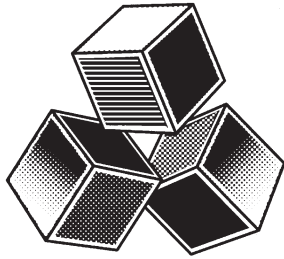


15 and 16
Months Old



PARENT EXPRESS

A Guide for You and Your Child

Dear Parent:

Your child is curious about everything.

Help your child explore her world. A 15- or 16-month-old child moves fast. She crawls, scoots, and walks. How exciting it is for her! Her world is full of new things to touch, throw, climb on—and to fall from or knock down. Your quiet, cuddly baby has become a lively little person, and that means you have to be lively, too. That can be fun, but it can make you tired, anxious, and angry.

Playpens are okay when you need to rest or to calm down, but keep playpen times brief. Enjoy your child's exploring and help her discover new things—safely. She needs to learn about her surroundings so she can feel good about herself and her world.

In This Issue

- ▶ Toddler Talk
- ▶ Reasoning Discipline Is Better than Power Discipline
- ▶ Look, Mom, I Can Feed Myself
- ▶ Mealtime and Snack-Time Routines
- ▶ Self-Esteem Begins Early
- ▶ What It's Like to Be 15 and 16 Months Old
- ▶ Games for Growing
- ▶ Bath-Time Fun
- ▶ These Are the Accident Years
- ▶ Lead Poisoning Is a Serious Illness
- ▶ Know When You're Really Stressed Out
- ▶ A Question about Sibling Rivalry
- ▶ Homemade Toys That Teach
- ▶ Don't Rush Toilet Training
- ▶ Limits Show Love

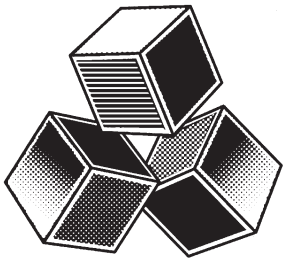
Toddler Talk I'm Learning about Movement

Help me discover how things move. If I like dropping something from my high chair, give me a paper napkin to drop and let me watch how the air moves it. Give me a sponge or a tennis ball to throw. I like to hear the sounds things make when they hit the floor. Tell me the names of things and what

they do, such as roll, bounce, or splat. I soon will find out that things that go splat get your attention.

Bounce me gently on your knee or lap, or clap with me in time to music. I like the movement and the music.

Let me have space indoors and outdoors to practice crawling and walking. I am going to be running by the end of the year. Right now, let me practice crawling, standing, sitting, and walking on my own.



Studies show that parents who control with reasoning are better able to manage their children's behavior and help them learn to cooperate.

Reasoning Discipline Is Better than Power Discipline

Recent research shows that parents usually control and guide toddlers in one of two ways: with power or with reasoning.

Power control includes physical punishment, use of force, and taking away objects or privileges. It also includes withholding affection or refusing to speak to the child.

Control with reasoning means explaining to the child in simple, understandable words why she should behave in a certain way, pointing out that the forbidden actions could hurt her or others.

For example, if your child throws sand at other children, power control might be yelling at her or hitting her. Reasoning control might be telling her that she could hurt other children by getting sand in their eyes and she must stop.

Studies show that parents who control with reasoning are better able to manage their children's behavior and help them learn to cooperate.

Look, Mom, I Can Feed Myself

By now, your child has become an expert at putting things in his mouth. This is both good and bad news. The bad news is that lots of things go into the mouth that don't belong there. The good news is that your child can begin to feed himself. It also means you can eat at the same time your toddler does, rather than separately. Of course, he will be watching you and will try to do what you do. When

he sees you eating with a spoon, he will want to practice eating with his spoon. (Child-size spoons are sold at most discount stores.) But he will still eat most foods with his fingers. Expect that he will make a mess.

More good news is that your child can begin eating the same foods you eat. There is no reason to buy special junior baby foods. You can easily make your own toddler foods by mashing, dicing, chopping, or shredding the foods you eat into small pieces that are easy to chew and swallow and that won't cause choking.

Mealtime and Snack-Time Routines

It is a good idea to give your child meals and snacks at about the same time every day. He will feel better if he knows he is going to have food at regular times. If he doesn't, he is apt to be crabby and cranky. He might overeat when he finally does get food because he is not sure when he is going to eat again.

Eating in the morning helps your child stay alert and energetic. He might not want to eat just after he wakes up. That's okay; try again later. He'll probably be ready for food in a half-hour or so.

Children have small stomachs and may get hungry within a few hours after a meal. Give your child nutritious snacks at midmorning and mid-afternoon to take care of his hunger and keep him healthy. Good snack foods include cheese cubes, crackers, yogurt, and cut-up fruits and vegetables.

Most people eat a meal around noon, and they may eat another meal about 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. You can plan the times of meals around what you have

to do during the day. Try to stick to this regular schedule. Suppose your child refuses to eat at mealtime but then asks for a snack immediately afterwards. Generally, it's a good idea to refuse his request and tell him he must wait until snack time.

If your child doesn't want to eat what you've prepared, don't get into the habit of fixing something different just for him. Remind him that this is what everyone in the family is eating. Tell him it will be a while before the next meal or snack. If he insists he is not going to eat, quietly remove his plate. Let him leave the table if he wants to. Try not to refer to any foods as good or bad. All foods can be part of a healthy diet. Research shows that restricting foods high in fat and sugar actually promotes liking for and intake of those foods.

Encourage your child to try different foods. Most children will not like a new food the first few times you serve it. Serve the food again at a later meal. He may try it then, or he may not try it again until you've served it three or four times. A child may try a new food five to 10 times before accepting it. Seeing other people eating and enjoying foods is an important part of becoming familiar with and accepting them. Parents are especially influential in determining a child's like or dislike of particular foods.

Self-Esteem Begins Early

Your child's self-esteem is made up of the thoughts, feelings, and ideas she has about herself. All together, these shape her ideas about how important, lovable, and capable she is. Your child's view of herself—her self-esteem—is determined by the way you

and others treat her. If she sees that she is treated as an important, competent young person by the people who are important to her, she will feel she is valuable and competent.

Your child needs to know that you continue to love her even when you don't like what she does. She needs to know that you expect a lot from her, but that you can accept her limited abilities.

High self-esteem is possible for everyone. It's not determined by a family's wealth, education, social class, or Dad's or Mom's occupation. The basic foundation for your child's self-esteem is built during the first years of her life. Because you and others care for her, play with her, and respond to her needs to grow and learn, she learns how precious she is to you. She also learns that you believe in her ability to learn and develop new skills. She needs this care, guidance, and respect from you as she continues to form her sense of self-esteem.

Building good self-esteem in children is one of the greatest challenges of parenthood. The ideas for guidance, play, feeding, and language in *Parent Express* will help you encourage your young one to feel loved and competent.

What It's Like to Be 15 and 16 Months Old

How I Grow

- ▶ I like to climb on things, and I usually like to do it alone
- ▶ I can climb upstairs on my hands and knees.
- ▶ I can climb on chairs, sofas, and tables.

- ▶ I can climb out of cribs, high chairs, and strollers.
- ▶ I'm always on the go; I can walk pretty well and run a little.
- ▶ I like to carry things in each hand.
- ▶ I want to show you how independent I am by doing what I want, not what you want me to do.
- ▶ I am learning to walk backwards.
- ▶ I can turn pages in a book a few at a time.

How I Talk

- ▶ I can say three or four simple words besides *mama* and *dada*.
- ▶ When you ask me to, I can point to my shoes or parts of my clothing.
- ▶ I can let you know what I want by the way I talk or point.
- ▶ I can follow simple requests, such as "Give me the ball."
- ▶ I can point to pictures you name if the things in the pictures are familiar to me.
- ▶ I can understand words for simple directions, such as *no*, *come*, *show me*, and *look*.
- ▶ I am learning to hold real conversations with people.
- ▶ I don't usually like to have a whole story read to me. I would rather point to pictures in a book and have you talk to me about them.
- ▶ I am beginning to say *no* a lot.

What I Have Learned

- ▶ I like to feel different things—smooth, rough, soft. I like soft things and smooth things, but I may not like things that stick to my fingers.
- ▶ I can throw a small ball, but I usually throw it crooked.

- ▶ I may be able to build a tower of two blocks.
- ▶ I can scribble with a pencil or crayon.

How I Get Along with Others

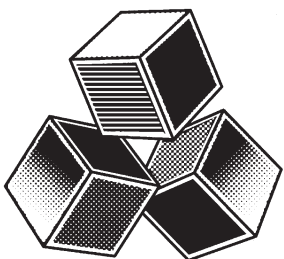
- ▶ I mostly want my own way; I don't cooperate much.
- ▶ I like lots of attention.
- ▶ I am easily entertained.
- ▶ I can tell when someone I know is absent.
- ▶ I can recognize myself in a mirror or photograph.
- ▶ I'm pretty self-centered and often not friendly.
- ▶ I like to imitate the way you do things, like sweeping the floor, setting the table, or raking the lawn.
- ▶ If you show me that you like what I do, I will do it a lot.
- ▶ Sometimes I will get things for you.
- ▶ I like to know where you are at all times.
- ▶ I'm not very good at giving, but I like to get things.

What I Can Do for Myself

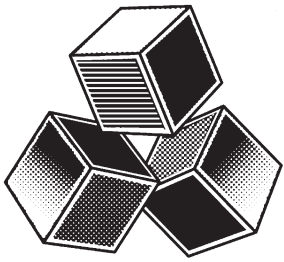
- ▶ I like to do things for myself, but I don't do them very well.
- ▶ I can let you know when I have wet or soiled pants, but I'm still too young to be toilet trained.
- ▶ I may be able to use a spoon, but I spill.

Play I Enjoy

- ▶ I like to turn switches on and off.
- ▶ I like to throw, push, and pound on things.
- ▶ I like to spin wheels.
- ▶ I like playing with spoons, cups, and boxes.



High self-esteem is possible for everyone. It's not determined by a family's wealth, education, social class, or Dad's or Mom's occupation.



Accidents are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child. More children die and more are permanently disabled due to injuries than all diseases combined.

- ▶ I don't play long with any one toy.
- ▶ I like to carry around a soft doll or toy animal.
- ▶ I like playing in sandboxes.
- ▶ I like rolling a ball with you.

Games for Growing

Naming Pictures

Purpose

This game helps your child learn the names of things pictured in a book.

How to Play

- ▶ Sit with your child on your lap.
- ▶ Read a picture book to your child.
- ▶ Encourage your child to find things pictured in the book. Say things like, "Where's the rabbit?" "Find the bird," "What is the boy doing?" "Is he playing with the toy?"
- ▶ Finish the story.

Reading Alone

Purpose

This game helps your child learn to turn pages alone and look at pictures so that he gets to know magazines as things that can be read.

How to Play

- ▶ Ask your child, "Do you want to read a magazine?"
- ▶ If the answer is yes, turn the pages of a magazine a few times and point to some pictures.
- ▶ Let your child look at the magazine alone.

Bath-Time Fun

You may have noticed how much your little one loves to splash in water. Take an extra minute or two at bath time to let your child have more fun.

Keep some toys just for water play. Plastic containers, measuring cups, spoons, and funnels all make fine bath toys. Wash them before giving them to your toddler.

During the bath, you can play the name game, a good way to have fun and help your little one learn the names of her body parts. Point to each body part while you say, "Here's your nose," "Here are your eyes," and so forth. Soon your child will be able to point to the right part when you say the name.

When your child sits in the water, you can sing or chant, "One hand splash, other hand splash, up, down, splash, splash all around." Always stay in the bathroom with your little one. She is not old enough to bathe alone and could easily fall or get caught under the water.

These Are the Accident Years

Accidents are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child. More children die and more are permanently disabled due to injuries than all diseases combined.

As a parent, you worry about the illnesses your child may get, and you take special care to protect him. You must take the same care to protect him from accidents. Your child cannot protect himself.

Young children are growing and developing all the time. Their ability to do things changes suddenly. In no time at all, a child can reach for a hot cup of coffee in your hands and get burned. Often accidents happen because parents are not aware of what children can do suddenly.

Here are some ways you can prevent accidents:

- ▶ Protect your child from falls with stairway gates and window guards. Don't leave chairs near open windows or cabinets.
- ▶ Cover electrical outlets.
- ▶ Keep your child away from hot stoves and heaters.
- ▶ Avoid scalds by turning the water heater down to 120° F.
- ▶ Lock doors that lead to dangerous areas.
- ▶ Keep dangerous substances locked up or safety capped.

Lead Poisoning Is a Serious Illness

The main cause of lead poisoning is chewing nonfood items that contain lead, such as peeling paint or plaster in an old home, colored newsprint and comics, toys and furniture painted with lead-based paint, or soil contaminated by leaded gasoline. Other sources of lead poisoning are some cold remedies. Only give your child medications prescribed by a doctor.

If you renovate your house or refinish furniture, be careful that your child does not get dust or chips from the old paint in his mouth.

Children with lead poisoning don't always look or act sick, at least not at first. Lead poisoning often shows up in simple behavior, such as laziness, grouchiness, upset stomach, headaches, or loss of appetite. Sometimes there are no signs at all until serious damage has occurred.

Since toddlers put everything in their mouths, supervise them carefully. Remove all items in your home and yard that may contain lead. If you think your child has eaten lead, ask your doctor to do a simple blood test called FEP. Because of recent multiple toy recalls concerning lead, check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at <http://www.cpsc.gov> for the latest information.

Know When You're Really Stressed Out

We all feel like the world is closing in sometimes. You may feel like you have too little time or money and nobody to help out. If you feel that way sometimes, you're not alone.

When stress gets too heavy, you might have headaches or trouble sleeping. You may feel angry all the time, even when nothing is happening. Stress can do real harm to your health and your relationships with your family, children, and friends.

You can learn to recognize the signs of stress in your own body. You may feel your muscles tighten, your hands begin to sweat, or your breathing become heavy and fast. Ulcers, migraine headaches, asthma, and high blood pressure can come from stress.

What can you do about it? First, remember that it's normal to feel stress when you're a parent—all parents feel stress sometimes. Talk to others about how you feel. Learn what other people do when they become stressed out. Try different ideas for coping with stress, such as self-help groups, parent stress hotlines, exercise, and time just for yourself. You can be in charge of your own stress—find out what works for you.

A Question about Sibling Rivalry

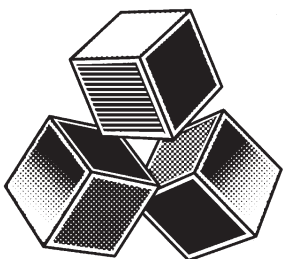
My 16-month-old daughter and my 4-year-old son fight constantly. It's driving me out of my mind. Why are they fighting, and what can I do about it?

Sibling rivalry can be a problem, especially when young children are less than three years apart in age. The older child may be fairly content with his new brother or sister until the baby begins to crawl. As you well know, when your baby begins to get into things, you have to pay more attention to her. When this happens, her older brother may understandably feel you love him less. To make matters worse, the little crawler can take and break her brother's toys.

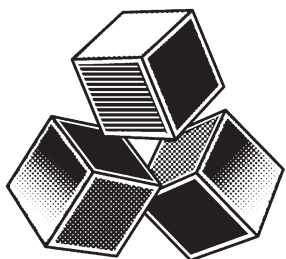
Let your son know you understand and sympathize with his feelings. Suggest ways he can cope with his little sister without hurting her. For the next six to 12 months, you may feel you're constantly stopping quarrels and the biting, hitting, and hair pulling that go with them. Worse, you seldom know which child started the quarrel.

These are some things you can do to cope with this rivalry:

- ▶ Protect your children from hurting each other or each other's things. It does no good to try to make your older child feel guilty for his anger. After all, his feelings are quite normal and understandable. Do let him know you will not let him hurt his sister or let his little sister hurt him.
- ▶ Do what you can to make life more bearable for your older child. Do not lavish praise on his little sister in his presence. Encourage your friends and relatives to follow this advice, too. Give your son enjoyable out-of-home experiences: a fun trip, a playgroup, or a babysitter just for him. Do this in a way that makes your son feel special, not pushed out or rejected.
- ▶ Give your older child your undivided attention at least once a day. All your children need this special show of affection and care.
- ▶ You might be tempted to put extra demands on your older child at this time. You might expect him to be more responsible, patient, unselfish, and grown up than he can reasonably be at his age. Ease up on these expectations.
- ▶ Don't try to decide which child is to blame for a fight. Just separate them. If they are fighting over a toy, take the toy away from both of them. Then help them find something else to do.
- ▶ Try to remember that fighting is common for children of all ages. Your children have not turned into monsters. Be patient, understanding, and firm. This period will pass.



Sibling rivalry can be a problem, especially when young children are less than three years apart in age. The older child may be fairly content with his new brother or sister until the baby begins to crawl



If you don't rush it, toilet training should not be a hassle. Children are ready for toilet training at different ages. Some girls are ready at about age 2; some boys at about 2½.

Homemade Toys That Teach Touch Treasure Box

Purpose

This toy helps toddlers learn about the different ways that things feel. They learn how to tell one feel from another. The toy also gives them a chance to collect and learn about the shapes, colors, and sizes of different objects and materials.

Materials

- ▶ Small cardboard box, such as a shoebox
- ▶ Crayon
- ▶ Small touch treasures collected by your child
- ▶ Glue (make sure the bottle is labeled nontoxic or child safe)

Making the Toy

Print your child's name in large letters with the crayon on top of the treasure box. With your toddler's help, glue some small objects of different textures and shapes inside the box. You can include pieces of sandpaper, scraps of wool, fur, sticks, small toys, shiny lids, rocks, and so forth. Make sure these things are not sharp or dangerous, and make sure they're not small enough to choke your child.

Playing

Your toddler will enjoy just looking at and touching the things in her treasure box. Encourage her to tell you about the objects. You can tell her which ones are hard or soft, which are big or little, which are round or square. You and your toddler can take turns talking about the objects.

You might want to have separate treasure boxes for special types of things—a box of all round things or things that are all hard, all furry, or all shiny, for example. You can take walks to collect natural things for an outdoor treasure box such as leaves, cones, or flowers. You can make a treasure box of things from a special occasion, trip, or person.

Nesting Cans

Purpose

This toy helps children begin to learn about big and little.

Materials

- ▶ Three to five cans of different sizes that can fit one inside the other. The cans should have smooth edges. You can use juice cans, fruit cans, coffee cans, and so forth.
- ▶ Colored paper, contact paper, or cloth to cover cans
- ▶ Glue (make sure the bottle is labeled nontoxic or child safe)
- ▶ Duct tape (not transparent or masking tape)

Making the Toy

Cover the sides of the cans with colorful paper or cloth. You can use wrapping paper, construction paper, magazine pictures, wallpaper scraps, and so forth. Glue the coverings onto the cans securely. Tape the cans' sharp edges and seams.

Playing

Your child can nest the cans one inside the other, stack them to make a tower, line them up in order of size, or roll them across the floor. You and your child will find other ways to use the cans for play and games.

Don't Rush Toilet Training

If you don't rush it, toilet training should not be a hassle. Children are ready for toilet training at different ages. Some girls are ready at about age 2; some boys at about 2½. Sure, you'd like to be rid of the mess and diapers, but be patient. When your child is ready for toilet training, you probably will find it will go quickly and easily. We'll write more about toilet training in a few months.

Limits Show Love

Sometime between 15 and 24 months, toddlers may become resistant and defiant. You probably will hear them say *no* a lot. This is perfectly normal. They are more aware of their individuality and are more able to do things for themselves. They want to test their independence and power and show you how important they are. They may do this by being negative, but that is a sign that they are growing up. Be patient.

Your toddler needs encouragement to become more independent, but he also needs guidance and discipline. Otherwise, his independence might cause him to hurt himself or others or to be destructive.

These can be trying times for parents. You need to decide early on some reasonable rules—a few, not too many. Make rules that your toddler can understand and follow. Most important, make rules that you can enforce consistently. Rules like these help your toddler know you care about him and that you will keep him safe. You also will be helping him learn that he can and should follow rules, even if he

really doesn't like them. He needs to know this to grow into a responsible adult.

Try not to break your own rules. If you have a rule against candy before dinner, enforce this rule all the time. Otherwise, you teach your toddler that rules don't matter or that they can be easily broken.

Explain in simple words why you have the rule. Say something like, "You always hold my hand when we cross the street so I can keep you from being hurt." This helps your toddler learn that rules have a purpose. Studies show that children follow rules better when they are given reasons for the rules. This understanding will help him follow rules and make good decisions later.

Sources and Recommended Readings

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2009). *Caring for your baby and young child, birth to age 5* (Shelov, S. P., Ed.). (5th ed.). New York: Bantam Books.
- Birch, L. (1999). Development of food preferences. *Annual Review of Nutrition* 19, 41-62.
- Brazelton, T. B., & Sparrow, J. D. (2006). *Touchpoints: Your child's emotional and behavioral development* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Da Capo.
- Fogel, A. (2009). *Infancy: Infant, family, and society* (5th ed.). Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY: Sloan.
- Gnatuk, C. A., & Quick, S. (2002). *Teach self-control*, Key No. 6, FCS7-184. *Keys to great parenting: Fun and learning with your baby or toddler* (Rev. ed.) Lexington: Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.
- Herr, J., & Swim, T. (2001). *Creative resources for infants and toddlers* (2nd ed.). Florence, KY: Thomson Delmar.
- Honig, A. S. (1997). *Behavior guidance for infants and toddlers*. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association.
- Lerner, C., & Dombro, A. L. (2000). *Learning and growing together: Understanding and supporting your child's development*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three. Phone: (800) 899-4301.
- Pruett, K. D. (2000). *Fatherneed: Why father care is as essential as mother care for your child*. New York: Broadway.

Contact

Carole A. Gnatuk, Ed.D., Extension Child Development Specialist

Adapted from a publication originally written by Dorothea Cudaback, D.S.W., and colleagues at the University of California Cooperative Extension.

Professionals at the University of Kentucky who have assisted in the preparation of the *Parent Express* series: Sandra Bastin, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.; Donna Clore, M.S.; Ruth Ann Crum, M.S.; Darlene Forester, Ph.D., R.D.; Starr Gantz, R.D.; Carole Gnatuk, Ed.D.; Peter Hesseldenz, M.A.; Janet Kurzynske, Ph.D., R.D.; Alex Lesueur, Jr., M.S.L.S.; Suzanne McGough, M.S., R.D.; Marilyn Peterson, R.N., B.S.N.; Larry Piercy, Ph.D.; Sam Quick, Ph.D.; Michael Rupured, M.S.; Tammy Stephenson, Ph.D.; Diane Strangis, M.S.; Janet Tietyen, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.



Parent Express guides you through parenting of children through age 36 months. For other publications in the 27-part series, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office.

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, M. Scott Smith, Director, Land Grant Programs, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Lexington, and Kentucky State University, Frankfort. Copyright © 2009 for materials developed by University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension. This publication may be reproduced in portions or its entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice. Publications are also available on the World Wide Web at www.ca.uky.edu.

Revised 10-2009