

Toddler Topics

For parents of children 12–24 months

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This issue is about children
12-15 months old



Dear Parents:

Someone once said that the world's greatest explorers, discoverers, and scientists wear diapers and are called babies. From the time they are born, babies are trying to figure out how the world works. To do this they use every skill they have—the five senses at first, hands and feet as skills develop. Take a deep breath as you begin the second year of your child's life. Your small explorer has some exciting adventures in store for you—and, perhaps, some that will be puzzling or even scary. It may seem strange to talk about discipline while your child is still a baby, but it's not too soon to establish the loving, firm relationship that is the foundation for healthy development. Children need a grown-up ally or friend as they try to become self-disciplined people. Unfortunately, what some children get instead is a grown-up enemy—a person they believe to be against all their efforts to find out about the world, other people, and themselves. We hope these letters will help you and your toddler become, and remain, good friends.



She or he? Him or her?

Toddler Topics gives equal space and time to both sexes! That's why we take turns referring to toddlers as "he" or

"she." So keep in mind that even if we say "he" or "she" we are talking about all toddlers.

Milestones of Baby's Growth*

Every child is unique and develops at his/her own rate. These milestones should be used only as general guides to your child's development.

	Here's how your baby's body will grow	Here's how your baby's personality will grow	Here's how your baby's language will grow
By 12 months	<p>sits steadily for 10 minutes</p> <p>pulls self to a standing position</p> <p>picks up small objects with fingers</p> <p>crawls on hands and knees</p>	<p>may become more confident with strangers</p> <p>shows emotions—affection, sympathy, jealousy</p> <p>likes to be with familiar adults</p> <p>cooperates in dressing if in the mood</p>	<p>waves "bye-bye"</p> <p>understands "no-no" but doesn't always obey</p> <p>says two words</p> <p>turns pages of book</p>
By 15 months	<p>cruises by walking holding onto things</p> <p>stands by self momentarily</p> <p>scribbles when given a crayon</p> <p>walks a few steps</p> <p>creeps up stairs</p>	<p>sometimes lets you know if diaper is soiled</p> <p>may not listen to "no"</p> <p>throws or drops things from high chair but wants them back</p> <p>very curious</p> <p>approaches other children</p>	<p>points to wanted things</p> <p>says five words, including people's names</p> <p>understands simple commands ("show me your eyes")</p> <p>imitates adult speech</p> <p>points to clothes, body parts when named</p>

*Adapted from *Off to a Good Start . . . You and Your Baby*, Program Director James E. Van Horn, extension family sociologist. Child development material contributed by G. L. Schilmoeller, formerly assistant professor of child development, with Florence Long and John Worobey, graduate students. Cooperative Extension Service, Pennsylvania State University.

Teething



Many one-year-olds have a miserable time with teething. You can make them more comfortable by

- providing hard rubber toys for them to chew
- offering a damp wash cloth (see if they like it frozen) or a damp or frozen sock for chewing
- providing apple slices, toast, or chewy foods if the toddler can eat them without choking

Supervise children *very carefully* when they have food or other objects in their mouths.

Babies who are teething may drool and have diarrhea. They need lots of liquid to drink.

Comfort toys (blankets, teddy bears, "loveys," or "cuddlers") may be especially important to children when they feel uncomfortable, bored, or tired. Encourage your toddler to use one.

Special Reminder

Each child develops at his or her own rate. The milestones listed here are generally true of most children. If your child is developing very differently, check with your pediatrician or well baby clinic. A perfectly normal, healthy child may, for example, be much slower to walk or talk than most other babies—but it's always better to check out a concern than to

worry. If you live in New York State call the telephone number of the Early Childhood Directions Center in your area. People at your center can help you understand your child's development. (Your local elementary school or Cooperative Extension Office will help you find a Directions Center or other help.)

Are you thinking of going back to work or school?

Choosing the best available care for your child is very important. Call your local Cooperative Extension office and ask for *Choosing Child Care for Infants and Toddlers*, by Polly Spedding, HDFS Fact Sheet 24.

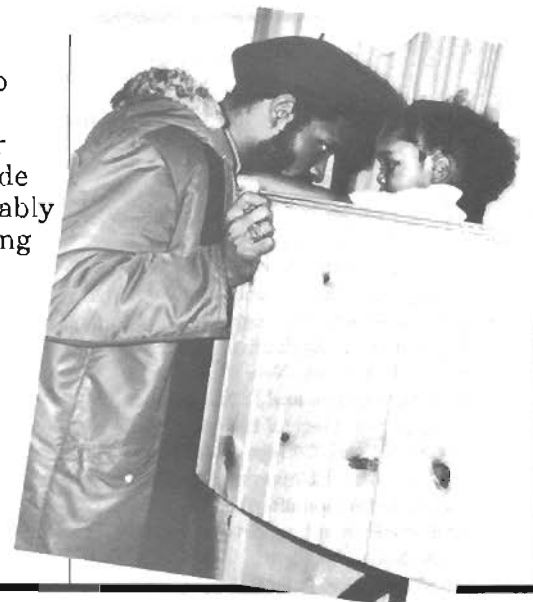


Games Babies Play

By this age your baby will enjoy "pat-a-cake," "peek-a-boo," or other simple, rhythmic games. Ask a mother, grandmother, nursery school teacher, or librarian to teach you these and other games. Or call Cooperative Extension or visit your local library for more ideas.

Good homemade blocks for babies can be made from milk cartons. Each block requires two milk cartons of the same

size. Cut the pouring spout ends off, so that you have two rectangles. Push one carton (open end first) into the other carton. Presto! You have made a block! Your baby could probably use 10 to 12 of them for looking at, stacking, throwing, and carrying from one place to another.



Feeding Your One-Year-Old

During the second year of life the baby's rate of growth slows down, so you may notice that she's not eating as much as she used to or that she's getting picky about what she will or will not eat. If you find yourself worrying about the amount your baby is eating, keep a "food diary" for a few days. In your food diary record everything the child eats—even if it sounds silly. Here are some typical entries: "1/4 cup cheerios, 1 slice apple, 2 oz. apple juice, 1/2 cracker."

That's OK! The county Cooperative Extension office can help you figure out if your toddler is getting enough to eat and eating the right foods. Discuss your concerns with your pediatrician, public health nurse, or Cooperative Extension nutritionist or home economist.



Many babies are ready to give up the bottle, breast, or pacifier by now. Watch your child for signs that he is losing interest and offer gentle, loving help as he moves on to more grown-up things—such as cups! It may help to introduce a cup of juice (not milk). Your child may



drink juice, water, or milk from a cup but continue to prefer one beverage in a bottle. Go along with her preferences for awhile. Toddlers may want a bottle at bedtime or when they are sick long after they have learned to use a cup.

Safety Tip

Store toys on low, open shelves. Toy chests are hazardous because

- children's fingers can get pinched in the hinges or banged when the lid closes.
- children may lean into them and be hit on the head, neck, or back when the lid slams shut.
- children may climb into them and suffocate if the lid closes.

Found and Scrounged: Creating Play Environments for Children, HDFS Fact Sheet 13, is available from your local Cooperative Extension office.

Especially for You

Life seems hectic, and the house is always a mess. It seems that you clean up all day long and still that busy baby is one step and several messes ahead of you. Isn't it interesting how standards of housekeeping change when a baby joins a family? It helps to get outdoors if you possibly can. It may seem like too much effort to bundle him into mittens, hats, and outerwear, but a brisk walk with the baby in a stroller is a wonderful way to reduce stress. And even the most active babies usually enjoy a stroller ride, as long as you keep moving. If you're working

you may enjoy an evening stroll—even in the dark.

You need some nonwork time away from the baby. Try to find a baby-sitter, relative, or drop-in child care center and treat yourself to some time alone each week. You deserve it, and you'll be an even better parent after a break. Put this page up on your refrigerator if the people you live with find your needs difficult to understand or accept.



Busy—Busy—Busy

Your baby is probably busy from morning to night—turning up in places you wouldn't expect such as the top of the kitchen table (how did he get there?!) and doing wonderful chores like emptying the wastebaskets (all over the floor!). This is truly the age of exploration. Imagine what it must be like to be able, all of a sudden, to move when you decide to move, rather than always to be at the mercy of someone who wants to move you.

Toddlers this age enjoy pots and pans (set up a low kitchen shelf or drawer just for baby), boxes, sturdy measuring spoons, rubber animals that can be chewed as well as examined and carried around, stacking and nesting toys, toys that have dials or knobs to turn and manipulate, and blocks. (If your baby starts twiddling the knobs on your TV or stereo, say "no" firmly, take her to another room, and give her a toy. Say to



David Dayger

her, "These are yours," and engage her interest in the toy, balls, toys that make music or interesting sounds, or durable books made from cloth or cardboard.

Special Reminder

Furniture polish, detergents, cleansers, aspirin, cough medicine, pills, and other poisonous substances should be stored in locked cabinets. List other substances in your home that you must put away.

The Poison Control Center telephone number should be next to the phone! For more information about poison prevention call your local hospital or Cooperative Extension office.

Questions

"My 13-month-old has been pretty easy to live with until now. But she's started having screaming temper tantrums when she arches her back and screams so loudly I can't do anything with her. What should I do?"

Some people will advise you to put your baby in her crib or play pen and leave her there until she stops screaming. But this might give her bad feelings about her crib or play pen as a place for sleeping or playing. Other people may advise you to

continued on next page . . .

Questions continued

slap or scold her—again this seems wrong because, after all, she's expressing herself in the only way she knows how.

A child who is screaming and out of control probably feels angry, frustrated, and perhaps scared. You can say, "When you calm down, I'll try to help"—and go about your business while remaining in sight. If you are afraid the baby will hurt himself by banging into furniture, for example, you may have to move him to a safe place—maybe even to his crib. But you can tell him, "I'll put you here so you won't hurt yourself," and remain in sight. When he does calm down, be sympathetic—say something like, "You felt really mad," and try to show him sympathy, perhaps with hugs and cuddles.

The baby doesn't know enough words to tell you what he thinks or feels or wants, and tantrums let you know how frustrating this inability to communicate can be. It's not a good idea to give in to a tantrum, for example, by

letting him have a forbidden food, object, or experience. But don't punish him for wanting it—or for letting you know he wants it.

If temper tantrums seem to occur more frequently in certain situations (perhaps when you go shopping or right before meals) try to think about them calmly at a time when the child isn't having one. Maybe you can plan the situation differently by trading off baby-sitting with another parent so you can go to the store alone, or by giving your toddler meals half an hour earlier than usual. Other ways to plan daily activities can be found in the following good books:

Louise Bates Ames, Frances Ilg, and Carol Chase Haber, *Your One Year Old*. New York: Dell, 1982.

Ira Gordon, *Baby Learning through Baby Play*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970.

Richard Rubin, John J. Fisher, and Susan Doering, *Your Toddler*. New York: Collier, 1980.