

# Growing Together



Because My First Years Last Forever

Volume 1

Issue 11

## Thirty-One to Thirty-Six

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Dear Parent,

Your child is almost three! She can do more things by herself. Take the time to show her how to put on her shoes, ride a tricycle, brush her own teeth and wash her hands. She can follow rules, turn one page at a time in a book and open a door.

She also may have trouble falling asleep because she now may have fears of the dark or noises. She sleeps about 12 hours a day and may still take a nap.

This is a time of great fun but remember it is your job to keep your child safe. Now that she can follow rules remember to set some rules.

This is a time when your child can play with other children, and you might want to consider preschool or a child care program that offers learning.

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

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# What It's Like to Be...

## THIRTY-ONE TO THIRTY-SIX MONTHS OLD

### How I Grow

I have more bowel and bladder control.  
I like filling, dumping and rolling things.  
I stack blocks and build things.

### How I Talk

I understand more words than I can say.  
I ask a lot of questions.  
I am beginning to carry a tune.  
I am speaking more clearly, and people can understand most of the things I say.  
I talk in three to four word sentences using correct word order such as "Me go car."

### How I Understand

I am more aware of the order in which events take place: first and last, before and after.  
I can match colors.  
I like to play make believe.  
I will notice if you skip a page when you read a favorite story. I may insist you read it the "right" way. I like the same story day after day.  
I can hold up two or three fingers to tell how old I am.

### How I Respond

I can play well alone.  
I play alongside other children.  
I like to watch other children playing.  
I often throw things when I am playing with other children. I also hit, and sometimes I may bite, to get what I want.  
I like to hear my name used in stories.  
I like to hear about what I was like as a baby.  
I still have a hard time sharing, e.g. I do this sometimes because I can't find the words I need to tell you what I want.  
I can act out a simple story or rhyme.  
I like finger plays and action songs.

Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Marezki, A. (1996). *What it's like to be*. Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 15. 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...

- Include nursery rhymes along with my bedtime story. The rhythm is soothing and relaxing.
- Have patience with me if I want to say "Goodnight" to all my toys. Although it may seem endless to you, it will only take a few minutes to go through this routine.
- Turn a cardboard box over and draw burners on the top. Get another box for me to use as a low table to serve the "food" I've cooked. I especially like it if you join in this play with me. I'll take the orders and prepare the "food" to your tastes.
- Share your interests with me. If you enjoy fishing, include me. If you like cooking, I'd like to help.
- Give me simple instructions, such as "Please put the paper in the trash can." After I do it, let me know how pleased you are by saying, "Thank you for helping." I'll learn to be polite if you are.
- Let me use big, colored crayons to draw on paper sacks or other large pieces of paper. If I name my pictures, write what it is on the edge.
- Get me a small backpack. I'll wear it around the house and on walks. I will put my own special treasures in it. It makes me feel so grown up.
- Give me a dishpan of water. Add a funnel, a sponge, measuring spoons and cups, a washcloth or some plastic squeeze bottles. I'll enjoy pouring, squeezing and washing.
- Buy pairs of picture postcards. I will enjoy matching them. Tell me what the pictures are. Flowers such as roses or tulips are easy to match. I'll quickly learn to name them too. Include some landmarks we know. Point these out to me when go for an outing.

***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](http://www.helpmegrow.org)***

# Play is Learning

## Games for Growing

### SILLY QUESTIONS

Encourage your child's imagination and use of words.

#### How to play

Ask your child to imagine what would happen if something silly occurred: "What would happen if I put on my glasses upside down?" "What if candy bars grew on trees?" or "What if people walked on their hands, instead of their feet?"

Let your child make up some silly questions for you too. Have fun guessing and acting out these silly questions. You might be pleased and surprised with your child's imagination.

### WHAT IS IT?

Help your child observe and understand the things in her world.

#### How to play

Sit in a familiar room with your child. Look around the room, and pick out something you can talk about in two ways:

1. What it looks like.
2. What it does.

Say both, and ask your child to guess what you are thinking of. For example: "I can see something that is red, and rolls along the floor," "I can see something that is white, and you drink from it" or "I see something that is tall, and you sit on it." Then ask: "What is it?"

Let your child have a turn asking you to guess too.

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.

### Talking to Children, Talking With Children

The way parents talk to their child affects that child's development. Some parents almost always talk to children. Talking to a child includes using a lot of directions like:

Dos – "Let's take the dishes off the table now."

Don'ts – "Don't pull the cat's tail."

Refusals – "Not now."

Talking to children also includes a lot of:

Teaching – "This cat is black."

Asking questions – "What shape is this block?"

Talking to children is OK. However, studies show that when parents usually talk *to* their child – and not *with* the child – this limits the child's language learning.

Parents talk with their child when they match their words to the child's questions and activities.

This may mean talking about something your child brings up or starting a new talk based on what your child seems to be interested in. For example: "Oh, yes! Look at that kitty jumping."

By talking with your child, you show that you care about their interests and needs, and you want to learn more about them. When you talk with a child, each of you speaks and listens to the other.

You take turns. You can start these talks with such comments as: "Tell me about your visit to Grandma," "You seem to be sleepy," or "What do you want to do with that box?" These are questions your child can answer, but you can't.

Talking with children helps them gain confidence and feel important.

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



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# Just for Parents

## Are You Listening?

Are you really listening to your child? Sometimes, young children feel that instead of listening to them their parents mostly interrupt, instruct, advise, or criticize. And they are often right!

This can lead to misunderstanding and anger. Children whose parents don't listen well can feel that they and their ideas are not very important. Check yourself: Do you talk before you listen? If so, try active listening.

## Active Listening

Active listening is trying hard to hear and understand the other person without interrupting, jumping to conclusions, judging, preaching or getting angry. It means showing respect for the other person and his ideas, even if you don't agree with them. It means waiting to talk until others have finished speaking.

Listening is a vital part of the good communication you want to have with your child. It takes patience and practice to develop good listening skills. But try it! You may find your talks with your child easier and less stressful.

As an extra reward, your child may imitate your good example by listening to what you have to say more.

## Preschool Checklist

It is time to think about finding a preschool or child care program that offers learning that matches Ohio's State Standards for Preschool. Starting Point provides resources to help find both qualified preschools and child care programs. The following checklist from Starting Point provides a list of things to look for as you visit each program. Their web site provides even more guidelines for choosing a school.

### Starting Point

216-575-0061

[www.starting-point.org](http://www.starting-point.org)

- 1. Are the children happy?** See if the children seem to enjoy going to child care. When there, they should feel like they are at home—easily playing and talking with others. Look for smiles and happy faces.
- 2. Are the children safe and secure?** For the child's well-being and yours, it's important to know that

your child is in the care of a responsible person, that the center or family child care home is set up to avoid fire, accidents and other dangers, and that there is a clear plan to deal with emergencies and sickness. Look for smoke detectors, first aid supplies, safety measures, safe play areas, covered radiators and electrical outlets. Check that all dangerous items and substances are well out-of reach. Make sure children cannot be released to anyone parents do not specify and are never left alone and unsupervised.

- 3. Are there enough teachers to give good care?** The fewer children each teacher has in her care, the more time she has to help each child learn and grow. That gives your child the good early start needed to do well in school and in life. The State of Ohio sets minimum standards for the number of children each teacher can handle. For higher quality care, look for lower teacher/child ratios.
- 4. Are the teachers loving and responsive?** First and most important, child care teachers should love the kids. When they do, you'll find they talk and play with the children. They respond quickly when they have problems, set limits gently, comfort them and meet their daily needs. Even discipline should be handled with love and understanding —by setting limits and offering consistent supervision.
- 5. Are the teachers well qualified?** At the least, teachers should have some form of special training in child care—particularly in child development, first aid, CPR, nutrition, behavior problems, health, safety and working with parents. Even better, look for professionals who have credentials, certificates or degrees in child development or early childhood education.



If you need advice, or just a listening ear, call Bellflower Center's 24 - Hour Family Help Line at 216-229-8800.

**6. Do the activities lead to learning and development?** Just watching the children isn't enough. Make sure the teachers set goals for each child and plan things to do that are right for the children's ages. They should use creative materials, toys, books and help the children develop language and everyday skills. The teachers should talk, sing and read to the children, have daily routines for mealtimes, nap times and repeat pleasurable activities like special songs, rhymes and comforting words.

**7. Is the place clean, pleasant and well organized?** You want your child to be in bright, pleasant surroundings—as well as a place that's clean and large enough for indoor and outdoor activities, naps, meals and personal belongings. There should be at least 35 square feet of playroom floor space indoors per child and 75 square feet outdoors per child.

**8. Are good health and nutrition practices followed?** You'll want to be sure the place is clean, especially the bathrooms and diapering areas. Does everyone wash hands before serving, eating, bathroom visits and diapering? Is there a separate isolation area with adult supervision for mildly ill children? Does each child have an individual mat, cot or crib? Are counters, toys and equipment cleaned daily? Is the building warm enough in cold weather? Are meals and snacks well-balanced, nutritious, wholesome and geared to meet the nutritional needs of each age group?

**9. Do teachers and parents work together for the child's well-being?** Working well with your child's teacher is important to you and your child. You'll want to be able to share your child's day, talk over concerns and check your child's progress. Make sure you can stop in anytime. Be concerned if you're not allowed to come in anytime you like.

**10. Do the child care costs, hours and policies match your needs?** As a working parent, you don't want surprises. Make sure your center, home or in-home provider is affordable. Does she

have hours that meet your workday needs? What happens when your kids are sick, have school vacations or emergencies? There should be written contracts and information on costs, handling sickness, vacations and emergencies.

### Getting help with child care costs

Be sure to find out if you're eligible for tax credits from the IRS. You'll find information at the Starting Point web site. If your income is low, see if your County Department of Job and Family Services can give you financial help.

#### A Good Child Care Program

- Offers a regular routine while allowing flexibility for the individual needs of the child;
- Has periods of quiet and active play as part of a well-balanced program;
- Offers a variety of experiences that allow each child to develop individual skills and self-confidence.

*Chances are you'll think of lots of things to ask the center director or child care provider. It's a good idea to write your questions down—or make a copy of the suggested questions—to be sure you remember them all.*

Families with a child receiving ongoing Help Me Grow services will be provided with support and information specific to the transition of their child at age three. Children who were eligible for Help Me Grow services up to age three may transition into services at their local school district, Head Start, or other community programs such as child care, as appropriate. If your child is currently enrolled in Help Me Grow Services and will be turning three soon, please contact the transition coordinator at Help Me Grow, 216-391-5297.

#### State of Ohio Child Care Center Regulations Teacher/Child Ratio

Toddlers (30 month –under 3 years old)	1 teacher for 8 toddlers
Preschoolers (3 years old)	1 teacher for 12 preschoolers
Preschoolers (4-5 years old)	1 teacher for 14 preschoolers

Excerpted from Starting Point's *Good Child Care Book*. (2008)

# Feeding Your Toddler

## Manners

It is not uncommon for three year olds to misbehave at mealtime. It is your job as a parent to lay out clear expectations for mealtime behavior. Your preschooler needs to know ahead of time that if she misbehaves at the table, she'll have to leave.

Your three year old won't be the neatest person around, and you can overlook a lot of messiness if she is genuinely applying herself to her food. She'll still need help using a knife, but she'll manage a fork and spoon pretty well. She will use her fingers a lot for pushing peas onto a spoon and picking up pieces of meat. She will likely have a difficult time sitting still.

Those are typical behaviors that don't interfere with kids getting the food they need. Other behaviors that are also common and do need to be corrected include whining or complaining about the food, begging for foods that are not on the table or eating in disgusting ways. If she can't behave properly, ask her to leave the table, don't let her take anything with her (or come back for dessert), and don't let her eat until the next planned mealtime.

This may seem like alarming advice to you. With this immediate and clear response, children get the message very quickly that there are unacceptable ways to act at the table. It's a way to teach children that eating with the family is important and that you expect her to participate in making it pleasant.

© Copyright by and adapted with permission from chapter nine, "Is your toddler pushing you around at the table" from *How to Get Your Kid to Eat... But Not Too Much*, Ellen Satter, MS, RD, CICSW, BCD, Bull Publishing, Palo Alto, Calif. 1987. For ordering information call Bull Publishing at 800-676-2855 or see [www.bullpub.com](http://www.bullpub.com).



## Good Times at Mealtime

Mealtime is not just a time to eat. It can be a time to talk, share, and enjoy being with others. Family members can tell each other what has been happening at school, work or home. Even though your toddler may not talk well, let him take part in this sharing. Ask him questions, and let him answer for himself.

Mealtime is not a good time to discuss family problems about money, misbehavior, and the like. No one feels like eating when there is an argument going on. If this happens often, your child will begin to dread meals. He will eat as quickly as possible and then want to leave the table. He may begin to have stomach aches because mealtime is unpleasant.

Talk about problems after the meal is over and everyone has left the table. During meals, think of things to talk about so everyone feels good.

If you are eating alone with your child, you can talk about the names of the different foods on his plate and the color and shape of each food. You can count how many different foods or pieces of food there are on his plate. With a little imagination and planning, you and your toddler can make every meal a happy meal.

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

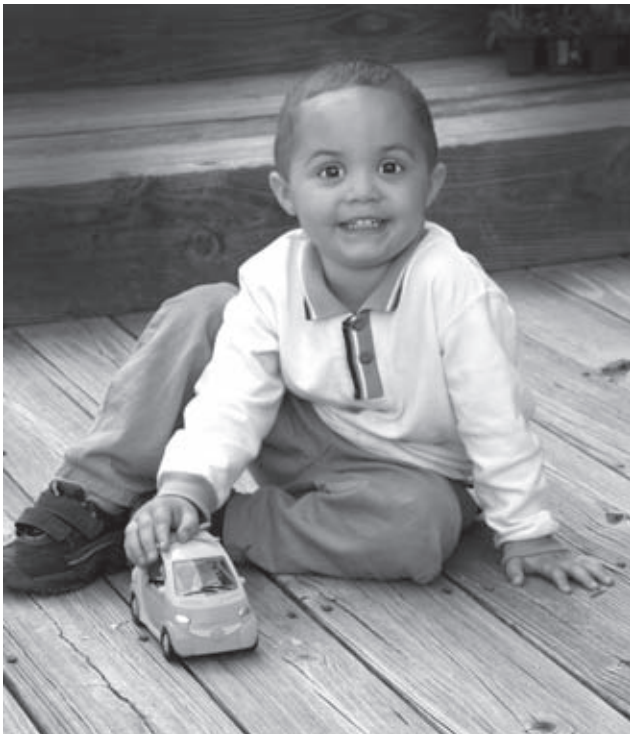
***If you have any specific questions on toddler feeding and would like to speak to a registered dietitian at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Nutrition Program, call 216-201-2000, Ext. 1526.***

# Safety and Your Toddler

## Teach Your Child to Be Safe.

While you still need to be watchful, you can begin to help your child learn to look out for himself. Here's how:

- Practice stopping and looking both ways before crossing any street. Have him remind you what to do.
- Keep a bicycle helmet on his tricycle or bike. Make a rule that he must wear it on every ride.
- Teach your child to buckle the belt in his car safety seat. Don't start the car until everyone is buckled in.
- Explain about dangers in the house — hot water faucets, the stove, fan blades, electricity, medicines, matches — and why it is important to keep away from them.
- Help him learn to tell you where he is going to play.
- Teach him why it is important for you — or another supervising adult — always to know where he is.
- Teach your child never to go with anyone, unless the adult in charge of him says it's OK.



Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Maretzki, A. (1996). *Teach your child to be safe*. Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 15. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

# Your Toddler's Health

## Preschool Vision Screening

National statistics indicate that one in 20 preschoolers have vision problems that can worsen and lead to other serious problems as well as affect learning ability, personality, social skills, self-esteem and adjustment at school. Amblyopia (lazy eye) occurs in approximately five out of every 100 children, and roughly 50% of all cases of strabismus (crossed eyes) and amblyopia remain undetected until after preschool years. According to Prevent Blindness of Ohio, amblyopia and strabismus, if not detected and treated early enough, can cause loss of vision in one or both eyes. If these disorders are detected and treated before age six, their blinding effects can be reversed, often with fairly simple treatment. After age six, little effective treatment is available and the child may face living with one good eye. If your child is in preschool or a child care setting, a registered nurse from the Board of Health may be able to go to the site and test your child. Share this information with your child care provider.

For more information about this service, call the **Cuyahoga County Board of Health** at 216-201-2000.

## 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."*



Ohio State University Extension  
 Cuyahoga County  
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 Cleveland, OH 44105-6136

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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*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.*