

Growing Together



Because My First Years Last Forever

Volume 1 Issue 10

Twenty-Five to Thirty Months

Inside:

What It's Like to Be
Twenty-Five to Thirty Months
Old page 76

Play is
Learning page 77

Just for
Parents page 78-79

Feeding
Your Toddler page 80

Your Toddler's
Health page 81

Dear Parent,

Two and a half year olds are terrific, tender, trying, taxing and very, very exciting. They've come a long way, and so have you.

As a parent of a two and a half year old, what do you need?

Patience — to help you deal with your child's mood swings from very helpful to highly unreasonable.

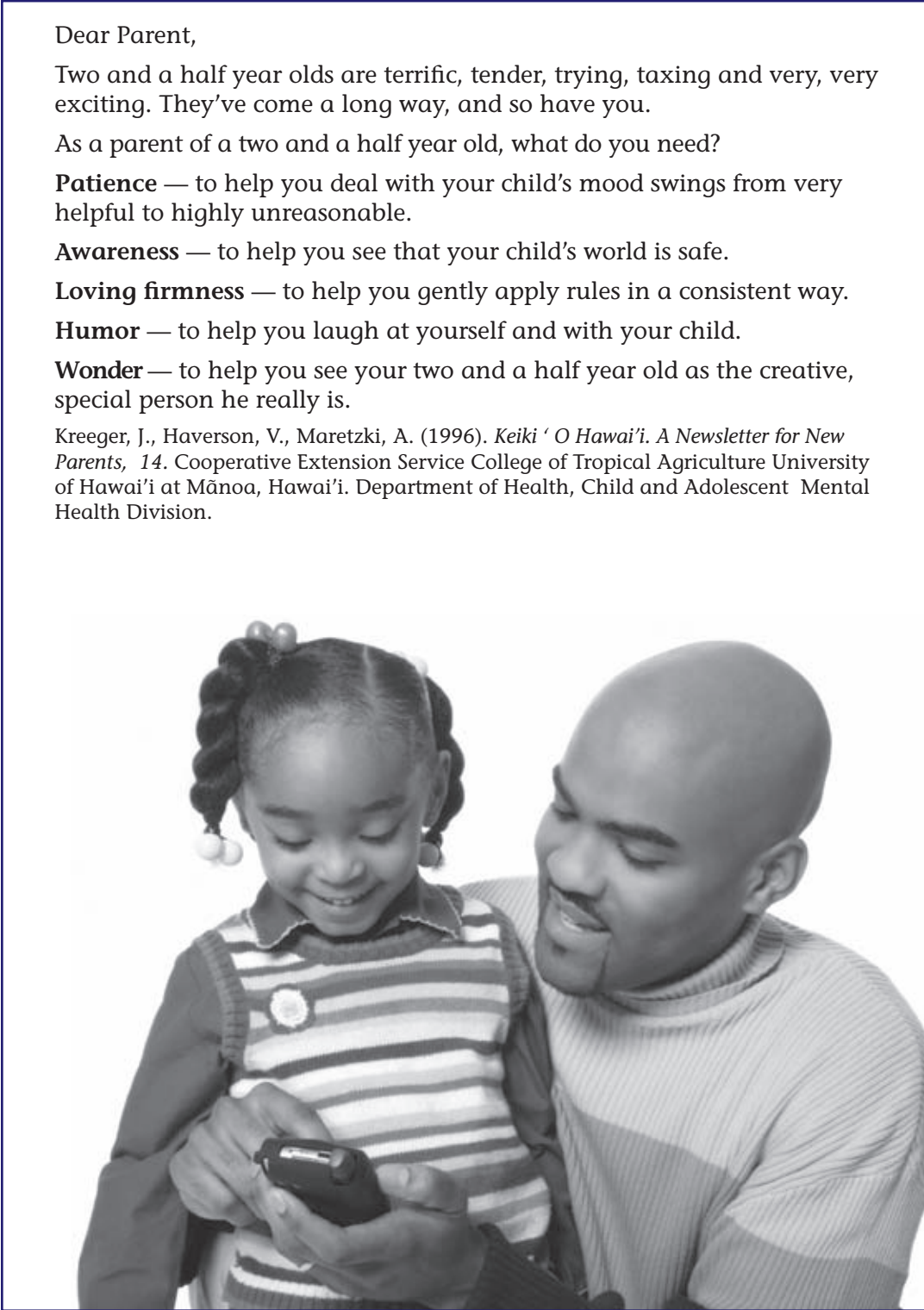
Awareness — to help you see that your child's world is safe.

Loving firmness — to help you gently apply rules in a consistent way.

Humor — to help you laugh at yourself and with your child.

Wonder — to help you see your two and a half year old as the creative, special person he really is.

Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., Maretzki, A. (1996). *Keiki ' O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents*, 14. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.



This newsletter is provided to parents by Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County

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What It's Like to Be...

TWENTY-FIVE – THIRTY MONTHS OLD

How I Grow

I run fairly well, but I still may fall.

I stay dry for longer periods, but I may not be ready for toilet training.

I enjoy jumping off a low step.

I enjoy being pushed on a swing.

I like to scribble.

I am beginning to walk on tiptoe.

I can blow bubbles.

How I Talk

I am learning to say a lot of new words, but it will take me a long time to really understand them.

I say two- and three-word sentences, such as “me do it” and “two foots.”

I talk to my toys or sing and hum when playing by myself.

How I Understand

I tell you about things, but it doesn't always make sense to you. I am beginning to understand slow and fast, light and heavy.

I think of other children as objects. I sometimes poke them or pull their hair to see what they will do.

How I Respond

I copy the things I see you do in my play.

I like to take my blanket with me. It makes me feel secure.

I enjoy listening on the telephone, but I probably won't talk.

I like being near other children, but may not be good at playing with them yet.

Source: Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Marezki, A. (1996). What it's like to be. Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 14. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

How You Help Me Learn...

- Show me new things. Name them to help me develop my vocabulary. I like the sound of big words such as escalator, rhinoceros, and elephant. I'll have fun trying to say them too.
- Sing and play action songs with me. I'll like “Ring Around the Rosey,” “London Bridge,” and “This Is the Way We Wash Our Clothes.”
- Help me use words by asking me questions when I point to something.
- I like to dance to music.
- Let me use a squeeze bottle to water outdoor plants. Think of other ways I could help you outside.
- Take photos of special times and write the date on the back of the pictures. I'll like looking at these photos when I'm older.
- Turn off the radio and TV, and listen to sounds around the house with me. Listen for running water, the refrigerator motor, or a wind chime. Tell me what they are.
- Let me feel different materials. Tell me what is rough, bumpy, sticky, or smooth.
- Let me hold heavy and light objects. Use the words “heavy” and “light” when you hand them to me. Ask me to pick up the heavy or the light object.
- I love to play dress-up. Share your old hats, shoes, or shirts with me.
- Ask me to close my eyes. Ring a bell, shake a rattle, or jingle some coins, and let me guess what is making the sound.
- Play “follow the leader” with me in front of a mirror. I will enjoy seeing how our bodies move. Eyes, teeth, and tongues will be especially interesting for me.
- Read to me. I can point to and name things in books. I know the words in my favorite books and may like to help you tell the story. Keep my books where I can get to them easily.

Even professionals are not always in agreement on specific child-rearing and feeding recommendations. Consult your doctor if you receive conflicting information.

If you have concerns about how your child is growing and developing, call Help Me Grow at 216-736-4300 or visit www.helpmegrow.org

Play is Learning

Games for Growing

This game is perfect for teaching your child to learn about alike and different, and increase her observation skills.

Draw four or five pictures or cut out four or five shapes that are all alike except one. Start by having your child match pictures or shapes that are very different, such as four pictures of trees and one picture of a house, or four triangles and one circle.

Later, you can make the “different” pictures more like the others: for example, four dogs and a cat, or four small red triangles and one large red triangle. Ask your child to show you the one that is different from the others. Take turns.

You can also play this with safe objects found around the house and yard, such as, four spoons and a fork, four red flowers and a white one.

Matching Pairs

The purpose of this game is to help your child understand how things are recognized. This game also helps build your child’s imagination and language skills.

Collect pairs of things that are the same, like

two spoons, two bars of soap, two plates, two tooth brushes. Mix the sets up. Hold up one thing, and ask your child to pick another item, just like it. You can take a turn at guessing too. To make the game harder, use a set of pairs of pictures, numbers, letters, or playing cards that are similar rather than exactly the same. Ask your child to match the one you hold up. As always take turns leading, and be sure to stop before your child loses interest in the game.

Steinberg, J., Riley, D., & Schatell, D. (1997). *Games for growing*. (adapted). *Parenting the Second and Third Years*. University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension, NCR publication No. 578.



Things Toddlers Treasure

From 28 to 30 months, toddler’s play is dominated by an increased attention span and a developing awareness of the feelings of others:

Toddlers treasure:

- grouping things together by color, size, and shape;
- practicing a new skill (like rolling a ball) over and over again; and
- working five- to eight-piece puzzles.

The increased desire to be with other children means toddlers like:

- playing with (not just next to) another child for a very short time;
- making efforts to share (but often change their minds immediately); and
- learning songs and finger plays.

Oesterreich, L. (January, 1992). *Things toddlers treasure*. 1, 2, 3 Grow: A newsletter for parents and toddler, 6. Iowa State University Extension.

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Just for Parents

“Time Out”

As we go about the business of teaching our children proper behavior, there are times when emotions threaten to get out of control. When this happens, it's wise to separate yourself from your child so that you can both cool off. Time Out can be used as an effective, positive tool. There are three different ways to use Time Out, each having a different purpose.

1. To give the child time and space to cool off and calm down.

The key here is in the attitude of the parent. In advance, let your child know that when her behavior is out of control she'll be asked to go to her room. Tell her that when she is calm and under control she may join the family. How she chooses to use the time is her business, as long as it's respectful of people and property. Screaming or pounding on the door is not acceptable, but reading a book or other activities are fine. This is a valuable life skill that will prevent your child from “flying off the handle” and saying and doing things she might regret later. Never drag a child to his Time Out. This robs you of the upper hand and makes you look foolish. Let him know in advance that when asked to remove himself he needs to do so immediately. If he does not, he'll be choosing to give up a privilege (one you have specified in advance), in addition to Time Out.

2. To give the parent time and space to cool off and calm down.

There are times when we get so angry at our children that we want to scream, hit, or ground them for life! This is the time to use a four-letter-word: E X I T. Make a brief statement, “I'm so angry, I need a minute to think.” Then go to your room or send the child to his room so that you can calm down and regroup. This will help you get yourself under control, and it provides good modeling for your children.

3. As a method for stopping a specific misbehavior.

This can be an excellent way to put an immediate stop to a child's action. It brings a strong message, “This behavior is unacceptable and it will stop now.” There are several keys:

Be quick. Catch your child in the act. Delayed reactions dilute the effect.

Use selectively. Use for hitting, talking back, and whining, or other specific problems. Don't overuse.

Keep calm. Your anger only adds fuel to the fire and changes the focus from the behavior of the child to your anger. This prevents you from being in control.

Stick with it. Once you say, “Time Out,” don't back down or be talked out of it. If you decide to use Time Out to control hitting, for example, use it every time your child hits, even if he spends most of the day in Time Out! Eventually, he'll decide that it's more fun to play without hitting than to sit alone in his room. Time Out is one more effective discipline tool for parents. When used with other positive parenting methods it helps you feel good about the job you are doing with your kids.

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *Kid Cooperation and Perfect Parenting*. 2002. Elizabeth Pantley, www.pantley.com/elizabeth.



Him or her?

This series of newsletters gives equal time to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as "him" or "her." Keep in mind that we are talking about all children when we use "him" or "her."

“Healthy Dozen” List for Toddlers

As part of “The Year of the Healthy Child,” U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., outlined a dozen tips to help keep toddlers safe and healthy.

- 1. Teach healthy eating.** Provide three nutritious meals supplemented with two to three healthy snacks daily. Feed toddlers at the same time as other family members and allow them to grow into feeding themselves. Offer children nutritious foods and let them decide how much to eat. Avoid foods and drinks that are high in sugar.
- 2. Begin a habit of good oral health.** Brush your child’s teeth twice a day with a soft toothbrush. Begin brushing for your child when his or her teeth first appear and continue until age 3 or 4 when you can start teaching your child how to brush.
- 3. Don’t smoke.** And don’t allow anyone else to smoke around your child. Second-hand smoke can have a harmful effect on your child’s breathing and can have long-term respiratory consequences like impaired lung growth, chronic coughing, and wheezing. Diseases of the respiratory system (aggravated by second-hand smoke) are the leading causes of child hospitalization and one of the leading causes of toddler doctor visits.
- 4. Give positive feedback.** Praise good behavior and accomplishments. This begins to ensure a healthy bond between parent and child. Also, make sure that your child’s caregiver agrees with your point of view.
- 5. Always use a car safety seat.** Be sure your child rides in an age- and weight-appropriate child safety seat, correctly installed in the back seat, on every trip.
- 6. Safety-proof your house.** To prevent accidental poisoning, move all medications and cleaning products to high shelves. To prevent burns, set the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. To prevent choking, be sure that any toys your child plays with do not have parts that are small enough to choke on. Do not give toddlers under age 2 foods that may cause choking, like hard candy, large pieces of raw vegetable or fruit, or tough meat. To prevent drowning, install a toilet lid lock on every toilet in the home.
- 7. Never leave your toddler unattended.** As a child grows, so does his or her natural curiosity to explore. It takes a few seconds for a toddler to get into a dangerous situation.
- 8. Make sure your child has a primary health provider.** Make sure that your child has a primary health provider, such as a pediatrician or family practitioner, who knows your child before your child has an illness, injury, or developmental delay that requires medical care.

9. Fully immunize your child. Make sure your child gets all immunizations on time.

10. Learn child first aid and CPR. Be prepared. Know how to call for help, including poison control. The national toll-free line for poison control is 1-800-222-1222.

11. Practice prevention and safety. Teach your child safety tips, including always swimming with a buddy and wearing a bicycle helmet. Be sure your older toddler knows his or her name, parents’ names, and phone number. Get your child’s fingerprints taken and keep a recent photograph.

12. Have fun. Hug, talk, read, explore, and play together. All parents sometimes feel overwhelmed as they tackle the challenges of parenting. If you feel so stressed that you feel unable to cope with the demands of parenting, get help.

For more information on “The Year of the Healthy Child” visit www.surgeongeneral.gov.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. February 19, 2008. Excerpt from *Safe Children and Healthy Families Are a Shared Responsibility*: 2006 Community Resource Packet. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Help For Fathers

Healthy Fathering Collaborative Phone: (216) 502-4795
www.neofathering.net

The Healthy Fathering Collaborative is a network of social service agencies serving fathers and families in Northeast Ohio.

Fatherville.com Phone: (208) 887-9086
www.fatherville.com

Fatherville.com is an online resource ONLY that supports, encourages, and challenges fathers in every stage of fatherhood.

National Fatherhood Initiative(NFI) Phone: (301) 948-0599
www.fatherhood.org

The National Fatherhood Initiative works to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers.

Families and Work Institute (FWI) Phone: (212) 465-2044
The Fatherhood Project

www.familiesandwork.org
The Fatherhood Project is a national research and education project that is examining the future of fatherhood and developing ways to support men’s involvement in child rearing.

Have you thought about Headstart?

Call the Headstart Recruitment Hotline at 216-589-9922.

Ask about eligibility and a program close to your home.

Feeding Your Toddler

Mealtime Strategies That Work

Try to keep an eating schedule. Children seem to do best with a routine. Meals and snacks should be served about the same time each day.

Parents and caregivers supply the three “Ws” of meals and snacks: **What** foods are offered and **When** and **Where** they’re eaten. The child fills in another “W” and “H”: **Which** offered foods to eat and **How** much.

While activity helps build a child’s appetite, plan a quiet time before meals and snacks. Kids eat best when they’re more relaxed.

Remember your child learns by watching you. Eat with your toddler. Set a good example by eating a variety of foods yourself.

Even if you can’t eat together, be there! Young children need supervision in case they start to choke. Reward toddlers with affection and attention, not food. Using food as a reward or punishment only promotes unhealthy attitudes about food.

Duyff, R. L. (1996). Mealtime strategies that work. In Braun, J (Ed.), *The American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, Food to Grow* (pp. 417-418). Minneapolis, Minnesota: Chronimed Publishing.

Sugar and Behavior

Does eating sugar make children hyperactive? Lots of people think so, but research clearly shows it’s not true. Why then do children seem so “hyper” after a party or special event? It probably has nothing to do with sugar, but a lot to do with the excitement of the day. So, should you let your toddler eat freely from the candy bag? No! Sugary foods and beverages contribute to tooth decay and provide empty calories that take the place of more nutritious foods. Some sweet treats like colas and chocolate have caffeine in them, and caffeine is a stimulant.

Steinberg, J., Riley, D., & Schatell, D. (1997). *Sugar and behavior*. (adapted). Parenting the Second and Third Years. University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension, NCR publication No. 578.



Fat Facts for Toddlers

Put away your adult notions about fat where a young child’s diet is concerned. A low-fat eating plan is not advised for toddlers. Fat is an excellent source of the energy, or calories, that supports a young child’s rapid growth and active lifestyle. Some fatty acids are essential for growth. They must be supplied by food because the body can’t make them. Between the ages of two and five, it’s okay to gradually reduce fat. As toddlers consume fewer calories from fat, they can get more energy from nutrient-rich foods that have less fat: grain products, fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and other protein-rich foods. Make this simple, fun recipe with your toddler:

Ants on a Log

1 medium banana
peanut butter
raisins

1. Peel the banana.
2. Slice the banana in half.
3. Spread each slice with peanut butter.
4. Place raisins on each slice.



Read the book *Two Bad Ants* by Chris Von Allsburg with your toddler while enjoying this nutritious snack together.

Duyff, R. L. (1996). Fat facts for toddlers. In Braun, J (Ed.), *The American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, Food to Grow* (pp. 419). Minneapolis, Minnesota: Chronimed Publishing.

If you have any specific questions on toddler feeding and would like to speak to a registered dietitian at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Nutrition Program, call 216-201-2000, Ext. 1526.

Your Toddler's Health

Emotional Health

Toddlers do best when they know what is going to happen next. A regular routine is important to their mental health. A daily meal and sleep schedule keeps your child happy. Your child needs to be given choices. For example, ask, "Do you want to wear this or that?" Teach your child words that will help them tell you how they feel. If you are worried about how your child is growing, follow your gut.

Does your child:

- Sleep for less than six hours at night?
- Get mad daily and destroy things?
- Hit, kick or bite during play most of the time?
- Act sad or nervous most of the time?
- Often have trouble in group settings?
- Have a hard time walking or talking?
- Have lead poisoning?
- Act like a one year old after acting like a two year old?

If you answer yes to any of these questions or if you have a gut feeling that something does not seem right call Help Me Grow for a free screening, 216-736-4300. Some other signs are you feel sad, overwhelmed or you are having trouble having positive feelings about your child most days. Events and your own feelings can affect your child's well-being. If you have questions about any of the above or just want to talk to someone call, Help Me Grow at 216-736-4300 or visit their web site: www.helpmegrow.org.

Kelly Hendricks, Program Assistant, Ohio State University Extension.

Reference:

The Emotional Well-being of Young Children pamphlet funded by Ohio Department of Health/Federal Government Bureau of Early Intervention Services, Help Me Grow Program and Cuyahoga County Invest in Children.

The information in this newsletter describes an average child at each age. Because your child is unique, he may do things somewhat earlier or later than is indicated.

Dealing with Head Lice

Children and their parents face many new challenges as they begin their first experiences in a group setting. One of the challenges is the risk of children contacting head lice and the use of potentially harmful chemical treatments.

Where are head lice most commonly found? Lice are most commonly found on the scalp, behind the ears, and near the neckline at the back of the neck.

What are the signs and symptoms of head lice infestation? A ticking sensation or something moving in the hair, itching caused by an allergic reaction to the bites, or sores on the head caused by scratching. Sometimes the sores can be infected.

How did your child get head lice? By contact with an infested person; wearing infested clothing, such as hats, scarves, coats, or hair ribbons; using the same combs, brushes, and towels; or by lying on a bed or a floor mat where they have lain. Sharing headsets and earphones can also be the culprit.

How do I prevent the problem? Ask your home day care provider, preschool teacher or staff person at a child care facility if they have established a head lice standard control. How do they communicate outbreaks with families? Head lice management needs to be a team effort of parents and providers.

How do I treat the problem? If you suspect any of the above listed symptoms, the diagnosis should be made by a health care provider. For more information and for proper treatment procedures, it is important to call the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Division of Nursing, at 216-201-2000, Ext.1348.



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Call any one of these Invest in Children partners below for support or information on how to make sure your child is healthy, well cared for and ready for school.

Prenatal Hotline • 216-778-BABY

Prenatal information and support for expectant mothers

MomsFirst • 216-664-4194

Prenatal care and support for expectant mothers in the City of Cleveland

Help Me Grow • 216-736-4300

Services and support for children prenatal to age three

Healthy Start • 216-987-7346

Health Insurance (Medicaid) for children prenatal to age nineteen

Starting Point • 216-575-0061

Child care services and information on care for children with special needs

Family Help Line • 216-229-8800

Free, anonymous support, information, referrals and crisis intervention

Tot-Line • 216-431-8200

Information on child development

First Call For Help • 2-1-1 or 216-436-2000

Free, confidential information and support for referrals to other local health or social services

This newsletter is provided to parents by Help Me Grow of Cuyahoga County.

Help Me Grow is a statewide child development program and a partner of Invest in Children. As Cuyahoga County's early childhood initiative, Invest in Children works to increase the development, funding, visibility and impact of early childhood services in the county, so our children start kindergarten healthy, well cared for and ready for school.



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This newsletter is produced by Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga County, with funding provided by the Ohio Department of Health. If you have a change of address or would like your name removed from the mailing list, please call 216-429-8216.

If you have specific questions about your child's health or development, or concerns about your own health and well-being, please contact your physician.