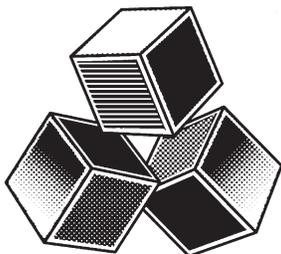


31 and 32  
Months Old



# PARENT EXPRESS

## A Guide for You and Your Child

### Dear Parent:

*Have you noticed how much your child enjoys other special adults—grandparents, aunts, uncles, older friends, and neighbors?*

Parents are the most important adults in your child's life, but he learns from other caring adults that he can trust, love, and enjoy. They make his world varied, interesting, and exciting. Each one has something important and different to share and teach.

Your little one needs these adult relationships, so do all you can to encourage them. They are a precious part of your child's life.

### In This Issue

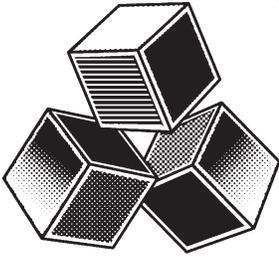
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### Getting Off to a Good Start in a Childcare Program

Leaving your child in childcare or preschool for the first time may be hard for both of you. Your child will face new adults, children, places, things, routines, and limits. She is used to your comfort, help, and protection. She may be scared about being alone and angry with you for leaving her. You may be worried that the caregiver won't care for your child the way you would or may ignore or hurt her. You may worry that your child will embarrass you by crying or misbehaving. These feelings are normal responses to beginning something new. Some planning may reduce them.

You have taken the first step by carefully selecting childcare that you think is right for your child. You have found childcare workers that you like and can begin to trust. Now you should talk with your child about what is going to happen. She may not understand everything you say, but she certainly will pick up your feelings of confidence. If possible, visit the program with your child before her first full day. Let her watch and explore with your help and protection.

Talk with the caregiver about your child before she begins the program. Tell the caregiver about your child's eating and sleeping schedule, any health concerns (such as allergies), and any situations at home that may affect your child. You will want to talk about what upsets your child and how she can be comforted.



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*Trust yourself and the decisions you have made about the caregiver. Remember that you are helping your child learn how to adjust to changes that may be frightening.*

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On the day your child starts in the program, be sure you bring all the forms, clothes, equipment, and food the caregiver requests. Bring one of your child's favorite things, such as a stuffed animal, a blanket, or a toy car. Arrive a few minutes early so you can talk with the caregiver, put away your child's things, and sit with your child to watch what is going on. With a calm face and hugs and kisses, say goodbye when it is time to leave. Tell your child when you will return.

Of course, she may cry, scream, kick, or retreat to a corner with her thumb in her mouth. She may like this place, but she wants you with her and needs to say so. Even though it is very hard, keep walking. Remember that you trust the caregiver and trust your child. It may help you to call the caregiver in an hour to learn how your child is doing.

When you pick up your child, greet her with warmth and words that show you know it was hard on her. Tell her you are proud that she made it through the day. Don't be surprised if she is both glad to see you and mad that you left her.

Learning how to say goodbye to people we love is difficult. Most of us struggle with this all our lives. This may be your child's first experience in saying goodbye to you on a daily basis, and it will take time for you both to learn how to do this easily.

Long after your child can say goodbye without tears or anger, she may show signs of this stress when she is with you. Children often are angels at school (where they want to please these new adults) and are terrors at home (because you are safe, and home is where she can blow off steam). After starting childcare, some children change their eating and

sleeping patterns. Some children need more time sucking their thumbs or curled up in their parents' laps. These behaviors will change as your child becomes more comfortable in the childcare program.

You can help most by trusting the caregiver's ability to teach, care for, and comfort your child. Trust your child's ability to learn these new and difficult skills. Trust yourself and the decisions you have made about the caregiver. Remember that you are helping your child learn how to adjust to changes that may be frightening. We all need to learn to do this.

## **A Question about Lying and Stealing**

**My little boy sometimes lies to me, and yesterday he stole a toy from his cousin's room. What should I do?**

Children your son's age do not understand about lying and stealing. It is common for them to say things that may not be true and to take things they want, even if these things do not belong to them. Your son is not trying to misbehave. What he needs from you now is gentle teaching, not punishment.

Tell him you do not want him saying things that are not true or taking things that are not his. Explain why this is so. Let your son return the toy he took. Do what you can to keep him from taking other things. When he lies to you, remind him that you want him to be truthful. Do not call your child a liar or a thief. He could come to believe these labels and feel that there is nothing he can do to change himself. Moreover, he might begin to feel special and decide he does not want to change.

Your child is learning about right and wrong. He is finding out the difference between make-believe (which may become lying) and reality. He is learning that he cannot get what he wants by taking it. This type of learning and self-control takes time. You probably will need to help him with it for the next few years.

Be patient, firm, and loving. Show him that you do not lie or steal. In time, your son will come to imitate you, not because he's afraid of punishment, but because he wants to do what is right.

## **Two's Talk**

### **I'm Learning about Sounds and Weights**

Let me hold heavy and light things. Use the words "heavy" and "light" when you tell me about them so I can learn the difference. Ask me to pick up the heavy thing or the light thing so I can practice what I have learned.

Help me learn about the sounds of things. Ask me to close my eyes. Then, ring a bell, shake a rattle, or jingle some coins and let me guess what is making the sound.

## **Games for Growing Surprise Path**

### **Purpose**

This game encourages your child's physical development and helps her learn to follow a path.

### **How to Play**

This game can be played indoors or outdoors. When your child isn't looking, mark out a path in some way with a rope, chalk, garden hose, or ribbon. Be creative. Lay out the path so it goes around in a circle, over rocks, upstairs,

under boards and tables, through tunnels, and so on. Your child can follow the path alone, or you and she can take turns leading each other.

## Copy Cat

### Purpose

This game helps your child learn and practice body movements and increases her ability to observe.

### How to Play

Copy Cat can be played indoors or outdoors. Stand facing your child and make different body movements for her to imitate, such as jumping, bending, turning, stretching, and hopping. Take turns leading the game. Other family members can join in to add to the fun.

## Doesn't Belong

### Purpose

This game helps your child learn about similarities and differences and increases observation skills.

### How to Play

Draw four or five pictures or cut out four or five shapes that are all alike except one. Start with pictures or shapes that are obviously different, such as four pictures of trees and one picture of a house or four red triangles and one white circle. Later you can make the one different picture more like the others. For example, draw four dogs and a cat or four small red triangles and one large red triangle. Ask your child to show you the one that is different from the others. Take turns. You also can play this game with actual objects found around the house and in the yard, such as four bottle caps and a rock, four spoons and a fork, and four red flowers and a white flower.

## Homemade Toys That Teach Egg Carton Fun

### Purpose

This toy helps your 2 year old learn about shapes and colors and teaches similarities and differences.

### Materials

- ▶ Cardboard egg carton (don't use plastic foam; children can easily break off and swallow pieces of it)
- ▶ Poster paint or crayons
- ▶ Magazine pictures

### Making the Toy

Color the inside cups of an egg carton different colors with crayons or with watercolor paints. Use bright colors—red, blue, green, yellow. Cut circles out of cardboard small enough to fit into the cups. Color the circles with colors that match the painted cups.

### Playing

Place the circles on the table or floor. Ask your child to put the circles in the cup of the same color—the red circle in the red cup, the blue circle in the blue cup, and so on.

Children can learn the names of objects with a different egg carton game. Put pictures of things cut out of magazines into each egg carton cup. Choose pictures of things familiar to your child, such as a dog, house, car, cup, ball, and tree. Be sure your child knows the name of each item. Ask him to find them and take the pictures out as you name them.

To teach shapes, you can paste or color a triangle, square, circle, diamond, and star inside different egg carton cups. Hand your child a set of these shapes and ask him to match the shapes to those in the cups. For a more advanced variation, you can print numbers or letters in each egg carton cup. Hand him a set of numbers or letters on cards for matching.

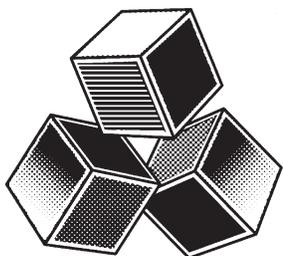
## What It's Like to Be 2½ and 3 Years Old

### How I Grow

- ▶ I can walk on tiptoe pretty well now.
- ▶ I can stand on one foot for about two seconds.
- ▶ I can run pretty well, but I'm not able to start and stop very quickly.
- ▶ I'm really unpredictable and have to be watched constantly.
- ▶ I can walk upstairs alternating feet, but when I come downstairs alone I usually put both feet on each step.
- ▶ I can kick a ball pretty well.
- ▶ I like my clothes, especially my shoes.
- ▶ I like bedtime rituals; I don't like it when they change.

### How I Talk

- ▶ I can say my name easily.
- ▶ I am learning lots of words, about 50 new words a month.
- ▶ I make four- or five-word sentences, such as "Get some for me," or "Get out of my way."
- ▶ I use "I" instead of my name when I refer to myself.
- ▶ I can understand cold, tired, and hungry.
- ▶ I get angry and unhappy when adults don't understand me.
- ▶ I like to have you talk to me about when I was a baby.
- ▶ I enjoy rhyming words and am interested in how words sound.
- ▶ I can tell you where things are, such as where the birds live, where the table is, and where my bed is.
- ▶ At age 3, I will understand almost all the words I'll ever use in ordinary speech, but won't yet be able to say all these words.
- ▶ I may be able to tell people my last name as well as my first name.



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*Your child was born with a liking for sweet things. This is why snacks such as frozen pops, cakes, cookies, and candy are so appealing. They are all high in sugar and are sweet, but these snacks offer little in the way of good nutrition.*

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## What I Have Learned

- ▶ I'm good at matching shapes on a form board.
- ▶ I can match some colors.
- ▶ I love to learn, and I ask questions almost constantly.
- ▶ I can draw a cross on paper if you show me how.
- ▶ I'm learning about sequence, such as "We'll eat supper when Daddy comes home," or "After my bath, I go to bed."

## How I Get Along with Others

- ▶ I like doing things for others sometimes.
- ▶ I may order others around or threaten to hit them if they don't do what I say.
- ▶ Once in a while, I can be kind and polite to other children.
- ▶ I love to give orders.
- ▶ I have trouble getting along with my brothers and sisters.
- ▶ When I want something, I really want it, but sometimes I can't make up my mind about what I want.
- ▶ I act angry when you don't let me do what I want to do or when you interrupt my play.
- ▶ I'm starting to learn about sex and the differences between boys and girls; I'm curious about sex organs and like watching others in the bathroom or when they are undressing.
- ▶ Most of the time I don't like to share my toys with others.

## What I Can Do for Myself

- ▶ I am beginning to control my bowel and bladder movements during the day. I probably won't be able to control them at night until I am 3 or 4 years old.
- ▶ I can feed myself at least part of a meal without too much spilling, but when I get tired, I want help.
- ▶ Sometimes I want to do everything for myself, and sometimes I want you to do everything for me.
- ▶ I can button my clothes.
- ▶ By the time I'm 3 years old, I'll probably be able to pick out and put on my own clothes.

## Play I Enjoy

- ▶ I like to hear stories read just as they are written, and I don't like it when you skip parts.
- ▶ I like pretend play, such as feeding my toy bear or sweeping the floor.
- ▶ I like to play with clay; I can make long snakes.
- ▶ I like to make mud pies. I like to make block houses and knock them down.
- ▶ I like to march to music.

## Snacks with Appeal

Your child was born with a liking for sweet things. This is why snacks such as frozen pops, cakes, cookies, and candy are so appealing. They are all high in sugar and are sweet, but these snacks offer little in the way of good nutrition. They provide energy but almost no vitamins, minerals, or protein.

However, many nutritious foods are naturally tasty and will appeal to your child. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ **Fruit juice.** Instead of fruit drinks, offer 100 percent fruit juice. Full-strength fruit juice may be too strong tasting. When you use frozen fruit juice, add an extra can of water. If you buy bottled or canned fruit juice, add a cup of water to each quart of juice. The water will give it a milder flavor and stretch your food dollar.
- ▶ **Fruit juice frozen pops.** Almost all children like fruit juice frozen pops. Pour 100 percent fruit juice into small paper cups and stick in plastic spoons as handles. Cover with aluminum foil to hold the spoon handles in place. Then place in your freezer until frozen.
- ▶ **Yogurt frozen pops.** If you have a blender, you can make yogurt frozen pops. Drain the liquid from a 16-ounce package of defrosted frozen fruit. Place the fruit in a saucepan. Add a tablespoon of unflavored gelatin. Heat slowly, stirring until the gelatin dissolves. Place this mixture in a blender with 16 ounces of plain yogurt. Blend together. Pour into paper cups. Insert plastic spoons as handles. Cover with aluminum foil to keep handles in place. Put in the freezer until frozen.
- ▶ **Snack-size pizza.** For a snack-size pizza, take half of an English muffin and spread about 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce on top. Grate some cheese and sprinkle that over the top. Put your mini-pizza under the oven broiler or in a toaster oven until the cheese melts.

- ▶ **Quesadillas.** A popular snack for children, quesadillas are easily made. Sprinkle cheese on half of a flour tortilla. Fold the other half over the cheese half. Add ¼ cup of cooked beans such as pinto or black beans for extra protein. Heat in a frying pan at low heat until the cheese has melted.
- ▶ **Ants on a log.** An all-time favorite snack is ants on a log. Spread a small amount of peanut butter down the center of a celery stick. Put some raisins on top. It's ready to eat. (This snack is better for children who have all their teeth and can chew well. A child should brush right after eating it—raisins can cause tooth decay.)
- ▶ **Carrots and dipping sauce.** Kids love to dip their food. Dip cooked carrot strips in ranch salad dressing or hummus.
- ▶ **Whole grain crackers and cheese.** Whole grains are a great source of fiber and most crackers are appealing to kids. Buy string cheese or cut up cheese yourself in unique shapes.

## Developmental Assessments

How do we know if our little ones are learning what they need to learn in order to become healthy, normal children? A developmental assessment measures the progress of toddlers and 2 year olds as they learn to walk, feed themselves, listen to and understand stories, say words, ask for toys, and follow directions.

The purpose of a developmental assessment is to review the child's developmental achievement. The as-

essment compares this achievement with the developmental achievement of children of a similar age and background. This comparison helps identify possible developmental delays.

Even though children's development will vary somewhat, infants and young children tend to learn a specific task at about the same age other children do. If a child lags behind, she may have a problem that requires special help.

Doctors and nurses do an initial developmental assessment as part of the physical examination and health history. They will observe and talk to the child. Information provided by the parents is especially important, since they have the most complete knowledge of the child and are best able to comment on her growth and development.

If development lags or delays are identified as part of the health assessment, additional developmental testing should be done by experts in child growth and development. Parents should ask for this service.

During a health assessment, the doctor or nurse might look for development of the following typical skills for a 2 year old:

- ▶ **Gross motor.** The child stands on one foot with slight support, walks smoothly, may begin to run.
- ▶ **Fine motor.** She attempts to turn pages of a book or magazine on her own initiative or after she is shown how to do it.
- ▶ **Self-help skills.** She uses a cup and spoon.
- ▶ **Social-emotional.** She asserts feeling with negative behavior, such as tantrums, kicking, holding breath, and running away.

- ▶ **Cognitive.** She responds by pointing, touching, or looking when asked to indicate a familiar object, such as shoes, her toy, or clothing.
- ▶ **Language.** (Expressive) She initiates simple words or sounds. (Receptive) After being given a block, she follows two out of four instructions, such as "Put it on the table," "Put it on the chair," "Give it to Mama," or "Give it to me."

## Try on Your Child's View of the World

Sometimes it's easier to understand and guide our children if we try to see the world as they see it. Most of us don't remember what it was like to be a 2 year old, so we have to use our imaginations.

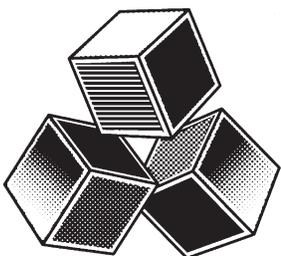
Suppose your child runs up to you happily to show you that she has learned to take the arms off her doll. Do you think first of the armless doll, or do you see the world through her eyes? Can you share her happiness and show her how proud you are of her newfound skill?

Your child has just learned he can hit two pans together and make a beautiful, loud noise. Is your first thought to stop the racket or to show him your pleasure in the discovery?

Children love to learn. Encourage this learning now. Repairing the doll and quieting the banging can come later.

It's not always easy to set aside your own feelings to appreciate your child's achievements, but try it. You may find it makes life with him richer and more pleasant for both of you.

A young child who has done something wrong may simply not know what he should have done differently. If your son throws a toy truck at




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his sister because she won't let him play with her ball, he needs to learn why he should not throw trucks. He also needs to learn how he can play without having the ball. This calls for guidance, not punishment.

Of course, you need to keep your child from throwing trucks. You also need to tell him in simple words why he should not throw the truck and how he can play with other toys until it is his turn to play with the ball. If you are patient and persistent, he eventually will learn to cooperate. Punishment alone could not have taught him this.

## Getting Control over Your Life

Sometimes stress comes from feeling that you have so many problems you can't even begin to solve them all. But if you handle one problem at a time, you may begin to feel you're in control of your life.

Here are some techniques for problem solving. You can work on them alone or with another person:

- ▶ **Start by choosing one problem to work on.** Pick a problem that you can identify exactly. Maybe it will be a problem that always happens at a certain time or with a certain person. An example might be that you can't look for a job because you don't have any childcare.
- ▶ **Gather all the information you can about your problem.** Think about what seems to cause the problem, what happens when the problem comes up, and how you would know if the problem were solved. Think about all the possible ways you could solve the problem. For example, you could ask someone to help with childcare in exchange for a service you can offer them.
- ▶ **Pick the solution that is most possible.** Maybe you can afford to pay a babysitter for just a few hours if you know in advance when a job interview is scheduled.

- ▶ **Decide exactly what you're going to do.** Think about the steps you must take to make the solution work. Maybe you need to find a babysitter first and then ask an employment counselor to help you arrange interviews in a certain time schedule. Write down the steps. Plan a time in the future when you can take another look at the problem and decide whether you've solved it.

Solving problems one at a time may seem slow, but each problem you solve reduces the amount of stress in your life. Each problem you solve helps you feel more in charge of your life.

## Discipline Is Not Punishment

When children misbehave we need to stop them, let them know what they have done wrong, and tell them why it is wrong. Most important, we need to teach them the right thing to do.

When we punish children, we expect to make them suffer physically or emotionally in "payment" for doing something wrong. Punishment usually does stop the unwanted behavior for a while, but it tends to have other effects that can cause problems. Punishment may cause children to fight back with aggressive or more naughty behavior. It may teach them that they can do what they want as long as they are willing to pay the price of punishment. They could come to feel like bad children—unloved and unlovable—and give up trying to please you.

Most important, punishment usually does not help children know what they should do, only what they should not do. It does not guide or teach. It does not build a sense of personal responsibility.

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Revised 10-2009