

PE D I A T R I C S

of
Northeastern Pennsylvania

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

YOUR 2 YEAR OLD CHILD

Can you believe it? Two years old! You can almost see the light at the end of the tunnel. A walking, talking bundle of glorious energy is more than likely living in your home. Your toddler's constant turmoil and negativism will be easing soon as new and exciting milestones approach. So take the time to sit back, savor these last few fleeting moments of baby stuff as you watch this unique little person grow.

Included in this handout is some general toddler information to keep you going.

NUTRITION

During this time you are still in control of your child's eating habits because YOU still choose what foods your child is offered to eat. Please don't equate feeding your child with your success as a caregiver. Don't tease, bribe or urge your child to feel guilty about not eating. Your child will learn that their actions at mealtime, not only attract your attention, but that of other family members. Feeding becomes an issue of control. We recommend offering foods to your child that are low in saturated fats and cholesterol, such as low fat varieties of milk, yogurt and cheese, skinless chicken and turkey, fish, veal, lean beef and pork, fresh, raw and steamed vegetables, fresh fruits and juices without sugar, brown rice, pastas, potatoes, beans and whole grain breads.

Next, here is a list of foods high in saturated fats and cholesterol. These foods you should serve less often. Some would include, french fries, macaroni and cheese, ice cream, egg yolks and liver.

As a parent you worry when your little one won't eat what is offered. Accept your child's emerging autonomy and independence. It is far more important and effective to be sure that what you child DOES eat is HEALTHFUL FOOD, than to worry about what your child does not eat. Here are a few tips to help defuse the food fight time bomb:

1. Encourage self feeding as soon as your child is able, about 9 months, using child appropriate items, i.e., a two handled plastic cup, child size utensils.
2. Offer small portions.
3. Offer a variety of food items, while realizing your child may get adequate nutrition through a limited selection of foods with good nutritional value. Allow your child to choose.
4. Praise, praise, praise!
5. Limit the length of meals to a set amount of time. Promote family mealtime.
6. Be consistent with timing, attendance, seating and discipline at mealtime.
7. Demonstrate acceptable behavior and require it of older siblings to set examples.

8. Do not use food as a comfort or reward.
9. Avoid force feeding or threatening behavior related to feeding.
10. If your child refuses to eat, remove the food.

EXTRA!!! EXTRA!!!

- No more bottles, please!
- Fluoride is still recommended; discuss optional vitamins with your doctor.
- Avoid non-nutritious snacking (junk food, excessive sugar).

SAFETY

Because your little one is walking, or more likely running, they require special, careful safety planning. Your child climbs, opens doors, (may lock them too), and drawers, takes things apart, and loves to play in water. This age group still loves to chew on most things they can get hold of, so please keep that **POISON CONTROL** number handy, **1-800-222-1222**. The trick at this age is to "get there" before they do, i.e., anticipate and try to remove potential hazards.

Make a toddlers-eye view of your home and you may find many hazards you need to change. Such as:

1. Guard against falls from table and dresser tops, by not leaving chairs out or drawers open to provide handy climbing access to your "active researcher".
2. Secure doors that lead to stairs, garages or other hazardous areas.
3. Install guards on windows above the first floor.
4. Remove furniture with sharp edges when possible, i.e., the coffee table and use non-skid pads in the bathtub.
5. Have a secure play area, preferably fenced in, or remain with your child at all times while outdoors.
6. In the kitchen, teach the meaning of "hot". Turn pot handles inward and use the back burner whenever possible. Store knives and scissors and other sharp objects out of your child's reach. Lock up toxic substances, detergents, and polishers. Don't allow appliance cords to dangle.
7. Provide unbreakable toys without removable parts. Trikes and other riding toys should only be used on sidewalks, not on the road, ever!
8. Keep guard in front of heater and fireplaces.
9. Never, ever leave your child alone near any body of water, not even a frozen body of water, such as a lake. Body of water also includes bathtubs and toilets.
10. An approved car safety restraint seat must be used at all times.

11. Don't allow your child to play in driveways or around power equipment, such as lawn mowers. Always hold your child's hand while walking on the sidewalk or crossing the street.
12. Keep matches and cigarette lighters well out of your child's reach. Don't allow your child to turn on the hot water.
13. Install smoke detectors and conduct fire drills. Buy flame resistant clothing whenever possible.

Remember this impatient little streak of lightning needs consistent and firm discipline, especially when playing outdoors. They still don't understand what is dangerous, and they don't remember those "No's" we are always telling them, but they're beginning to learn by imitation. Your example can be an excellent teacher, although there is no substitute for anticipating an accident before it happens.

SLEEPING

Autonomy issues play a great role in sleep disturbances at this age. These children want to control all aspects of their environment and frequently present problems going to sleep and staying asleep. Management at this time should include a consistent bedtime ritual. Nightly routines allow your children to have charge of the process of going to sleep. Rituals should include positive reinforcement for good behavior. Your child should be sleeping in their own bed or crib. If your child is consistently crawling out of the crib, consider a bed at this time. If a bed is used, you may want to gate off the room to prevent any "escapees" during the night.

TOILET TRAINING

Although toilet training is a task that involves considerable parent-child interaction, its ultimate success depends on the child's ability to master the process at their own pace. Watch for signs of readiness, such as dry naps, grunting or straining after meals, and specific word signals that indicate understanding, such as "pee pee" or "poo poo".

PARENTING TIPS

Offer simple, durable toys to your child, and make time to play with your child. Don't expect true sharing or concern for game rules at this age. Encourage peer contact, but remember it's easier for your child to play with one or two other children than in a large group. You can continue to encourage development in language skills and understanding by regularly reading to your child. Showing them the pleasures of reading can be one of the best gifts you can give them. Encourage your child to tell you what they see when you go for a ride or a walk.

Select TV programs and limit TV to about an hour a day. Watch with your child and discuss what is real and what isn't. Help your child learn their first name. You say it and encourage your child to repeat it. Tell stories, using your child's name, either real or make believe. When your child is dressing, name the pieces of clothing and body parts. This age group has loads of energy so provide space and encourage physical activity. Encourage climbing, running, jumping and balancing. Play follow the leader, have your child crawl, tip toe, or do the bunny hop around chairs and over pillows. Show your child how to bounce a ball with you and to you.

Encourage play with puzzles, blocks and toys. Show your child how to draw shapes, like circles and lines, and how to group objects together in ones or twos. Allow your child to attempt choosing clothes and dressing themselves and encourage dress up play.

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

At this age, the typical child can:

1. Climb and descend steps alone, one step at a time, holding the stair rail or parents hand.
2. Open doors, climb on furniture, use a spoon and cup well, kick a ball, throw overhand.
3. Stack five or six cubes and can align two or three blocks in straight line (like a train).
4. May have a vocabulary of at least 20 words, although language development shows great variability at this age. Can make two-word phrases with pronouns, refer to herself by name.
5. Respond to two-part verbal commands.
6. Spontaneously make or imitate horizontal and circular strokes with a crayon.
7. Show some interest in bowel and bladder control.
8. Enjoy imitating adults.
9. Show interest in helping to dress himself.
10. Use a toy appropriately, like a hammer and pegs, etc.
11. Washes and dries hands.

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 our 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.