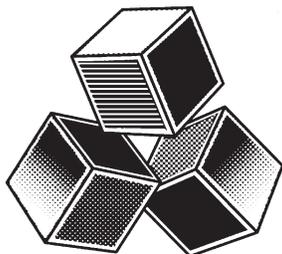


33 and 34
Months Old



PARENT EXPRESS

A Guide for You and Your Child

Dear Parent:

This is the time for memories.

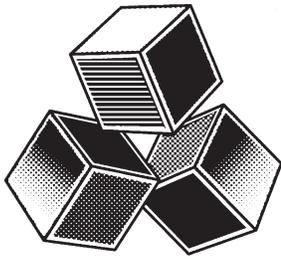
Children love to learn about themselves and their past. It helps them feel important and special. A nice thing you can do for your child and yourself is to collect and organize reminders of these early years.

Chances are, you have some makings for memories already. You can use photographs, birthday cards, certificates, and so forth to start a memory book or box. Add pictures your child draws, a piece of her favorite blanket, an outline of her hand or footprint, her holiday cards, newspapers published on her birthdays, notes from favorite relatives—and anything else you and she want to save. Let your child know this is a special book you want to keep for both of you. Let her look at it with only you so you can keep it from getting torn and dirty.

All too soon, these early years pass. A memory book will help you and your child enjoy remembering these special years.

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Calcium is an important nutrient for growing children. Your child needs three to four servings of dairy foods each day to get enough calcium. Try giving your child milk to drink or putting it on her cereal.

Young Children Need Iron and Calcium

The nutrient often low in the diet of toddlers and 2 year olds is iron, an important nutrient for healthy blood and energy. You can make sure that your child is getting enough iron by giving her foods that are good sources of it.

Look over the list of foods below and ask yourself, "Does my child eat at least two or three of these foods every day?" If she doesn't, she may not be getting enough iron. Remember, always cut all food into small pieces to prevent choking.

Foods with lots of iron include:

- ▶ Beans—kidney, pinto, red, great northern, navy, small white, and lima
- ▶ Lentils and split peas
- ▶ Organ meats, such as heart and liver
- ▶ Foods with some iron include:
 - ▶ Dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots, and prunes
 - ▶ Egg yolk
 - ▶ Enriched macaroni, noodles, and rice
 - ▶ Enriched breads and cereals
 - ▶ Whole-wheat breads and whole-grain cereals
- ▶ Beef
- ▶ Pork
- ▶ Chicken
- ▶ Fish
- ▶ Spinach and other greens, such as kale

Vitamin C helps your body use iron, so offer some orange juice when you serve iron-rich food. As an infant, your child probably ate iron-fortified baby cereal. Now she probably eats adult cereal.

To find out if a cereal is high in iron, look for the nutrition label on the box and see how much of it each serving of cereal has. The amount of iron will be shown as a percentage of the U.S. Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA). Try to give your child only those cereals that have at least 25 percent of the U.S. RDA for iron. When you take your child to a doctor for her regular checkups, ask if your child is getting all the iron she needs.

Calcium is an important nutrient for growing children. Your child needs three to four servings of dairy foods each day to get enough calcium. Try giving your child milk to drink or putting it on her cereal. Offer cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, and ice cream as part of a balanced diet. Calcium is an important nutrient for people of all ages, so help your child learn to eat a diet that includes dairy foods.

Vision Testing

Vision problems often go unnoticed by parents, and since a small child has no knowledge of what good vision is, he does not complain. Your child's ability to see well is essential for learning. You can help him get off to a good start in preschool and kindergarten if you make sure his eyesight is normal.

Between the ages of 1 and 2, your child's vision improves rapidly as his brain develops. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, by age 2 the average child's vision is approximately 20/60. By age 5, vision generally improves to around 20/25, and by ages 7 to 9, vision reaches the adult level of visual sharpness, 20/20. By age 14, when vision is fully developed, doctors cannot correct or reverse many vision and eye difficulties.

An early discovery of vision and eye problems followed by prompt medical care may prevent permanent loss of vision. For example, a common vision problem in young children is amblyopia, often called lazy eye. This condition develops when one eye doesn't see well or has been injured. The child depends on his "good" eye, and the other eye becomes still weaker. Doctors must notice amblyopia by age 3 and correct it by age 5 if the weak eye is to be able to work normally.

By law, Kentucky children must show evidence of an eye examination no later than January 1 of the first year they enter school. Make sure that you schedule an eye examination for your child along with his yearly health checkup. In Kentucky, funds are available to help pay for eye examinations. Contact your public health department or your local family resource and youth service center for financial assistance.

A Question about Stuttering

My little girl is 33 months old and uses a lot of words now, but I've noticed that when she is tense, she stutters. What can I do about this?

Like all 2 to 3 year-olds, your daughter is learning language fast, about 10 to 15 new words each week. But she may not be learning words as fast as she wants to use them. She wants to make herself understood, but sometimes she simply doesn't know all the words she needs to know to do this. This lack of words can cause her to stutter, especially when she is upset or excited or when she is rushed by people she is talking to.

The best thing you can do to help your daughter overcome her stuttering is to be patient and relaxed with her. Don't rush her speech or criticize her stuttering. It is not easy to learn language. If her stuttering persists in spite of your patience and help, discuss it with her doctor.

Games for Growing Take Away

Purpose

This game encourages your child's attention to detail and memory.

How to Play

Put several different things on the table or floor. Ask your child to close her eyes as you take one thing away. Then ask her to open her eyes and guess which one was removed. You can play the game at first using two items. Later, to make the game harder, you may use more things. Let your child have a turn at taking things away so you can guess which one has been removed. Stop playing when the game is no longer fun for you or your child.

Matching Pairs

Purpose

This game helps your child learn how things can be the same or different.

How to Play

Collect pairs of things that are the same, such as two spoons, two bars of soap, two playing cards, two plastic cups, and two toothbrushes. Mix the sets up, then hold one and ask your child to pick another just like it. You can take a turn at guessing. To make the game more difficult, choose pairs of pictures, numbers, letters, or playing cards, and ask your child to match

the one you hold up. As always, take turns leading, and stop before your child loses interest in the game.

Where Is It?

Purpose

This game helps your child learn the important words for position, such as *in*, *under*, *beside*, *on top of*, and *behind*.

How to Play

Ask your child to move something to a different position. For example, using a ball and a basket, ask him to put the ball in, behind, under, or on top of the basket. You can ask him to put his hat on his head, beside his head, under his foot, behind his back, and so forth.

Homemade Toys That Teach Costume Box

Purpose

This toy encourages your child's imagination, creativity, and pretend play.

Materials

- ▶ Large cardboard box
- ▶ Cast-off clothing and accessories, such as hats, scarves, shawls, neckties, and jewelry

Playing

Your child will know what to do with this box of costumes; he has lots of imagination. Encourage his pretend play by suggesting people he can pretend to be. Suggest that he act out characters you've read about in stories or that he ask you to guess who he is dressed up to represent. Sometimes, he'll enjoy having you dress up and pretend with him.

Look at Me

Your child still is developing her own idea about who she is. Give her a chance to see and talk about herself with the following activity:

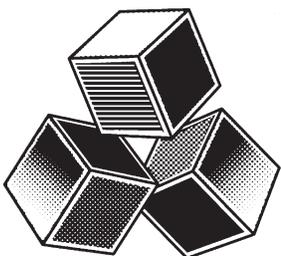
The only special equipment you'll need is a large sheet of paper, such as brown butcher paper. Ask your child to lie down on the paper that you have spread out on a smooth surface, such as the floor. Now, use a crayon or marking pen to draw around her from head to toe. Don't forget to draw in between fingers and around ears—get as much detail as possible!

When you have finished the outline, you and your child can fill it in. Name the body parts and items of clothing as you color them. Let your child look in a mirror so she can draw her eyes, nose, and mouth into the picture. Don't be afraid to be imaginative! Green hair is okay.

When your child's picture is finished, hang it up where everyone can admire it. You can repeat this activity every few months or once each year on her birthday so you can see changes and talk about them: "See how much bigger you are getting," or "Your hair is getting longer," or "You're wearing a dress here."

Magic Closet

The magic closet (or box or basket) is a place full of happy surprises for your child. You can rotate your child's toys through the magic closet. You can bring out one thing at a time when your child is sick, bored on a rainy day, or when you and she need something special to do. Children like to rediscover old toys. A few new toys can be kept in the magic closet, too. Surprises are fun for everyone, and you will enjoy seeing your child playing with her magic closet discoveries.



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Pretend Cooking

Make your little one a pretend stove by drawing burners on the bottom of a large cardboard carton. He will especially like to play at cooking if you play with him. He'll take your order for food, cook the food, hand it to you, and hope you enjoy eating it.

Helping Your Child Reduce Stress

As your child grows, he will encounter more and more situations that cause stress. It is not too early to help him learn to recognize and manage stress.

Show your child how to relax by sitting quietly and paying attention to his breathing. Most children like to use their imaginations. Encourage your child to think about something calm and pleasant when he is tense—soft rain, a sleeping kitten, a quiet meadow. Help him picture a place he especially likes—a park or a beach—and tell him to think about that place. Suggest he can go in his head to that place whenever he is upset.

By teaching your child to relax, you'll be giving him a skill that will help him all his life. Try some of these ideas yourself—they work for everybody.

Problem Solving Begins Early

One of the most valuable skills we have as adults is the ability to solve problems. Through training and experience we have learned what is best to do when trouble arises, how to avoid problems, or how to fix something that is broken. Some people go through life solving problems well. Others go through life solving them poorly.

Young children learn how to solve problems and develop their own style of problem solving. Whether they learn to solve problems well or not so well depends largely on the help and encouragement they receive from their parents, other adults, and brothers and sisters.

Every day children face problems and have a chance to practice solving them. For example, suppose two children are playing together and building block houses, but neither has enough blocks to finish. You could suggest how they can solve this problem, but it is better if you help them learn to figure out how to solve the problem themselves.

To do this, describe what you see. Say that they both want to finish their houses and neither has enough blocks. Then ask them for ideas on how they might solve the problem. In doing this, you show them that you expect them to be able to solve problems, and you give them a chance to practice doing so. At first, you may need to help them come up with ideas. Later, they'll be able to do more problem solving on their own.

A 3 Year Old's Birthday Party

As your child's third birthday approaches, you may be thinking about planning a party. Your child is old enough to enjoy having friends over for a celebration, but how fancy should a 3-year old's party be?

Keep it simple. This is the basic rule for a young child's birthday party. Children at this age can easily become overexcited at their own parties. Too much activity can turn a fun event into a disaster.

Some child development experts recommend inviting the same number of children as your child's age. Sometimes parents try to combine their youngster's party with an adult party. Remember that a combination party would give you twice the work of preparation and cleanup. It's also hard to supervise little ones when you are talking with other adults.

Keep food and party games simple. Plan games in which everyone wins or, at least, gets some type of prize. Three year olds aren't very skilled at entertaining themselves, so plan one-and-a-half to two hours of structured activity. Alternate quiet activities,

such as story time, with active games like a treasure hunt, balloon chase, or beanbag toss. Plan a quiet activity, like drawing or a guessing game, just before serving the cake and ice cream. This way, the children aren't overexcited when they eat.

Children don't always understand that presents are meant for the birthday child, so it's a good idea to have a small, inexpensive party favor wrapped for each child to open.

Finally, be prepared for the possibility that your child will be overwhelmed by the whole thing. Try to keep your sense of humor if your child bursts into tears or hides in the closet.

Being Strict and Being Loving

Many parents are afraid to be strict with their children. They fear that if they are strict, their children will love them less and will feel less loved by them. This simply is not true. Good discipline is fair, sensitive, and consistent, and it is guided by the parents' love and desire to help the child grow. With this type of discipline, the child will feel loved and valued. The child can easily understand limits imposed for her own safety, such as not playing with knives. She also can come to understand and accept limits set to keep her from disturbing others or destroying property.

A child needs to learn that her rights are important but no more important than the rights of others. If she doesn't learn this now, your little one may become the type of child who is less lovable.

All parents want to discipline their children in ways that encourage them to become cooperative and responsible. Discipline is a form of guidance that corrects, molds, and strengthens. Discipline is something you do for and with your child, not to him.

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