

# Growing Together



Because My First Years Last Forever

Volume 1 Issue 9

Twenty-Two to Twenty-Four Months

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Dear Parent,

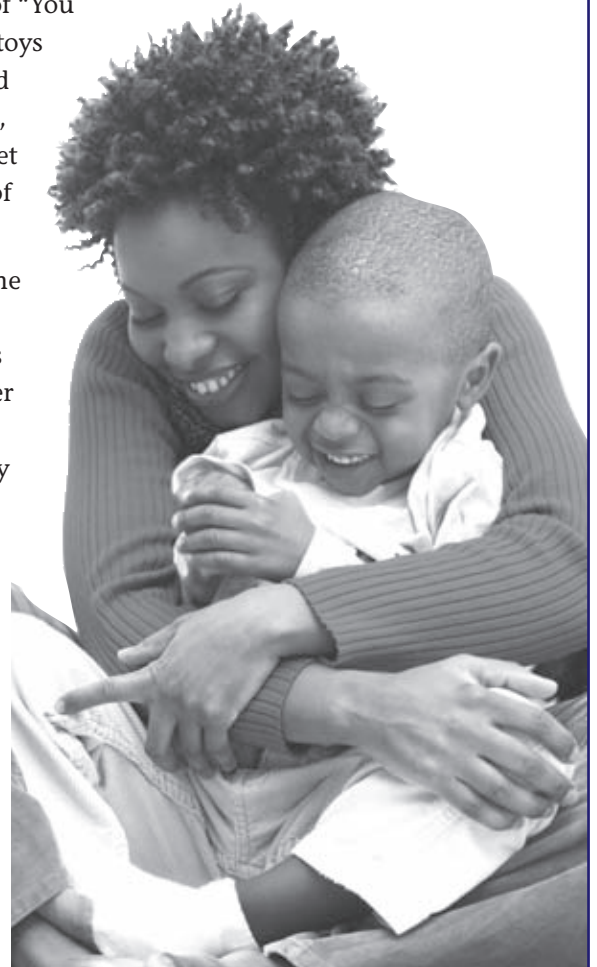
Even though your child has entered the “me” and “mine” phase of life he needs you more than ever to help him feel good about who he is.

As your child grows, it is your job to help him feel good about himself. He needs positive words and he needs to know how you want him to act. A child at this age learns from example and your words both good and bad can define how he thinks of himself. Speak to him the way you would want someone to speak to you. “Please” and “thank you” are magic words. Tell him you love him and thank him for helping you even if it is not done the way you would have done it.

There are many ways to teach your child how you want him to act. For example, give positive directions. “Let’s put the toys away now that you are done playing with them.” Instead of “You are so lazy, why can’t you put your toys away?” Avoid statements that would make anyone feel bad. For example, when he spills his milk, say, “Let’s get a sponge and clean it up,” Instead of “Can’t you do anything right?”

Remember, you are human and some days we all need to stop and think before we act. We all make mistakes and we all have questions. Bellflower Center’s 24-hour Family Help Line, 216-229-8800 can help you with any parenting questions you have.

Kelly Hendricks, Program  
Assistant, Ohio State  
University Extension.



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

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# What It's Like to Be...

## TWENTY-TWO – TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS OLD

### How I Grow

I turn doorknobs and open doors.  
I walk up and down stairs.  
I put both feet on each step and hold onto the railing.  
I can walk on a line and even take a few steps backward.  
I can run fairly well.  
I wash and dry my hands with help.

### How I Talk

I ask for food when I'm hungry and water when I'm thirsty.  
I can say more words clearly and understand more of your words.  
I like to create tunes with my voice.  
I can say "I," "me," "mine," and my own name.

### How I Understand

I am beginning to understand "today" and "tomorrow," but I cannot understand "yesterday."

### How I Respond

I may cry if you speak sharply to me.  
I may resist bedtime.  
I am continually testing limits you set.  
I like to have my own way in everything.  
I may hit or bite when I am angry or want something.  
I do better on a schedule.  
Routines and rituals are very important to me.



Kreeger, J., Haverson, V., & Maretzki, A. (1996). *What it's like to be*. Keiki 'O Hawai'i. A Newsletter for New Parents, 13. Cooperative Extension Service College of Tropical Agriculture University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Hawai'i. Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

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.

## How You Help Me Learn...

- Make up a song or a story. Use my name. Change the words to match my actions or feelings. This may help calm me when I'm upset.
- Sing songs like "Rain, Rain, Go Away" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb." It will be easy for me to copy. I won't really be able to sing until I'm closer to three.
- Look at the night sky with me. Point out the clouds, moon, and stars.
- When we go for walks, take a bag to collect "treasures." We can look at them and name them when we get back home.
- Repeat the names of objects over and over again; use simple words and short sentences. Talk to me about what I am doing and what you are doing.
- Let me get things for you.
- Make some play dough for me. I will roll, pound, and squeeze it. It will be easier for me if you put it on a plastic place mat. Protect the floor and play with me.

### 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."*

**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

## Early Years Are Learning Years

### Helping Toddlers Become Problem Solvers

All parents and teachers have seen the unique ability of toddlers to use toys and materials in unexpected ways. One child may turn a cup into a hammer or a basket into a hat. Another toddler may stand on a riding truck to try to reach a toy or pull over a chair to climb onto a bookshelf. Observant adults recognize these innovations as signs that children are learning to use their thinking skills to solve problems.

Experiences in problem solving help children develop curiosity and patience, along with thinking skills such as flexibility, and understanding of cause and effect. They learn to work toward achieving a goal, and gain confidence in their ability to reach a solution.

Even very young children make discoveries on their own. An infant who accidentally creates a noise with a rattle may then make the sound again and again on purpose. An older infant discovers that by looking under a blanket, he can find a hidden toy. A toddler who cannot pull a wagon up a hill by herself learns that she and a friend can push it up from behind.

By not rushing in and rescuing young children who are facing minor everyday problems, adults can help infants and toddlers develop confidence and increase their thinking abilities.

It's also helpful for parents and teachers to provide materials that encourage children to explore. Some toys, such as jack-in-the-boxes and busy boxes, provide opportunities to explore simple cause-and-effect relationships. Other common materials like empty cardboard boxes, plastic bowls, or scarves can provide open-ended experiences through which toddlers can make choices and decisions, and find different ways to manipulate

the materials. Other activities can involve materials such as clear plastic tubing (such as the tubing used for aquariums) which children can fill with bright materials, and watch the materials move as they shake the tubes. If you provide inclines or ramps of wooden blocks, a toddler can watch what happens as objects roll down inside the tubes. She may discover that some objects roll faster than others. He may learn about actions and reactions when he sets plastic bottles at the bottom of the ramp to create a unique bowling game. (Whatever materials you provide, remember to be very careful about choking hazards.)

These everyday materials are fun, and can hold children's interest for long periods. Groups of children engaged in these activities negotiate with their friends and learn how to solve interpersonal problems.

By providing interesting materials and enthusiastically reinforcing children's attempts to explore and solve problems, parents and teachers can stimulate children's development, promote advanced critical thinking, and help children take pride in their own abilities to find out more about how their world works.

Excerpted from "Using Everyday Materials to Promote Problem Solving in Toddlers" by Laura Segatti, Judy Brown-DuPaul, and Tracy L. Keyes – an article in the NAEYC journal, *Young Children*.

Early Years Are Learning Years is an NAEYC resource for early childhood educators, parents, and others who support and nurture the development of young children. For more information about the benefits of NAEYC membership, visit [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)



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*Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension.*

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# Just for Parents

## Surviving Toilet Training

Most children are ready for toilet training sometime between their second and third birthdays. This is the same time that they are experiencing what many parents call “the terrible two’s”—a time when the children are having their first experiences with the word “No!” and with exerting their own will and making their own opinions known. As wonderful and funny as two-year-olds can be, their willfulness and independence can make toilet training a real trial for their parents.

What can parents do to survive toilet training? The first thing is to realize that everyone becomes toilet trained eventually! Your child will, too. The second thing to remember is that toilet training does not occur at the same time for every child. Your child will be ready when he or she is developmentally ready, and this may be different than the child next door or your child’s brother or sister. If you try to pressure your child into toilet training before he or she is ready, this could result in a stressful situation for both of you.

### WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS READY FOR TOILET TRAINING?

- An interest in wearing underpants instead of diapers.
- The ability to stay dry for several hours at a stretch.
- An interest in being clean and dry.
- The ability to undress and dress oneself.

### WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR MAKING TOILET TRAINING EASIER?

Remember that you are dealing with a two or three-year-old who likes to believe that he or she is controlling the situation. It is better to let the child have some choices. Parents generally have better success when they are not forcing the toilet training. The following are some tips for easing the stress of toilet training:

- Let the child choose some of the equipment he or she will need, for instance, underpants, a potty seat, a book or video about toilet training.
- Make full use of those props—the books or videos or dolls that drink and wet.

- Make it easy for your child by having potties that are readily accessible.
- While you can suggest that your child may want to try the toilet, it is difficult to force the child to actually use it.
- Aim for consistency in toilet training among caregivers, for instance, with your daycare provider or babysitter.
- When you are out, be especially patient. You will soon learn where the closest restroom is in every grocery store, restaurant, and mall.

**EXPECT MISTAKES!** Toilet training generally takes several weeks or more for the child who is ready. If it is taking longer, maybe your child isn’t yet ready, and you should try again in a few weeks. Even for the child who is making progress, there will be plenty of mistakes. Be prepared to accept them with good humor and to appreciate that this is just part of normal toilet training. Reward your child with praise and congratulations when he or she uses the potty, and be sympathetic when there are mistakes. (Children who are punished for toileting mistakes may end up becoming more resistant to using the toilet altogether.) Finally, congratulate yourself on your patience, and celebrate with your child when you make it through the first “dry” day.

For more information on toilet mastery, call Bellflower Center’s Tot-line at 216-431-8200.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. 2008. Safe Children and Healthy Families Are a Shared Responsibility. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



## Limit TV Time

From a very young age, our children are exposed to a variety of media, including television shows, videos / DVD's, cable, video games, computer activities and internet. Research shows that children spend more time using media than they spend on anything else except sleeping.

What is our responsibility as parents? Is it to turn off the TV forever? Not necessarily. Instead, get involved, stay informed, and be proactive. Here are a few suggestions to help you be in the driver's seat when it comes to deciding media exposure for your child:

- Know how much your child is watching - no more than 1-2 hours a day of quality programming from all types of media for preschoolers.

- Discourage children under 2 years of age from watching any television.
- Know what your child is watching.
- Remove television sets from children's bedrooms – children who have TV sets in their own rooms watch more unsupervised television.
- Do not allow television during meal times.
- Limit use of television as a babysitter.
- If you use day care, find out if your child is watching any television there.
- Encourage alternative entertainment for your child including reading, athletics, hobbies, and creative play.

Excerpted from *Growing Together Newsletter* Issue 13 (2006), "Does Television Impact your Preschooler's Health?." Punam Ohri-Vachaspati, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.

## Backup Child Care... Do You Have a Plan?

Even the best-planned child care arrangements can be disrupted from time to time. Without emergency care, commonly known as backup care, working parents may be forced to stay home. Options for backup care should begin at the same time you set up your regular care.

Backup care is needed when your regular child care arrangements are not available: when either your child or your provider is ill; when providers are on vacation, resign, or go out of business; when schools are closed; or any situation in which your care arrangements fall through. For two-parent families, the best place to begin is to talk with your spouse or partner ahead of time about your individual work schedules. Decide who could stay home. If you are a single parent, talk with family, friends or church members who may be of assistance. In some situations, you may be able to find another parent who is willing to help you out in exchange for some weekend or evening hours.

**Remember that your two year old should never be home alone.**



## Tips to Be Prepared

- ▶ Find more than one backup care arrangement.
- ▶ Visit as many potential backup child care facilities as possible.
- ▶ Keep a file of providers with their phone numbers and available hours.
- ▶ Have copies of paperwork such as birth certificates and immunization ready.
- ▶ When you interview care givers, ask if they have an emergency caregiver.
- ▶ Complete preregistration materials for programs that require advance paperwork.
- ▶ Know your employer's policies about taking time off from work.
- ▶ Know your caregiver's policy on sick children.

Reprinted from The Daily Parent, a newsletter for parents, with funding from the Citygroup Foundation and produced by National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Washington D. C., Volume 3, 1999.

If you would like more information about child care, call **Starting Point at 216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971**. Ask about providers in your community that provide backup care.

# Feeding Your Toddler

## Food Jags

What do you do when children get “stuck” on a certain food? If he or she keeps asking for the same food meal after meal, the child is experiencing a “food jag.” Food jags are common in the toddler years. More frustrating for you than harmful for kids, it’s a smart idea to remain low key about them. The more you focus on them, the longer they may last. It is okay to offer the food they want again and again and again! Just include other foods alongside to encourage variety. Your “monotonous diner” will soon tire of eating the same foods. Focus your attention on the positive aspects of your child’s eating behavior, not on your child’s food choices.

Duyff, R. L. (1996). Food jags. In Braun, J (Ed.), *The American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, Food to Grow* (pp.420). Minneapolis, Minnesota: Chronimed Publishing.

## Meal Preparation Activities for Your Toddler

One way to help your toddler over food jags is to involve her in planning and preparing meals and snacks. Food-handling activities are also a wonderful way to spend time with your child. Food activities teach lifetime skills: taking responsibility, figuring things out, making decisions, and getting along with others (talking, listening and taking turns). At the same time, toddlers are learning vocabulary about food and nutrition and gaining valuable skills in making food choices and learning to prepare meals. Preferences for foods begin early. Exposing your child to a variety of foods can encourage lifelong healthy eating from all food groups.

Hertzler, A. ( May, 1996). *Meal preparation activities for your toddler.* (adapted). Preschoolers Food Handling Skills and Motor Development, (Extension Publication No. 348-011). Virginia Cooperative Extension.

## Healthy Snacks Equal Good Nutrition

Toddlers like to snack. And that’s good news! Because their stomachs are small, they may not be able to meet their nutrition needs with just three meals a day. Snacks can provide nutrients and food energy that are missing from their meals. Serve snacks no less than two hours before meals so that your child comes to meals with her appetite intact. Vary snack foods as you do foods offered at mealtime. Children can drink too much juice at snack time, so limit the amount to no more than 4 to 8 ounces of juice a day.

Duyff, R. L. (1996). Healthy snacks equal good nutrition. In Braun, J (Ed.), *The American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, Food to Grow* (pp.420-421). Minneapolis, Minnesota: Chronimed Publishing.

## Child-Friendly, Nutritious Snacks

- Yogurt with fruit
- Cereal with milk
- Small cubes of cheese
- Peanut butter, thinly spread on rice cakes, crackers, or toast
- Applesauce
- 100% fruit juice
- Dry cereal
- Mini cheese pizzas
- Pudding
- Graham crackers
- Pretzels

## Nutrition Web Sites

<a href="http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids">www.mypyramid.gov/kids</a>	Government nutrition web site
<a href="http://www.aap.org">www.aap.org</a>	American Academy of Pediatrics
<a href="http://www.eatright.org">www.eatright.org</a>	Nutrition web site
<a href="http://www.kids/health.org">www.kids/health.org</a>	Kids Health resource site
<a href="http://www.ohiohelpmegrow.org">www.ohiohelpmegrow.org</a>	Ohio Help me Grow



**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

## Safe Water Play

Children of all ages enjoy playing in water!

Tragically, unsupervised toddlers have been known to wander into a neighbor's yard, open the latch on the gate, crawl under the pool cover (in and above-ground) and drown.

These tragic accidents can be avoided. If there is a pool in your neighborhood, talk to the owner and other neighbors. Encourage everyone to watch out for young children. Two year olds are fearless and have no sense how dangerous water can be. Even a wading pool with only a small amount of water in it is potentially dangerous. It takes only a few minutes and less than an inch of water for a child to drown. Remember:

- Small pools and wading pools should be emptied when not in use.
- Larger pools should be fenced in and the gate kept locked when the pool is not in use.
- Beware of young children playing with buckets of water without adult supervision.

Children can have fun with water play, but adults must be willing to spend the time to ensure the safety of children playing in or near water. Here are some safe "wet-and-wild" water activities for your child:

- Instead of playing in a pool, attach the garden hose to a sprinkler.
- Wet the sand in a sandbox. Have the children dig rivers, streams and lakes in the sand, and fill them with water.
- Blowing bubbles is a fun outdoor activity. Two year olds can learn to blow bubbles if you show them how. You can buy bubble wands or use suitable products you may have at home. An easy bubble solution can be made by combining:

1/2 cup dishwashing soap

5 cups water

A tiny bit of cooking oil added to the mixture will make the bubbles tough enough to float without breaking easily.

For a free consumer publication on pool safety: visit the Consumer Products Safety Commission's web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).



# Your Toddler's Health

Keep your doctor's phone number and other important numbers (police, fire, emergency squad, poison hotline, pharmacy, taxicab) near the phone. Let your babysitter know where the numbers are in case of an emergency.

## Make Sure Your Child Exercises Regularly

Many children are not getting enough exercise and childhood obesity is on the rise. Fitness is vital to good health. Build an activity plan for large-muscle physical activity into your toddler's life. Children imitate adult behavior, and children with active parents are usually active themselves. Get involved in the activities you plan for them. If children see you running, jumping, climbing, dancing, and exercising, they will join in. Promoting exercise at home can be fun for you and your child and lead to lifelong fitness. Activity and exercise also builds teamwork, self-discipline, sportsmanship and leadership.

## Here are some ideas:

- Help children do warm-up routines that include stretching, flexing and balancing. Make sure the exercises are suitable for toddlers.
- Present exercises in a way that will interest children. Plan active games and group exercises when friends visit.
- Combine music and movement every day.
- Take advantage of all the free resources your local library has to offer. Ask the librarian about age-appropriate materials.

Carlson, G. (1994). Make sure children exercise. In Todd, C.M.(Ed), *Family child care connections*, 4(3) pp. 6-7. Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.



Ohio State University Extension  
 Cuyahoga County  
 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.*



COMMISSIONERS  
 Jimmy Dimora  
 Timothy F. Hagan  
 Peter Lawson Jones



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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.*