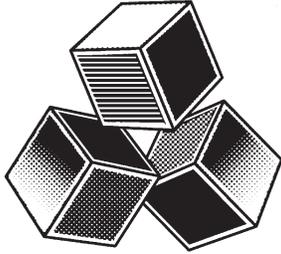


29 and 30
Months Old



PARENT EXPRESS

A Guide for You and Your Child

Dear Parent:

Isn't it amazing how fast your child is learning new words?

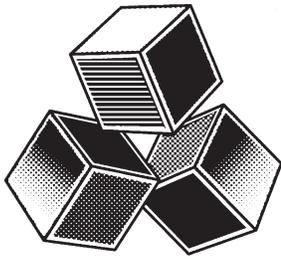
Language learning may be your child's most important accomplishment this year, and you are helping. Every time you sing a song, read a story, or repeat a nursery rhyme to her, she learns to enjoy language more. Remember, your child learns by imitating you and catching your enthusiasm.

In their eagerness to teach their little ones about language, some parents forget that language goes two ways. Children must hear people use language, but they also need adults to listen and respond to their words. Let your little one tell you stories, "read" books to you, describe things she has seen, and answer your questions. Help her invent songs and encourage her to play at rhyming words or making up new words.

Show your child that what she says is important to you. Communication means talking and listening.

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Talk about problems after the meal is over and everyone has left the table. During meals, think of things to talk about that will help everyone feel good about themselves and others.

Good Times at Mealtime

Mealtime is not just a time to eat. It can be a time to talk, share, and enjoy being with others. Family members can tell each other what happened at school, work, or home. Even though your child may not talk well, let him take part in this sharing. Ask him questions and let him answer for himself.

Mealtime is not a good time to discuss family problems about money, misbehavior, and the like. No one feels like eating when there is an argument going on. If this happens often, your child will begin to dread meals. He will eat as quickly as possible and then want to leave the table. He may begin to have stomachaches because mealtime is unpleasant.

Talk about problems after the meal is over and everyone has left the table. During meals, think of things to talk about that will help everyone feel good about themselves and others.

If you are eating alone with your child, you can talk about the names of the different foods on his plate and the color and shape of each food. You can count how many different foods or pieces of food there are on his plate. With a little imagination and planning, you and your little one can make every meal a happy meal.

Childcare Centers Require Immunizations

If you are considering enrolling your child in a childcare center, her immunizations must be up-to-date. You will need an immunization record that lists the dates of each immunization your child received.

The law says that childcare centers must make sure all children enrolled have their immunizations. The childcare center staff must see your child's immunization record so they can complete official records for their files.

The immunizations required by childcare centers are the same ones every child needs for protection. For children who are 18 months or older, the required immunizations are:

- DTaP: four doses (DTaP = diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus)
- IPV: three doses (IPV = inactivated polio vaccine)
- MMR: one dose (MMR = measles, mumps, and rubella)
- Hib: three doses plus booster (Hib = Hemophilus influenza type B)
- Var: one dose (Var = varicella—chicken pox)
- PCV: three doses plus booster (PVC = pneumococcal vaccine)
- Hep B: three doses (Hepatitis B)
- Rota: three doses (Rotavirus)
- Influenza: optional (yearly)

For younger children, fewer immunizations are needed. Ask the staff of the childcare center to tell you what they are. Please refer to *Parent Express* 17 and 18 Months (FCS7-155) for more information.

Choosing a Preschool

Preschools differ. You and your child's caregivers need to work together as a team to help your child grow. Here are a few questions to consider if you are choosing a preschool:

- Are you invited to observe in the classroom? Spending one to two hours in a class will show you what the school has to offer.

- Are the caregivers willing to answer your questions? Would they talk to you on a regular basis about your child's progress? Once your child has enrolled, will you be welcome to visit and observe at any time?
- Do teachers seem to enjoy and respect the children? Is there hugging, holding, and warmth between the teachers and the children? Do teachers talk with and listen to the children? Are there enough adults to provide good supervision and attention? Children's relationships with caregivers are important.
- Do the children seem happily involved in activities? Are there enough play materials for all the children? How long would a child have to wait for a turn? Children can become angry and unhappy if they have to wait too long for a chance to play with toys.
- Is there a balance of quiet and active play? Is there a balance of indoor and outdoor play? Children need variety in their daily lives.
- Does indoor play include music, art, water, dress-up, housekeeping, science, block building, books, and puzzles? Does it also include toys for imaginative play such as trucks, cars, and dolls? Are the rooms clean, safe, and attractive? Children need to have lots of different opportunities to learn.
- Is there a safe outdoor area with enough equipment such as ladders, barrels, low slides, riding toys, and swings to encourage activity and muscle development? Is there protection from the sun?
- Are meals or snacks provided by the preschool? Do you approve of the food they serve?

You will not be happy about your child's preschool unless you feel that your child is in a safe, healthy, nurturing place. The extra time it takes to find the right care for your child will pay off in your own peace of mind and in your child's development.

A Question about Sleeping

My 2½ year old won't go to sleep when I put her to bed. What can I do?

Bedtime is not always sleep time. Your children need regular bedtimes and special bedtime routines, such as teeth cleaning, stories, and hugs. It's also important for children to have regular bedtimes so that parents can have some relaxation time. You can expect your child to go to bed and be quiet at set times. Don't worry if she does not always go to sleep as soon as she goes to bed. When she isn't sleepy, let her have some quiet play time in bed until sleep comes.

Games for Growing Drawing Around Things

Purpose

This game lets your child practice using small hand muscles and helps him understand more about the shapes of things.

How to Play

- ▶ Sit in a comfortable place and give your child a plastic cup to draw around.
- ▶ Have him trace the edge of the cup with his finger. Then give him a pencil or crayon to use for drawing around the cup. Talk about the circle he drew. Help him find some other things with simple shapes to

trace. He can trace around his hand or yours. He'll enjoy this. You're helping him to use his hands and to make pictures of objects so he'll learn more about the ways they are different.

Follow Me

Purpose

This game encourages your child's imagination and physical development.

How to Play

This is a follow-the-leader game to play indoors or outdoors. Show your little one funny ways you can move and encourage her to imitate, following after you. Run fast, walk slow, gallop like a horse, shuffle like an elephant, flap like a duck. Take turns leading. Use your imagination and encourage her imagination as you both think of more and more different and funny ways to follow the leader.

What's It For?

Purpose

This game helps your child understand how things are used. It also helps build your child's imagination and language skills.

How to Play

Collect about 10 things that your child uses or has seen used such as a shoelace, a fork, a napkin, a comb, a key, eyeglasses, a spool of thread, a hammer, a paintbrush, and a pencil. Pick up one after the other and ask your child what it is used for. Give your child a turn to ask you what things are used for. You can play a silly version of this game too by asking a silly question about each thing you pick up. For example, you can pick up a cup and ask if that is what you brush your

teeth with. Play the game only as long as it is fun for both of you.

Homemade Toys That Teach Play Dough

Purpose

This toy helps your child practice using his hands and fingers and helps him learn how to mold different shapes by patting, squeezing, and rolling.

Materials

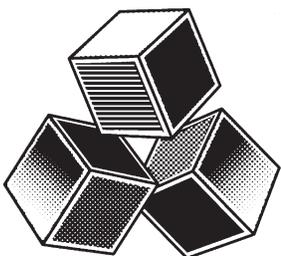
- ▶ 1 cup of flour
- ▶ ½ cup salt
- ▶ 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- ▶ 1 cup water
- ▶ 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- ▶ Food coloring (optional)

Making the Play Dough

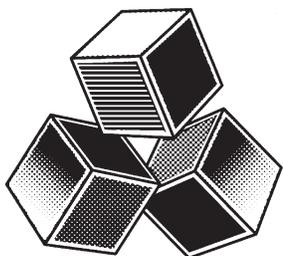
Mix the dry ingredients; add the water and oil. Stir over low heat until the mixture forms a ball. Add food coloring if you want. Knead it and let it cool. Store dough in the refrigerator in a covered container.

How to Play

Put the play dough on a plastic place mat and protect the floor from spills. Your child will enjoy having you near her when she plays with it. You can give her ideas on how to squeeze, roll, and pinch the dough. Add cookie cutters, a dull knife, and a rolling pin to encourage your child's creativity.



Your children need regular bedtimes and special bedtime routines, such as teeth cleaning, stories, and hugs. It's also important for children to have regular bedtimes so that parents can have some relaxation time.



Children who are heavy television viewers use less imagination in their play and school activities than children who see less television.

Bread Dough Creations

Your 2 year old has learned to roll, pinch, poke, and mash bits of play dough with you, so why not make some creative snacks together? Use this recipe:

- ▶ 2 cups flour
- ▶ 3 tablespoons oil
- ▶ ½ cup water
- ▶ ½ teaspoon salt

Before beginning food preparation, wash your and your child's hands with soap and warm water. Be sure all equipment and work surfaces are clean.

Measure the flour and salt into a large bowl. Add the oil and rub it in until the mixture resembles coarse oatmeal. Add the water and blend it with your fingers. Add more water if necessary to make a dough you can gather into a ball. Knead the dough for 10 minutes.

Your child will enjoy punching and rolling the dough. Divide the dough into small balls and let her create. Show her how to flatten it, cut holes in it with a table knife (help her with this so she doesn't cut herself), pinch up peaks in it, and stretch it. When she's all done, place her creations on a cookie sheet. Bake them in the oven at 350 degrees F for 10 minutes. When they're cool, enjoy showing off and eating her creations.

Two's Talk

I Learn in Lots of Ways

- ▶ Let me use a sprinkler can or a squeeze bottle to water outdoor plants. Think of other ways I could help outside.

- ▶ Give me my own flashlight. I'll enjoy turning it on because I can push the switch forward with my thumb. I probably can't pull it back. Show me how to turn the flashlight around so I can push the switch off.
- ▶ Take pictures of special times and write the date on the back of the pictures. Even if you don't have a baby book for me, I will like looking at these pictures now and when I'm older.
- ▶ Turn off the radio and television. Listen with me to sounds around the house such as running water, the refrigerator motor, a ticking clock, or a wind chime. Tell me what they are. Helping me learn to listen will help me learn language.
- ▶ Young children enjoy the catchy tunes and repeated phrases used in cartoons, children's shows, and commercials. These jingles give them a chance to practice their listening and talking skills.
- ▶ Young children don't understand the meaning of television programs. However, they may develop a television viewing habit that will keep them from other healthier activities. If your child shows a great interest in television, talking and listening may be important to him right now. Read and talk with him about pictures in a book. Play some story tapes, CDs, or records. Substitute these activities for some television viewing time.

You might think about these questions when you decide how much television your child should watch:

Television's Effect on Children

We don't know a lot about the effects of television viewing on young children. Research on older children, however, suggests the following:

- ▶ Children who are aggressive tend to watch a lot of violence on television.
- ▶ Children are attracted to and influenced by television commercials. They may pressure parents to buy toys and food advertised on television. Many of these toys may not be right for your child, and foods may not be good for him, since many of those advertised are high in sugar, fat, and salt. Studies show that watching a lot of television can lead to overeating and obesity.
- ▶ Children who are heavy television viewers use less imagination in their play and school activities than children who see less television.
- ▶ Do you know how many hours a day your child watches television? Do you know which programs he watches, and do you know what he's learning from them? It is important for you to know these things.
- ▶ Do you watch television with your child and discuss what you are seeing? Doing this helps your child understand his world.
- ▶ Do you want your child to see violence on television? Violent situations are shown even in cartoons and music videos, and they can be scary.
- ▶ Does television keep you from reading, talking, and playing with your child? Does it keep him from creative, active, or imaginative play?

Television can be a powerful influence in children's lives. It can entertain and educate. But it can take children away from other important activities. Begin deciding now how much television you want your child to see and what programs you want him to watch. If you set up some clear guidelines now, it will be easier to handle television later.

Avoid Overusing No

The fewer times you say *no* to your child, the less she'll scream it back at you. Keep asking yourself, "How can I help my child do what I want her to do without saying *no*?" Life can be more pleasant for everyone with fewer *no*'s. Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Look for ways to structure routines and play spaces to reduce the need for restriction and discipline. Remove tempting dangers and breakables. Try to reduce time spent in activities that require your child's patience or that might cause conflict. For example, since long shopping trips seem to undo nearly all parents and their youngsters, try to cut them short.
- ▶ Keep rules reasonable. Your child is growing fast, but her ability to understand is still more limited than you might expect. She will press you to let her do things on her own—and that's important for her learning—but she still may have accidents. She may break, drop, or spill things. She can understand some rules, but not all.
- ▶ Give your little one practice in independence. As part of their increasing sense of self, 2 year olds often are defiant and non-cooperative. You need to be firm but patient in enforcing rules. Look for safe, reasonable opportunities to let your child make her own decisions so she can practice that growing independence.
- ▶ Play detective. If your little one does something over and over that you have told her not to do, try to figure out the reason. Don't assume that she is just trying to annoy you. Chances are she has her own good reasons for doing what she's doing. See if you can help her get what she wants in a way that is okay with both of you.

Sure, all this takes more time, patience, and energy than saying *no*, but the long-term benefit is likely to be a child who is happier and easier to live with.

Guidance Styles and Child Behavior

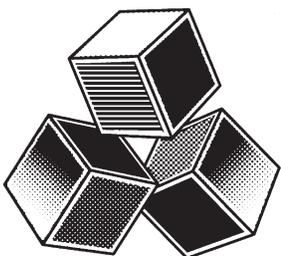
How can parents help their child grow to be cooperative and well behaved? Child development researchers have studied this question extensively. They have found that the children who are most compliant and cooperative have parents who are warm and loving, have firm rules, communicate clearly what they expect, and demand reasonably high levels of behavior. This type of guidance and discipline has been shown to be more effective than guidance that is too bossy and rigid or too passive and weak.

Communicating to Lower Stress

Sometimes angry feelings and stress are caused by the way people talk to each other. You can reduce your stress by changing the way you say things. That doesn't mean you should hold things inside, but simply that you should say them in a different way.

Things we say to others often have the word *you* in them. For example, you might say, "You're always telling me how to care for my child!" If you give the same message with "I" in it, the other person might not get so irritated. You could say, "I feel like a child myself when someone tells me what to do."

Try turning "you messages" into "I messages." This may make your conversations less stressful.



Children who are most compliant and cooperative have parents who are warm and loving, have firm rules, communicate clearly what they expect, and demand reasonably high levels of behavior.

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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.



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