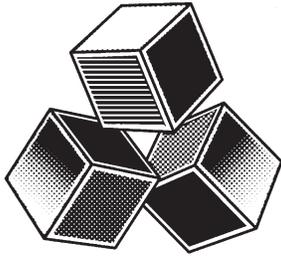


23 and 24  
Months Old



# PARENT EXPRESS

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A Guide for You and Your Child

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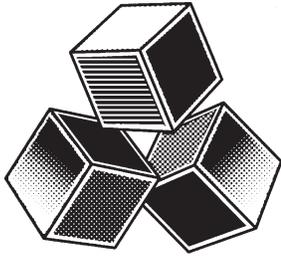
## Dear Parent:

*Build your child's self-esteem.*

A child's self-esteem is his overall judgment of himself. It determines whether he likes, accepts, and respects himself. One of the greatest and most important challenges you face is to help your child feel good about himself.

Children begin early to form either positive or negative pictures of themselves. You can help your child feel good about himself by telling him that you like who he is and you like the way he does things. Let him know when you think he does a good job of putting blocks in a bucket—or dumping them out of the bucket. Thank him for putting napkins on the table or hanging his towel up. Show him with smiles as well as words.

Tell your child what to do rather than what not to do. Instead of saying "Don't carry the cat that way," say "Carry your cat like this." That way, he'll feel like a success rather than a failure. Listen to what he says and respond to his questions. Take time to understand his feelings, joys, and fears. You are showing him that his ideas and feelings are important. All this will help him to feel important and capable. You are helping him develop the self-confidence to become the responsible, successful person you want him to be.



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*Young children need parents who try their best, but that doesn't mean you can succeed 100 percent of the time. We all make mistakes. When you're not feeling okay, do try your best but don't worry that you are not a super parent.*

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## Good Parent— Bad Parent

Parents often think they aren't doing a good job if their children don't act the way they should. No matter how good you are as a parent, your child will misbehave. If you feel responsible for all of your child's misbehavior, you will feel stress. That stress is hard on you and can cause you to be hard on your child. This will make things worse for both of you. Instead of criticizing yourself, try to give yourself some positive messages.

For example, sometimes parents think, "If I were a good parent, my child wouldn't be having so many tantrums." Instead, how about telling yourself and your child, "We got through that trip to the store without any fussing at all!"

Young children need parents who try their best, but that doesn't mean you can succeed 100 percent of the time. We all make mistakes. When you're not feeling okay, do try your best but don't worry that you are not a super parent.

Give yourself and your child credit for the good times and understand that nobody is perfect.

## Toddler Talk

### Give Me Lots of Different Experiences

- ▶ Make up a song or a story. Use my name and change the words to match my actions or feelings. This may help me calm down when I'm cranky.
- ▶ Sing songs like "Rain, Rain, Go Away" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb." These simple songs will be easy for me to copy. I won't really be able to sing until I'm closer to 3 years old.

- ▶ Let me smell some sweet smelling spices like cloves, curry powder, and cinnamon. Watch me closely so I don't eat them.
- ▶ Look at the night sky with me. Point out the clouds, the moon, and the stars.
- ▶ Keep me interested in my toys by dividing them into two boxes and switching boxes every week.

## What It's Like to Be 23 and 24 Months Old

### How I Grow

- ▶ I can pedal a small tricycle.
- ▶ I can throw a ball into a wastebasket.
- ▶ I can walk down stairs alone, with both feet on one step at a time while holding onto the railing.
- ▶ I usually like to run more than I like to walk.
- ▶ I like to walk on low walls with one hand held by someone.
- ▶ I can walk a few steps on tiptoe.
- ▶ I might be afraid of the noise of trains, trucks, thunder, the toilet flushing, and the vacuum cleaner. I might also fear rain, wind, and wild animals. Be patient with me.

### How I Talk

- ▶ I can ask questions just to keep the conversation going.
- ▶ I can answer some questions such as "What is your name?" "What does the dog say?" and "What does the cat say?"
- ▶ I can name almost everything that I see often, such as things in my house, my preschool, or my neighborhood.

- ▶ I'm beginning to learn the meaning of "soon," and I am learning to wait.
- ▶ I can ask for food and drink.

### What I Have Learned

- ▶ I can sit and "read" picture books, turning the pages for myself.
- ▶ I can put together a puzzle of three to six pieces.
- ▶ I know pretty well where things are located in and around my house.
- ▶ I can make a tower of eight blocks.

### How I Get Along with Others

- ▶ I still don't understand sharing, but I like to be with other children for short periods of time.
- ▶ I like to please others.
- ▶ I am interested in babies and their mothers.
- ▶ I am afraid of disapproval and rejection.
- ▶ I like to order other people around.
- ▶ I sometimes show my anger by slapping, biting, and hitting.
- ▶ I want my way in everything.
- ▶ I am sometimes stubborn and defiant, and I frequently say phrases such as "It's mine," "I don't like it," "Go away," "I won't," and "No."

### What I Can Do for Myself

- ▶ I can take off all my clothes, and I can put most of my clothes back on.
- ▶ I like to unwrap packages.
- ▶ I know what a toilet is for, but I probably don't want to use it yet.
- ▶ I can turn doorknobs and open doors. Keep dangerous things out of my sight and out of my reach.
- ▶ I want to do lots of things by myself.

## Play I Enjoy

- ▶ I like to play simple chase games such as tag.
- ▶ A teddy bear or a soft doll is still my favorite toy.
- ▶ I like to take things apart and put them together. Watch that I don't play with small pieces that could choke me.
- ▶ I can stack five rings on a peg toy in the correct order.
- ▶ I like to be pushed in a swing.
- ▶ I play happily with soft modeling clay.

## Toddler Intelligence and Home Experiences

Recent research on early brain development shows that the way parents and caregivers help their children develop language skills influences their children's intellectual development. Those children who were most intelligent had parents or other caregivers who talked with them a lot, encouraged their use of language, and did things with them that helped them learn and practice language.

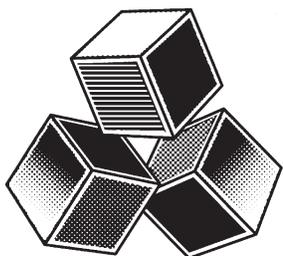
## Homemade Toys That Teach A Shape Board

### Purpose

This toy helps your child learn about shapes and about similarities and differences.

### Materials

- ▶ Cardboard sheet about 8 ½-by-11 inches
- ▶ A bright-colored crayon
- ▶ White paper



## Making the Toy

- ▶ Draw and color simple shapes (circle, square, triangle, and star) on the cardboard with colored crayon.
- ▶ Then draw, color, and cut out matching shapes from white paper.

### Playing

Show your child how to match the cutout shapes to the shapes drawn on the board. Talk about the pieces, naming their shapes. Ask her to put the star on the star, the circle on the circle, the square on the square, and so on.

Remember, play this and any game only as long as it is fun for both of you. Encourage and praise your child's efforts; do not criticize her failures.

## Games for Growing Color Learning

### Purpose

This game helps your child learn to match colors and begin to learn their names.

### How to Play

- ▶ Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or sofa facing your child.
- ▶ Select five blocks or other objects of different colors.
- ▶ Place two blocks of different colors in front of your child.
- ▶ Point to a block and say, "This is red."
- ▶ Ask your child to give you the red block.
- ▶ Ask your child to say the color of the block she handed to you.
- ▶ Use only two colors at a time but change the colors. For example, start with blue and red together, then switch to blue and green.

- ▶ Tell your child the name of the new color only. See if your child can remember the name of the other color.

## Other Color Games

Have your child tell you the names of colors in stoplights, on television, in magazines, or on signs. Put together different things that are the same color and ask your child what is the same about them. Help your child use crayons or colored pictures to learn the names of the colors.

## Blindfold Guessing

### Purpose

This game helps your child name objects he cannot see. This way, he learns to put the name of the object together with the way it feels.

### How to Play

- ▶ Ask your child to sit on your lap facing away from you.
- ▶ Place a blindfold on your child; if the blindfold is scary to your child, ask him to close his eyes or turn his head instead.
- ▶ Use objects the child knows well such as a spoon, rattle, or small stuffed toy.
- ▶ Give your child different objects one at a time to feel, and ask him to guess what he is holding.

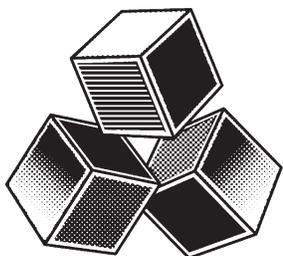
## Other Blindfold Guessing Games

- ▶ Put familiar things in a box or paper bag and ask your child to put his hand in the box or bag and tell you what he feels. Or ask him to take out of the box or bag the items that you name without looking at them.

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*When your child shows she wants to go to the toilet, stay with her at least the first few times. Always compliment her for her successes; don't criticize or punish her accidents.*

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## Get Ready for Toilet Training

Some girls are ready for toilet training at about age 2, some boys at about 2½. You should not rush toilet training, but there are some things you can do when you think your child is ready to be taught to use the toilet. Teach your child the words she needs to ask to go to the toilet. A good time to do this is when you change her diaper. Tell her why you are changing her: "You peed and made your diapers wet" or "You had a BM (or pooped or had a bowel movement)." Show her and tell her the word for the toilet or potty chair you will want her to use.

Some children will let you know when they need to go to the toilet by saying the words, pulling your hand, or tugging at their diaper. When they are ready for training, it helps to dress them in loose-fitting training pants they can pull off easily.

When your child shows she wants to go to the toilet, stay with her at least the first few times. Don't give her toys to play with and don't insist that she sit on the toilet when she wants to get off—even if she has not done anything. Always compliment her for her successes; don't criticize or punish her accidents.

## New Foods Are Strange Foods

It isn't easy for a toddler to switch from baby foods to adult foods. Your toddler probably won't be happy when she finds a new food on her plate. In fact, like most toddlers, she probably won't eat a new food the first time it's offered.

When your child rejects a new food, it doesn't mean she doesn't like it. It means she's a little afraid of it and needs some time to get used to it. Here are some things you can do to help:

- ▶ Serve yourself the same food and eat it to show that you like it.
- ▶ Suggest that she might want to taste it, but don't force, bribe, or punish her if she refuses.
- ▶ Serve the new food again within a week or two. The second time, it won't seem so new to her. Again, don't make a fuss if she doesn't eat it. Sometimes it will take four or five tries before a toddler will even taste a new food.

Most toddlers would be happy to eat nothing except three or four favorite foods. But, to be well nourished, they need variety. Fix different foods for your toddler, not just a few favorites. Help her enjoy foods such as milk, yogurt, cheese, fruits, vegetables, rice, whole grain breads and cereals, fish, chicken, lean meat, eggs, and beans. You should wait until your child is 3 before feeding her peanut butter. This lowers the chance that she will have an allergic reaction. Be especially cautious about combining peanut butter and vegetables because they could present a choking hazard.

## Keep Your Child Safe

Your child darts around quickly now. He probably likes to run more than he likes to walk. He doesn't know what things could hurt him and may suddenly do something dangerous. Don't let him play near the street. Always hold his hand when you are in a parking lot or crossing a street or driveway.

When driving with your child, do the following:

- ▶ Always buckle in your child and yourself.
- ▶ Use an approved safety seat for your child every time he is in the vehicle.
- ▶ Firmly buckle in the safety seat with the vehicle's seat belt. (Some seat belts require a locking clip to ensure that the infant seat is secure.) Check your vehicle's owner's manual for instructions on proper installation.
- ▶ Put the safety seat in the middle of the back seat for maximum safety.
- ▶ Never leave your little one alone in the vehicle.

Please refer to the *Parent Express* newsletter for ages 21 to 22 months for more information on selection and use of child safety seats.

## Toddlers Learn about Sex

Your toddler is learning fast. You love his curiosity and encourage his questions because you know it means he is alert, enthusiastic, and competent. Do you encourage his curiosity about sex?

Sexuality is important. Naturally your toddler will have questions about where babies come from and why boys and girls are physically different from each other. Sure, these questions can be embarrassing, especially when they are asked in a public place, but whenever you see your little one curious or confused about sex, you have a precious opportunity. You can show your toddler you admire his curiosity

and you want him to learn about all types of important things, including sex.

If you can talk to your child now about sex, it will be much easier for both of you to talk about it later, as he grows and as his sexual attitudes and behaviors become more important to him and to his relationships with others.

You can expect your toddler to wonder about babies and where they come from. Tell him the truth in words that he can understand, something like, "Babies grow in a special place inside the mother's body." Show him you are glad he asked the question. If he asks how babies get inside the mother, you may simply say that babies are made by mothers and fathers together. You could explain that the father's sperm comes into the mother through the father's penis.

Your child's early sexual concerns and questions may be about the differences between men and women. Little girls may wonder why they have no penis; boys may worry that they could lose their penis. You can help your child learn that boys and girls are born with different genitals. Your toddler should know the correct names for his body's sexual parts. Teach him these as you teach him the names of other body parts.

All young children handle their genitals. Normal children like to explore all parts of their bodies. When they handle their genitals and find that this feels good, they may rub them. They may masturbate when they feel bored or upset.

Some masturbation does no harm. It is normal, and it is best for you to ignore it. If you try to stop it and tell your child that it is bad, he may feel

that he is naughty or that sex or sexual feelings are bad. Do, however, let your child know that this is a private activity, just like going to the bathroom.

## Bedtime Talk

You might enjoy bedtime talk as part of your bedtime routine with your toddler. Bedtime is a good time to talk with your toddler without interruption in a cozy, private place. Review the best things that have happened during the day and talk about plans for tomorrow. The sound of your soft, comforting voice will help your child ease into sleep.

You probably will find yourself doing much of the talking at first, but you're setting the stage for later discussions. As your child grows, she'll want to have private conversations with you about important things. You are practicing for these conversations with your bedtime talks. Some nights you may be in a hurry and want to skip your talk. Don't be surprised if your child says, "You forgot to talk to me about today and tomorrow."

## A Question about Biting

**What do I do about my almost 2-year-old who bites and hits other children? Should I hit and bite her back?**

Sometimes when young children play together, they push, hit, slap, or bite. Biting and forceful hitting must be stopped right away. Most children bite and hit when they are feeling angry. When your little one bites you or another child, say firmly, "No, biting hurts." Move her to a safe place, look her in the eyes and say, "Stay here until you feel calmer. I cannot let you

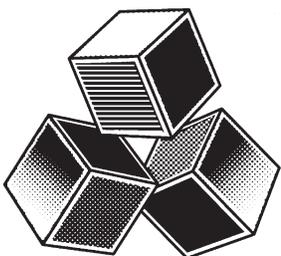
bite." After a minute or two, ask her if she is ready to play again without biting or hitting. When she says yes, let her return to her play.

Never bite or hit your daughter back. This does not stop the behavior. In fact, it may make her believe that biting is all right. Most children who bite do so for only a short time. Hitting may continue for a longer time than biting.

Help your toddler learn better ways to handle her anger. Teach her to substitute words such as "Stop that," "Go away," and "I don't like that" for hitting and biting.

When your little one substitutes words for hurting, praise her with words and hugs and say, "You did a good job of using words instead of hurting." As your daughter learns to express her feelings in words, hitting and biting will decrease.

The reasons your little one bites another person can vary. Ask yourself: Why did this child bite? What happened just before the biting occurred? Who else was involved? What did she want or need? Is there a pattern in her biting (time of day or repeating circumstances such as hunger, tiredness, extra noise, a brother or sister grabbing a toy, etc.)? Act to solve the biting problem based on your answers to questions such as the ones above.



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