “no,” “come,” “show me,” and “look.”
- I am learning to hold real conversations with people.
- I don't usually like having a whole story read to me. I would rather point to pictures in a book and have you talk to me about them.
- I am beginning to say “no” a lot.

What I Have Learned

- I may be able to build a tower of two blocks.
- I can scribble with a pencil or crayon.

How I Get Along with Others

- I'm pretty self-centered and often not friendly.
- I like to imitate the way you do things, like sweeping the floor, setting the table, or raking the lawn.
- If you show me that you like what I do, I will do it a lot.
- Sometimes I will get things for you.
- I like to know where you are at all times.
- I'm not very good at giving but I like to get things.

What I Can Do for Myself

- I can let you know when I have wet or soiled pants, but I'm still too young to be toilet trained.
- I may be able to use a spoon, but I spill.

Play I Enjoy

- I don't play very long with any one toy.
- I like to carry around a soft doll or toy animal.
- I like playing in sandboxes.
- I like rolling a ball with you.

When There Are Two Languages at Home

Experts believe that if you speak two languages at home, then both languages should be used with your child from the beginning. Some experts suggest that one parent or caregiver always use one language and another parent or caregiver use the second language. This way, the child can keep the two languages more separate and will be less confused about hearing and speaking them.

A child learning two languages will be a bit slower at first in language development than a child learning only one language but by her fourth or fifth birthday, she should catch up and be able to speak both languages well.

Nutrition: Mealtime and Snack-Time

It is a good idea to give your child meals and snacks at about the same time every day. He will feel better

if he knows he is going to have food at regular times. If he doesn't, he is apt to be crabby and cranky. He might overeat when he finally does get food, because he is not sure when he is going to eat again.

Breakfast is key. Eating in the morning helps your child stay alert and energetic. He might not want to eat just after he wakes up. That's okay; try again later. He will probably be ready for food in half an hour or so.

Snacks are important. Children have small stomachs and may get hungry within a couple of hours after a meal. Give your child nutritious snacks at midmorning and midafternoon to take care of his hunger and keep him healthy.

Have regular eating times. Most people eat a meal around noon, and they may eat another meal about 5 or 6 p.m. You can plan the times of meals around what you have to do during the day.

Try to stick to a regular schedule of meals and snacks. If your child refuses to eat at mealtime, but asks for a snack immediately afterwards, you may want to tell him he must wait until snack-time.

Help your child learn to eat the foods you've prepared. If your child doesn't want to eat what you've prepared, don't get into the habit of fixing something different just for him. Remind him that this is what everyone in the family is eating. Tell him it will be a while before the next meal or snack. If he still insists he is not going to eat, quietly remove his plate. Let him leave the table if he wants.

Help your child learn to eat new foods.

Encourage your child to try lots of different foods. If he doesn't eat a new food the first time you serve it, don't give up.

Children often reject new foods the first time around. Serve the food again a few days later. He may try it then or he may not try it until you've served it three or four times. By then he will have seen other people eating and enjoying it and the food will be more familiar to him.

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.

Reading Along

Purpose of the Game: To help your child learn to turn pages alone and look at pictures so that he gets to know magazines as things that can be read.

How to Play:

- Ask your child, "Do you want to read a magazine?"
- If yes, turn the pages of a magazine a few times and point to some pictures.
- Let your child look at the magazine alone.

Bath Time Fun

You may have noticed how much your little one loves to splash in water. Take an extra minute or two at bath time to let your child have more fun.

Water play toys. Keep some toys just for water play. Plastic containers, measuring cups, spoons, and funnels all make fine bath toys. Be sure to wash them before giving them to your toddler.

The Name Game

During the bath, you can play the Name Game, a good way to have fun and help your little one learn the names of her body parts. Point to each body part while you say, "Here's your nose, here are your eyes," and so on. Soon your child will be able to point to the right part when you say the name.

Splash! When your child sits in the water, you can sing or chant, "One hand splash, other hand splash, up, down, splash, splash all around." Remember

always to stay in the bathroom with your little one. She is not old enough to bathe alone and could easily fall or get caught under the water.

Health: Lead Poisoning Is a Serious Illness

The main cause of lead poisoning is chewing nonfood items that contain lead, such as peeling paint or plaster in an old home, colored newsprint and comics, toys, and furniture painted with lead-based paint, or soil contaminated by leaded gasoline.

Many sources of poisoning. Other sources of lead poisoning are some folk remedies. Only give your child medications prescribed by a doctor. If you renovate your house or refinish furniture, be careful that your child does not get dust or chips from the old paint in his mouth.

Symptoms are tricky. Children with lead poisoning don't always look or act sick, at least not at first. Lead poisoning often shows up in simple things like laziness, grouchiness, upset stomach, headaches, or loss of appetite. Sometimes there are no signs at all until serious damage has occurred.

Watch carefully! Since toddlers put everything in their mouths, supervise them carefully. Remove all items in your home that may contain lead. If you think your child has eaten lead, ask your doctor to do a simple blood test called FEP.

Question: Why Do My Two Young Children Fight All the Time?

Q: "My 16-month-old daughter and my 4-year-old son fight constantly. It's driving me out of my mind. Why are they fighting and what can I do about it?"

A: Sibling rivalry can be a problem, especially when young children are less than 3 years apart. The older child may be fairly content with his

new brother or sister until the baby begins to crawl.

Crawler beware! When your baby begins to get into things, you have to pay more attention to her. When this happens, her older brother may understandably feel you love him less. To make matters worse, the little crawler can break and take her brother's toys.

This is no fun. Let your son know you understand and sympathize with his feelings. Suggest ways he can cope with his little sister without hurting her.

You can cope with fighting. For the next 6 to 12 months, you may feel you're constantly stopping quarrels and the biting, hitting and hair pulling that goes with them. Worse, you seldom know which child started the quarrel. There are some things you can do to cope with this rivalry.

One cannot hurt the other. Protect your children from hurting each other or each other's things. It does no good to try to make your older child feel guilty for his anger. After all, his feelings are quite normal and understandable. Do let him know you will not let him hurt his sister or let his little sister hurt him.

Give your older child special attention. Do what you can to make life more bearable for your older child. Do not lavish praise on his little sister in his presence. Encourage your friends and relatives to follow this advice too. Give your son enjoyable out-of-home experiences, a fun trip, a play group, a babysitter just for him. Do this in a way that makes your son feel special, not pushed out or rejected.

Give your older child your undivided attention at least once a day. All your children need this special show of affection and care.

Have realistic expectations. You might be tempted to put extra demands on your older child at this time. You might expect him to be more responsible, patient, unselfish, and grownup than he reasonably can be at his age. Ease up on these expectations.

Don't be a judge—help the children move into positive play. Don't try to decide which child is to blame for a fight. Just separate them. If they are fighting over a toy, take the toy away from both of them. Then help them find something else to do.

Hang in there! Try to remember that fighting is common for children of these ages. Your children have not turned into monsters. Be patient, understanding, and firm. This period will pass.

Homemade Toys that Teach

Nesting Cans

This toy helps children begin to learn about big and little.

Materials:

- Three to five cans of different sizes that can fit one inside the other. The cans should have smooth edges. You can use juice cans, fruit cans, coffee cans, and so forth.
- Colored paper or cloth to cover cans
- Glue
- Paper Tape (not transparent tape)

Making the Toy: Cover the sides of the cans with colorful paper or cloth. You can use wrapping paper, construction paper, magazine pictures, wallpaper scraps, and so on. Glue the coverings onto the cans securely. Tape the can's sharp edges and seams.

Playing: Your child can nest these cans one inside the other, stack them to make a tower line, line them up in order of size, or roll them across the floor. You and your child will find other ways to use the cans for play and games.

Safety Tips: Burns

1. Insert safety plugs in unused outlets.
2. Do not use electrical appliances in the bathroom.

3. Keep electrical cords out of a child's reach.
4. Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
5. Do not smoke in bed.
6. Develop an escape plan in case a fire breaks out in your home. You should figure out which exit routes you and your family can take, and choose a family meeting point away from the house in case of a fire.
7. Buy a fire extinguisher for your home. Extinguishers should be placed in kitchens and rooms with furnaces or fireplaces.
8. Install a fireplace screen. This will help prevent sparks from shooting out of your fireplace. Always be sure the fire is completely out before you go to bed.
9. Install a smoke detector in your home. Smoke detectors should be installed on each floor, and especially near furnace and sleeping areas.
10. Check the temperature of your hot water. Your child could get third-degree burns from being in water that has a temperature of 140 degrees fahrenheit. You should set your water heater temperature between 120 degrees and 130 degrees fahrenheit. The lower you set the temperature, the better.
11. Protect children from hot pots and pans. Cooking pot handles should be turned inward and be out of your child's reach.

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