

PE D I A T R I C S

of Northeastern Pennsylvania

920 Viewmont Drive Dickson City, PA 18519-570-346-1464

YOUR 15 MONTH OLD CHILD

There is a really neat individual developing from all this "babiness". It's so incredible to see their minds working as their vocabulary enlarges and communication becomes a little bit easier. Sometimes, you and baby don't see eye to eye on the issues. Here's some general "baby info." to help keep you going.

NUTRITION

Allow your child to feed herself with fingers or a spoon. Don't focus on table manners at this point. Your baby should be eating table food about three times a day plus snacks. Preferable snacks would be non-sugared and unsalted foods, such as fresh fruit instead of candy or chips. Avoid small or hard foods, (i.e., hot dogs, peanuts) so as to prevent choking.

Keep in mind that baby's growth has slowed down drastically from the first year of life. Your child will therefore require less food.

Your child should be drinking juice or milk from a cup, not bottle. Remember, juice or sugary substances in a bottle at bedtime encourages both tooth decay and inhibits self soothing to sleep.

SAFETY

Toddler car safety seats used consistently and properly are still essential.

Stairs remain a hazard so continue to use gates or locked doors to prevent access to unsafe areas. Keep poisons, medications or toxic substances in a locked cabinet. Never underestimate your child's ability to climb. Medications, remember are NOT to be referred to as candy. **POISON CONTROL # 1-800-222-1222.**

You can prevent burns and scalds by, 1) setting your hot water thermostat at 120 degrees Fahrenheit, 2) keeping hot liquids out of reach during meal preparation, 3) don't carry your child and hot liquids at the same time, 4) beware of hot liquids on table cloths that the child can pull down, 5) turn pot handles to the back of the stove, 6) keep your child away from hot stoves, space heaters, irons and fireplaces.

Avoid electrical injuries by continuing to use safety plugs in sockets and keeping electrical cords as inaccessible and as least obvious as possible.

Protect your child from falls by first realizing they can climb and climb quickly. So don't leave the means and motives. For example, don't leave the kitchen chair pulled out from underneath the table when there is interesting things on top to explore, or don't leave open dresser drawers, etc.

Keep all plastic wrap, bags and balloons safely out of your child's reach.

Close supervision is still required near any body of water, pool, tub, well, etc. Keep your toilet lid closed. Remember that knowing "how to swim" doesn't make a child water-safe at this age.

SLEEPING

Remember your bedtime ritual. Children thrive on routine. It makes them feel safe and secure. Separation anxiety may still cause problems at bedtime, so use a transitional object such as a toy or favorite blanket to help soothe anxiety.

Your baby is surely climbing, so make sure the crib mattress is at its lowest point to avoid unnecessary falls. Most children will still nap once or twice a day.

PARENTING TIPS

Play is an excellent way to communicate with your baby and introduce them to their world. Toys needn't be excessive nor expensive. Stuffed toys, books, small cars, push/pull toys, toys to open and close, fill and empty, toys to pound, musical toys, pots and pans, riding toys, softballs, household utensils, even empty boxes are all great and fun for the imagination.

Let your little one help you dust or sweep. They love to imitate Mom and Dad who are their idols.

Stimulate language and communication development through reading, singing and talking with your child about what they are doing and seeing. Call things by their correct names and encourage baby to repeat the words. It is easier to teach the correct word once, then to teach "baby talk" now and re-learn correct language later. Listen and answer your child's questions and let them see your pleasure as they make word-like sounds.

Allow your child time and space to explore their world safely. Play chasing, dancing to music, splashing in water, throwing and kicking a ball, examining treasures found on walks like rocks, leaves, sticks are all fine supervised physical activities. Don't use TV as a substitute for parental interaction with your child. You are the most significant person in your child's life and your example speaks loudly.

DISCIPLINE

This age is influenced by developing autonomy and overwhelming curiosity. Both of these are necessary for your child to develop a sense of competence.

This doesn't mean your child calls all the shots though. Consistent discipline is necessary. Discipline means to teach, giving clear messages appropriate to your child's understanding. Rules and appropriate limits must be agreed upon by Mom and Dad, so as not to give your child mixed signals. Be prepared to follow-up a verbal "no" with physical action if necessary, such as holding the child, removing an object asked not to touch or distracting or removing the child from dangerous situations.

Give lots and lots and lots of positive reinforcement. And try not to encourage negative behavior by mainly being a "no " parent. Instead, reinforce positive behavior by telling your child what they CAN do. By reinforcing and praising your child for good behavior, you are not only increasing their self esteem, you are giving them positive parental attention, which further encourages the desired behavior.

EXTRA!!! EXTRA!!!

TOILET TRAINING

The end of diapers is almost here! Usually somewhere between 18 months and 24 months your child will exhibit certain signals to let you know that they are becoming ready for toilet training. One important thought to keep in mind is children train themselves. You really have little to do with it. In fact, the more control you try to exhibit, the more it usually backfires.

Watch for consistent dry naps and word signals that indicate understanding, such as "pee pee" or "poo poo", or grunting or straining after meals. These indicate child-readiness to be introduced to the potty.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Refer to immunization chart in baby book for immunizations due.

Immunizations and their schedules change according to the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations. Check with your physician for changes/updates.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Motor

Walks alone, stops and starts, stoops, and explores.
Self feed with fingers, drinks well from cup.
Scribbles spontaneously, can stack two blocks.

Language

Has a 3-6 word vocabulary, uses jargon, uses gestures.

Mental

Points to one or two parts of his body on request, understands a simple command.
Pats picture in a book and attends to story being read.
Indicates wants by pulling, pointing, grunting or vocalization.

Social

Gives and takes toys, hugs.

Please remember these are "typical" milestones for this particular aged child, but every baby is an individual and variations are to be expected.

Please call out office between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. with ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS. That's what OUR part of YOUR team is all about.