

Growing Together



Because My First Years Last Forever

Volume 1 Issue 8

Sixteen to Eighteen Months

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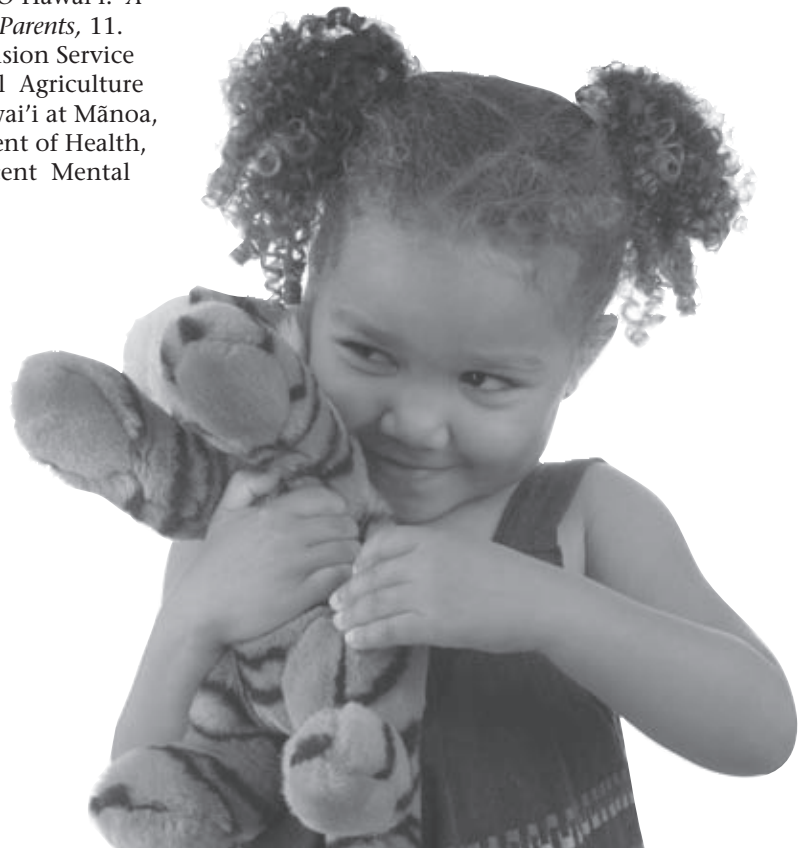
Dear Parent,

Your toddler is able to share more of her feelings about her wants and needs. You can expect some feelings to be more intense. At this age, your toddler may also react more quickly and impulsively. Excitement, frustration, joy, anger and fear are some of the real feelings she has.

Help your child understand these feelings by giving them a name. When a box will not open or a car will not roll, your child may drop it in tearful frustration. Say "I know it makes you angry when your toy won't work." These words show your toddler that you understand her frustration. It gives her words for understanding her feelings. Showing her how the toy works or substituting another toy may help her.

It takes many years for a child to understand and cope with her feelings. Giving names to feelings is the first step. The more help you give now, the easier this learning will be.

Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Maretzki, A. (1996). Keiki 'O Hawai'i. *A Newsletter for New Parents*, 11. 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...

SIXTEEN TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS OLD

How I Grow

I walk by myself.

I can throw a ball from a standing or sitting position.

I may be able to climb stairs with help.

I may start creeping down the stairs backward.

I am very good at pushing a small chair. It gives me a real sense of power to test out my developing muscles.

How I Talk

I may be able to hum.

I have long babbling "conversations" with you or with my toys.

I can combine two words such as "go bye-bye."

I may let you know when my diaper is wet or soiled.

I will begin to say "please" and "thank you" if I regularly hear you say them.

How I Understand

I am beginning to put things inside other things to see how they will fit.

I am beginning to remember where objects belong.

I try to copy adults.

I spend a lot of time staring at things, animals and people.

I can understand simple directions most of the time and follow them some of the time.

I will bring a toy from another room if you ask me to get it.

How I Respond

I am struggling to be independent and to control myself, other people and other things.

I like to play by myself for short periods with you nearby.

I look for you to help me when I am in trouble.

I don't understand what it means to share. When I want a toy, I can't understand that another child may also want it.

I hunt for you by going from room to room.

When I give you something, I want to see how you like it.

I may help put toys away if you show me where they belong. I can't do it by myself. Make a game of it for me.

Tickling and squeezing me after I've eaten may make me throw up. If you toss me up in the air, I get scared. The rough movement could damage my brain.

Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Maretzki, A. (1996). *What it's like to be*. Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 11. 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...

- I am figuring out how things work and may discover that your lipstick marks as well as crayons. It may be difficult for you to imagine how clever I was to have made that discovery. It will be easier for both of us if you put many of the "no's" out of my reach. I need to explore, and I need your approval and love.
- Play with me. One of my favorite games now is "chase-and-be-chased." Other favorite games are "hide-and-seek" and "roll-the-ball."
- Give me lots of hugs and kisses. Tell me you love the way I smile, that you like my giggle, that you love my nose, my toes and my ears. Tell me over and over again.
- Talk to me, even though I don't understand everything you say. Talk to me as you would to adults, so I get the correct rhythm of the language. It will help me understand longer sentences. As I get dressed, name my body parts and my clothes and tell me what is going to happen today.
- Let me play with an old purse with a handle. I will put my treasures in it and carry it around.
- Let me sit in a box or cut out the ends of a large box and let me practice crawling through it. Hang a towel over one end of it and I'll hide from you.

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.

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

Naming Pictures

Helping your child learn the names of things pictured in a book is a wonderful way to encourage reading.

How to Play

Sit with your child on your lap.

Read a picture book to your child.

Encourage your child to find things pictured in the book. “Where’s the rabbit?” “Find the bird.” “What is the boy doing?” “Is he playing with the toy?”

Finish the story.

Sounds Things Make

Helping your toddler pronounce difficult words and learning to connect objects with sounds is a fun learning game.

How to Play

Sit together in any relaxed position.

Imitate sounds for your child. Use your body to show action, like when a plane goes “zoom,” a duck goes “quack,” a fire engine goes “ding-ding-ding,” a train goes “choo-choo-choo,” or a dog goes “wuuff-wuuff.”

After each sound you make, ask the child, “How does a jet go?” or “How does a dog sound?”

You can use a picture or model of the objects when you play this game.

Learning by Helping

Toddlers spend up to 20 percent of their time just watching, listening and staring at you. They’re learning how to copy things you do. When you let your child help you, you are offering a chance to practice what she learns.



Children learn best when parents do simple tasks with them, like cooking, cleaning and other chores. When your child tries to help you, look for ways to make helping fun for both of you. That way, your child will enjoy helping, and will want to help more.

Children can learn how to pour milk from a small pitcher by watching you. They can learn how to sweep the floor, pick flowers, care for a pet, sort clothes and put away toys.

Children will make mistakes, of course. But don’t scold them for these. Instead, say “That was a good try. Maybe it would work better if you did it this way.”

Take the time to help your toddler succeed now. Then later, she will be willing and able to do more things alone and for you. This is time well spent for both of you.

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

Play with Me

All parents want their children to be able to read. Some parents think they do not read well enough to help their children. That’s hardly ever the case. There are things every parent can do to help his or her child get ready to read:

- Look at books with your child — the pictures in children’s books help tell the story. As you and your child practice reading simple words and phrases, you’re building your own reading skills as well as your child’s.
- Recite nursery rhymes or make up rhymes — children need to hear the rhyming sounds in words such as “Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.” or “The old fat cat sat on the mat with the rat.”
- Sing songs. Most songs are really poems set to music — they have rhythm and rhyme, two important elements that can help build reading skills.
- Tell stories — family stories, neighborhood stories, stories from your childhood.
- Talk about colors and shapes — Have you seen my *blue* key case? It is not light blue like the sky, but dark blue like a policeman wears. The ball is a big *circle*. What else is shaped like a circle?

Above all else, have fun!

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Just for Parents

When There Are Problems With Your Child Care

When you recognize problems in your child care program, you should bring your concerns to the caregiver, teacher or director as soon as possible. Sharing your concerns can enhance your relationship with your child's caregiver as well as point out improvements that may benefit all the children in the program. When you talk to the caregiver, teacher or director, try the SOLVE method:

- S** State the problem without placing blame.
"I am concerned because ____ occurred." or "I see ____ and wondered if we could discuss it." is often a good way to begin.
- O** Offer and ask for ideas to solve the problem. Then, decide together what you and the caregiver will do.
- L** Listen and stay calm.
- V** Value the caregiver. Let them know you appreciate them and are willing to work with them to find a solution.
- E** Evaluate after a few days or weeks by talking with the teacher, caregiver or director, sharing your feelings and asking for theirs.

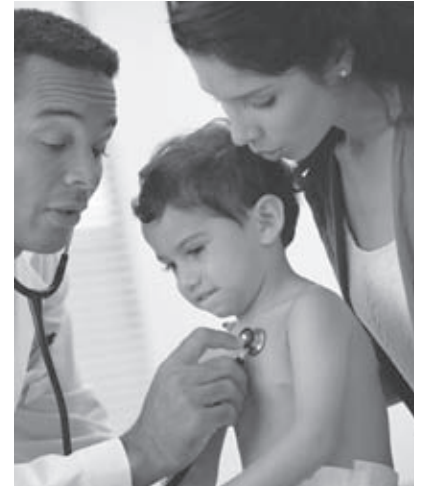
If you would like more information about child care, call **Starting Point at 216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971.**

National Network for Child Care (1998). *When there are problems with your child's care.* NNCC-98-005.



Well-Child Visits

As part of a well-baby/well-child visit, your child's doctor should ask specific questions about your baby's progress. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) lists five behaviors that signal further evaluation is recommended:



- Baby does not babble or coo by 12 months.
- Baby does not gesture (point, wave, grasp) by 12 months.
- Baby does not say single words by 16 months.
- Baby does not say two-word phrases on his own by 24 months.
- Baby has any loss of any language or social skill at any age.

Having any of these five "red flags" means, your child should have a "developmental screening". A child showing these behaviors should have further evaluations by a multidisciplinary team. This team may include a neurologist, psychologist, developmental pediatrician, speech/language therapist, learning consultant, or other professionals knowledgeable about developmental disorders.

HealthyStart provides free health insurance for children of qualifying working families. **216-987-7346**
The "five red flags" courtesy of the Autism Society of America

Resources for Development questions

Help Me Grow 216-736-4300 or www.helpmegrow.org
Tools for today and tomorrow www.toolsfortoday.org
Autism Society of America 1-800-328-8476
www.autism-society.org

Biting

Biting is one common behavior among young children 16 months to around 30 months (or more). As children get more adept at talking they are more likely to convey their needs with words and less likely to bite. Until this happens, however, constant supervision and help to monitor frustration levels is important. A child may bite for what appears to be no reason at all. In fact, the child may simply want attention and doesn't see another way of getting it. Show him how to ask another child for a toy or to play with his friend. Practice this often, and be there to help each time he needs it. Even games that pretend biting foster this behavior. Find another way to play with your child.

If you have any specific questions on biting or other behavioral problems, call **Bellflower Center's 24-Hour Family Help Line at 216-229-8800.**



No!

Of course parents need to say no to their children. It's a matter of safety and learning boundaries, but, oh, do we dislike hearing no from our toddlers. Children this age are just as apt to refuse their favorite flavor of ice cream as they are to say no to bedtime. In this first example, the child is likely to come around quickly. In the latter, she will need a lot of help. Tolerating the automatic no and waiting for a minute or two to let your child warm up to your suggestion will take care of many of these situations. Parents should try to avoid using "no" themselves. Try to phrase directions positively (i.e., instead of "No, don't jump on the couch," say "Couches are for sitting.")

Offer the toddler two simple choices to allow her the feeling of power and independence she needs.

Bushaw, K. (September, 1998). No! Focus Issue: Parenting/ Child Development in Common Concerns of Parents 12-24 month. North Dakota State University Parent Line.

Stranger Anxiety

The term "stranger anxiety," or fear of strangers, is a natural stage that your toddler may pass through as he learns to tell the difference between people who are familiar to him from those who are new. Stranger anxiety emerges between 9-12 months, and may reappear around 18 months of age.

While stranger anxiety is not displayed by all children, those who do show signs of it can have reactions that range from simply looking carefully at a person and taking longer to interact with them to a screaming fit when approached by a stranger. It is important to note that this anxiety occurs either when the person is a stranger to the child or someone they don't remember. This may include a grandparent or babysitter they have not seen in a while. The more experience your toddler has interacting with strangers the less likely he is to exhibit stranger anxiety. A child who had no anxiety between 9-12 months of age may show extreme anxiety at 18 months. There are several things you can do to help him get through this anxiety including:

- Don't force him to interact with someone he seems nervous about, even if it is a grandparent. Give him time to come to the person on his own terms.
- Talk to him and let him know that this is a person that you know and trust.
- Use body language to send your child the message that this person is OK by giving them a hug or touching them on the arm. Don't force your child to do the same.

This stage will last longer for children of certain temperaments and they may remain more shy than other children for many years. Give them the time they need to warm up to the situation, providing whatever support you can while letting them know that they are going to be fine.

Whalley, K. (2000). *Stranger anxiety*. Ohio State University Extension.

Feeding Your Toddler

It's Okay to Eat a Little or a Lot

"You have to eat everything on your plate." Is this something you were told as a child? After all, no one wants to see food wasted. It's really unfair to ask your child to eat about the same amount every day. Some days children will be hungry and will want more than you've put on his plate. Other days he will be less hungry and won't want as much. Only your child knows how hungry he is, so let him decide how much to eat. Let him eat until he isn't hungry anymore, then let him stop.

Don't punish your child for eating too little or for eating too much. If you do, your child will feel ashamed of his appetite and will begin to feel guilty about food. Food left on the plate can be put away for another meal or snack. If you find there is always food left, you may want to try giving him less. Start with small portions (1 to 2 tablespoons) so the plate doesn't look so overwhelming.

Mealtime may be less hectic (and less messy) if child-sized dishes and utensils are provided. Weighted-bottom cups, small plates and small spoons work best.

Steinberg, J., Riley, D., & Schatell, D. (1997). *It's ok to eat a little or a lot.* (adapted). Parenting the Second and Third Years. University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension, NCR publication No. 578.



Weaning From a Bottle

A toddler at this age, can usually drink from a cup quite well. Many parents continue to give their child a bottle because they prefer giving liquids in a spill-proof container. Other parents are worried that their toddler will not get enough to eat if he doesn't get a bottle. The bottle may also provide a lot of comfort.

Problems can occur when a toddler continues to use a bottle. A child may carry his bottle during the day. At night, he may go to sleep with the bottle in his mouth. This pattern means that juice or milk is in frequent and continued contact with his teeth. The sugars in these liquids feed bacteria in the mouth and can cause cavities. If he sucks the bottle while lying down, there is also a chance of painful ear infections.

If toddlers fill up on milk or juice, they may not get the nutrients they need to grow and develop. Children at this age need a variety of foods in their diet.

To prevent these problems, help your toddler gradually give up the bottle.

- Continue your special routines. If the bottle is associated with cuddling and rocking, carry on these activities without the bottle.
- Be prepared for a few rough weeks. Look for ways to show your child love and distract him from the bottle.
- Give him milk and juice only from a cup. If he insists on having his bottle, fill it with water or allow him to have it when empty.
- Keep his bottle out of sight unless you intend to give it to him.

Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Maretzki, A. (1996). *Weaning from a bottle.* Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 11. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

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."

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

Safety Alert, Avoid Burns

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

Most burns to young children are caused by:

- **Scalds** from hot liquids and foods like coffee, tea and grease or even tap water.
- **Touching something hot** like a stove, iron or heater.
- **Toxic chemicals** such as toilet cleaners (lye).

Burns happen most often in the kitchen when hot liquids are spilled while cooking and serving, and when ovens, stoves, pots and pans are hot. Parents often change their habits and household after a burn, rather than before.

During this age, children grow so fast that parents are often not ready for what a toddler can do. Toddlers can pull hot food off a table or touch a hot stove while they are trying to walk. Be aware that a toddler will get underfoot in the kitchen, and you can spill hot food on her. She may also be able to turn on a faucet or flick a lighter so it starts a flame.

Remember: Your child will surprise you with what she can do. Expect her to grow and change every day.

Be prepared

- Turn your hot water heater down to low (120° to 130° F) to prevent scalds in the sink and tub.
- Check the temperature of the bath water with the back of your hand.
- Be especially careful when your child is with you in the kitchen.
- Never leave anything hot on the edge of a table or counter.
- Never eat, drink or carry anything hot when you are carrying your child.
- Never smoke near your child. Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- Store cleaning supplies on the highest shelf of a locked cabinet.



Your Toddler's Health

Dental Care

Your child's first visit to a dentist should be scheduled between the ages of 1½ and 2. Dentists who have special training and equipment to care for children are called pediatric dentists or pedodontists. Your own dentist may be willing to care for your child.

This important first visit should be a pleasant experience. Prepare your child for the visit by reading him a children's book about going to the dentist. Explain to your child that the dentist is a helper to mom and dad in caring for his teeth. Tell him what to expect while he is there. Playing "dentist" may also help.

This is the time to establish good dental habits. Young children often feel very grown-up when they are given their own toothbrush and allowed to brush to their heart's content. For more information go to www.helpmegrow.org

Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Marezki, A. (1996). *Dental care*. Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 11. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

Immunizations

If your child is between the ages of 16 and 18 months she should be scheduled to receive the 4th DPT (diphtheria-tetanus-whooping cough) shot, the 3rd Polio shot and the 4th Hib (haemophilus influenza type B vaccine) and should have already received the 1st MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) at age twelve months. If you don't already have a well-check-up appointment scheduled, call your doctor or health care professional. If your toddler has not received immunizations, it's not too late to begin. Reduced cost immunizations are available by calling the **City of Cleveland Department of Public Health, 216-664-4257, or Cuyahoga County Board of Health, 216-201-2000.**



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 9127 Miles Avenue
 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.