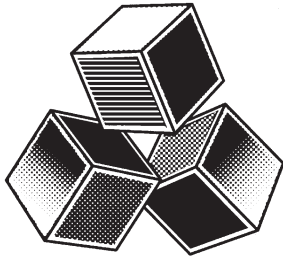


19 and 20
Months Old



PARENT EXPRESS

A Guide for You and Your Child

Dear Parent:

Your child is special.

Isn't it nice that your child is like no other child in the whole world? Parents often worry that their children are not developing as they should.

Those who study young children agree that the one predictable thing about children's development is its variability. Normally developing children may walk as early as 7 months, though many do not walk before they are 18 months old, but should be pulling up and "cruising" (holding onto objects as they move). Normal children may begin talking at 8 months or at 18 months, and so it is with all learning.

Your child naturally enjoys learning new skills. You can support and encourage this learning not by pushing or criticizing or comparing your child with other children, but by teaching, encouraging, and celebrating her own successes.

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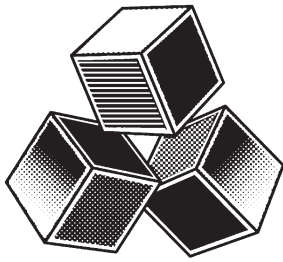
Happy Dancing

Toddlers like to do things with their parents. They like music, rhythm, and body movement. Happy dancing combines all these things. Turn on some music. Teach your child to do a happy dance. Dance to fast and slow music. Hold hands and dance together. Clap your hands to music or use large wooden spoons to beat on something that makes a nice noise. Show your little one how to keep rhythm along with the beat. Children

grow up to like the type of music they hear when they are little. Play a variety of music and your child will learn to like many kinds of music.

Mealtime is Mess Time

Toddlers are messy eaters. You can bet that a lot of food will end up on the floor. If you are worried about the carpet or floor, put an old sheet under the high chair. You can shake it out



Trade babysitting with another parent, or trade a service like cooking a meal in return for a few hours of babysitting. You've earned it, you deserve it, and you don't need to be embarrassed about asking for it.

after meals. When it gets really dirty, you can wash it.

Things that make eating easier for your toddler are small unbreakable items such as:

- ▶ A spoon with a short handle
- ▶ A bowl with sides to push food up against
- ▶ A cup that your toddler can circle his hands around and pick up. (This cup shouldn't tip over easily. A training cup with a lid can make drinking easier.)

There will be lots of spills, and most will be accidental. If it happens three or four times in a row, your toddler might be playing or trying to get your attention. This means it is probably time to end the meal.

Serve your toddler food at the same time everyone else is eating. Your toddler will learn how to eat by watching you and other family members eat. Don't expect good table manners yet. Your child will learn manners gradually over the next few years.

A high chair can help. Toddlers are such busy little people they might not want to stop to eat when it's time for a meal or snack. When you put your child in a high chair, he knows that it's time to stop what he is doing and eat.

Give Yourself a Present

Taking care of a toddler can leave you feeling you never have a moment for yourself. If you're feeling stressed out, give yourself a present—some time just for you. Trade babysitting with another parent, or trade a service like cooking a meal in return for a few hours of babysitting. You've earned it,

you deserve it, and you don't need to be embarrassed about asking for it.

Here are some suggestions for spending time on yourself:

- ▶ Take a long, private bubble bath, a walk, or a swim. See a movie or read a book.
- ▶ Plan your future—investigate classes you might take, jobs you might like, or activities you would enjoy.
- ▶ Spend time with a friend—without children.
- ▶ Talk to someone about the stress you feel and what you might do to reduce it.

The time you take just for yourself will help you feel refreshed and ready to face parenthood again.

Sometimes Change Takes Time

Does it sometimes seem that your child changes almost too fast, while at other times she learns important things so-o-o slowly? Believe it or not, your little one wants to learn, and she is doing her best. Some things are just hard for her to get the hang of. You can help by being patient and calm and by encouraging and praising each tiny accomplishment. That way, she won't get upset and have trouble learning.

If your messy eater gets two spoonfuls of applesauce in her mouth without spilling much, let her know you are pleased. If she plays with another child just five minutes without squabbling, compliment her.

Let her know you appreciate what she can do. Try not to criticize what she can't do. She'll learn faster, and you'll both feel better.

What It's Like to Be 19 and 20 Months Old

How I Grow

- ▶ I explore a lot.
- ▶ I may be able to kick a large ball.
- ▶ I like being independent, but sometimes I want to act like a baby.
- ▶ I can run without falling too often.
- ▶ I can stand on either foot while holding onto furniture.
- ▶ I still like to climb on everything.
- ▶ I don't know about safety, so I count on you to keep things safe for me to explore.

How I Talk

- ▶ I'm very good at saying no.
- ▶ I love to name things.
- ▶ I can follow simple directions.
- ▶ I like to be read to.
- ▶ I can say about 15 words.
- ▶ I like to listen to nursery rhymes.
- ▶ I ask a lot of questions, mostly by saying "Why?" or "What's that?" Be patient with me. I am just trying to learn.

What I Have Learned

- ▶ I can pull the toilet paper wa-a-a-y out.
- ▶ I can put two pieces of clay or play dough together to form a simple figure.
- ▶ I'm beginning to know what things are for, such as that a hammer is for banging.
- ▶ I can draw an up-and-down line pretty well.

How I Get Along with Others

- ▶ I love cuddling.
- ▶ I like to help you do simple things.
- ▶ I'm still not much interested in other children.
- ▶ I may treat other children like they are things; I may hurt them.
- ▶ Even when I'm with other children, I like to play alone.
- ▶ I want to keep my toys to myself, and I may hide them so others can't play with them.
- ▶ I need time to get to know people; I'm afraid of some people.
- ▶ I like to do things without adult help.
- ▶ I may be less friendly to adults, but this is temporary.

What I Can Do for Myself

- ▶ I can brush my own teeth but still need help finishing the job.
- ▶ Sometimes I let you know when I'm going to have a bowel movement.
- ▶ I can let you know when I need dry clothing.
- ▶ I go to bed without complaining.
- ▶ I can feed myself pretty well.

Play I Enjoy

- ▶ I like to play alone, but I like adults to be near me.
- ▶ I like picture books, and I love looking at pictures of myself.
- ▶ I enjoy swinging on a swing.
- ▶ I like dressing up in adult clothing and pretending I am an adult.
- ▶ I like to have you sing to me.
- ▶ I like to take toys apart.
- ▶ I like rides and walks.
- ▶ I like to look at myself in the mirror.

Games for Growing Big and Little

Purpose

This game teaches your child about opposites and sizes.

How to Play

- ▶ Sit in any relaxed position.
- ▶ Place three big and three little blocks on the floor.
- ▶ Pile the blocks up in different patterns and describe what you are doing. For example, "Now I'll take the big block. Now I'll put the little block on it," and so on.
- ▶ Now say something like "We need a big block. Give me a big block," or ask for the little blocks so that your child learns the difference between big and little. Encourage your child to make up other block games or big-and-little games you can play together.

Touch a Word

Purpose

This game helps your child point to objects named and learn the words for these objects.

How to Play

- ▶ Sit with your child.
- ▶ Turn pages in a baby's picture book and say to your child things like "Where's the car?" and "Touch the horse."
- ▶ Then say, for example, "Now look at this. This is the word for car." Point to the word and then say, "Point to the car. Touch the word for car."

Play this and any game only if it is fun for both you and your child.

Homemade Toys That Teach Milk Carton Blocks

Purpose

This toy will teach your child to stack things and to see what happens when the stacks are knocked down. Block play also allows young children to experiment with patterns, shapes, and sizes. These lightweight building blocks, which cost almost nothing to make, are popular with children.

Materials

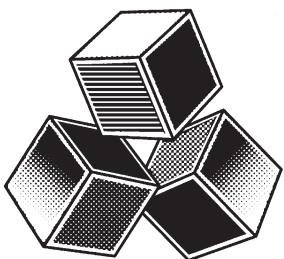
- ▶ Milk or cream cartons
- ▶ Heavy plastic or duct tape

Making the Toy

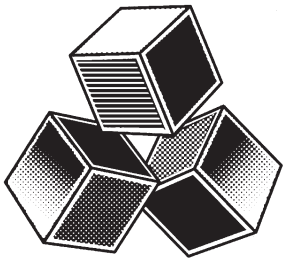
Take any two cartons of equal size and cut them to the same height. Turn one over and slip it inside the other so that it makes a block. Secure the edges with duct tape or heavy mailing tape—a kind of tape that a child can't peel off and swallow. Cover the blocks with decorative adhesive paper or paste letters, numbers, or pictures on them.

Special Toy or Blanket

Many children have special blankets, teddy bears, or toys. Some children adopt the strangest things as comfort toys. They claim them and call them their own forever—or at least until someone makes fun of them. The most common favorite object is a blanket. Your little one may appear every morning with one thumb in his mouth and the other hand clutching a ratty, tattered blanket.



You can help your child with learning new things by being patient and calm and by encouraging and praising each tiny accomplishment.



The problems, pain, and disfigurement from a burn could last the rest of your child's life. Most childhood burns occur between birth and 4 years of age.

There are some stories about security blankets that would truly surprise you. Heaven forbid if one should get lost, stolen (who'd want it?), or washed. Yet that blanket or teddy bear or toy represents a friend who has shared your child's life through thick and thin, in sickness and health, in good times and bad. Most of us would welcome such a friend if it could do as much for us.

What do you do about these special comforts and attachments? Leave them alone. In time your child will realize the blanket or bear or other toy isn't going to solve life's problems. He will come to realize he can solve his problems by himself. For now, let him enjoy his comforting "friends."

Toddler Talk

Let Me Play in Water and Sand

Let me play in sand and water even if I get dirty or wet. A pile of sand in the corner of the yard will be great. You can make a sandbox by filling an old tire with clean sand; but make sure it is not a steel-belted radial tire, which could cause injuries. Also, check the sandbox frequently for spiders, snakes, and animal waste; and keep the sandbox covered when it's not in use to keep out cats and dogs.

Let me play with water. Bathing, filling and emptying containers, and washing dishes are great fun. Give me a plastic bucket or can filled with clear water and an old paintbrush. I will paint the sidewalk, the house, and everything I can reach. Put a small dishpan of water on the kitchen floor or outdoors. Add a funnel, sponge,

measuring spoons and cups, a washcloth, and a plastic squeeze bottle. I'll enjoy pouring, squeezing, washing, and squirting. Remember, don't leave me alone with water; I can drown in less than 2 inches of it.

All this is teaching me about the world I live in, and it's lots of fun.

Avoid Burns

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

Most burns to children are caused by:

- Scalds from hot liquids and foods such as coffee, tea, and grease
- Contact with hot surfaces such as stoves, irons, and heaters

These burns occur most often in the kitchen when hot liquids are spilled while you are cooking and serving and when appliances are hot.

At this early age, children grow so fast parents often are not prepared 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. A 2-year-old will get underfoot in the kitchen, and you can spill hot food on him.

After a burn incident, parents often change their habits and household; but it is better to change things first to prevent possible accidents. Remember that your child will surprise you with his ability. Expect him to change overnight.

Here's how you can be prepared:

- Never eat, drink, or carry anything hot when you are carrying your child. You can't handle both.
- Never leave anything hot on the edge of a table or counter.
- Be especially careful when your child is with you in the kitchen. Don't let him play in the kitchen when you are not there.
- Keep pot and pan handles turned toward the back of kitchen range.

Temper Tantrums

Sometimes children between the ages of 1 and 3 have temper tantrums. They may cry, shout, hit, bite, throw themselves on the floor, and kick. Some hold their breath. You may not know what started the tantrum, but you certainly know you want to stop it.

Some children have tantrums because they have learned it is a way to get attention or to get something else they want. Others imitate parents who have quick tempers. Tantrums probably mean that the child is overcome by anger or frustration. Maybe she has been told too often what she cannot do. Children seem to have temper tantrums most often when they are overtired, hungry, or excited. Although temper tantrums are normal for children at this age, they don't happen as often if the child feels loved and important.

There is no magic way to handle tantrums, but here are some suggestions:

- Try to remain calm, which is often hard to do.
- Keep your child from hurting herself or others.

- ▶ Separate her from other children or from the place where she's having her tantrum or just hold her in your arms.
- ▶ When your child calms down, comfort her and try to understand the reason for the tantrum.
- ▶ If you give the child what she wants when she has a tantrum, she might learn to use tantrums to get her own way.

Give Your Child a Lifetime of Happy, Healthy Smiles

Your child's first teeth are important for:

- ▶ Helping to chew and talk
- ▶ Saving space for permanent teeth to grow in straight
- ▶ Helping your child feel good about her smile

By following a few easy steps, you can avoid future dental problems for your child:

- ▶ Gently clean your child's teeth and gums daily with a damp cloth, gauze, or toothbrush.
- ▶ Feed only formula, milk, or water from a bottle. Do not add sugar.
- ▶ Offer the bottle only at feeding time.
- ▶ Do not put a child to bed with a bottle.
- ▶ If you use a pacifier to comfort your baby, never dip it in any sweet substance.

- ▶ If your drinking water is fluoridated, make a habit of encouraging your child to drink it. If your child's drinking water is not fluoridated, ask your doctor about fluoride supplements.
- ▶ Take your child for a dental check-up when she is between 2 and 3 years old.

A Question about the Terrible Two's

I've heard about the terrible two's. What are they, and how do I cope with them?

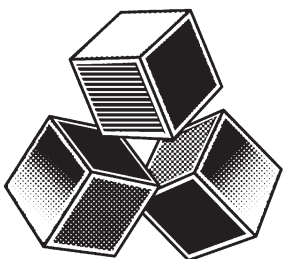
The months of the second year may not be terrible, but they can be difficult. Most toddlers go through a period at about 2½ years—some as early as 18 months, some much later—when they seem to delight in doing just what you do not want them to do. This happens because toddlers are learning independence at this age. They have the physical ability to do things on their own and are learning that they can have some power over others. They have learned to say “no” and “I want.” To practice all these new abilities, they want what they want right now, and they let you know this very clearly. Sometimes they demand things they shouldn't have. At times they demand things they don't even want just to show how powerful they are.

When your toddler reaches this stage, he is not being deliberately nasty. He's just showing that he is growing up. Be patient. Use the guidance ideas we have discussed in this series. In a few months, your toddler should be moving out of this difficult period.

Secure Toddlers Are More Compliant

A lot of research has been done on the relationship between parents and their young children. For some this relationship is close and loving, but for others the relationship is tense and uncomfortable. In a close relationship, the child feels secure. She feels she can count on her parents for affection, care, and protection.

Children are more likely to obey parents if they have a positive, harmonious, affectionate relationship with them. Studies have found that when parents are aware of a child's distress and are able to comfort the child quickly and successfully, a close, secure relationship between parent and child develops.



Some children have tantrums because they have learned it is a way to get attention or to get something else they want. Others imitate parents who have quick tempers

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