



Toddler Care Tips: 15-24 Months

Toddler can (15-18 months):

- Name common objects (at least six-eight).
- Understand words and phrases such as “stop,” “bring me a diaper.”
- Play hide-n-seek.
- Walk backward, up & down stairs while holding an adult’s hand and on tip toes.
- Play ball, roll ball. Tries to catch and throw a ball.

Toddler can (18-24 months):

- Say many words and put some together; sing.
- Identify size and shapes; stack 4-6 blocks.
- Put simple puzzles together (3 or 4 pieces).
- Jump up; “dance”.
- Stand on one foot for a second.
- Help undress himself and put on some clothing.

Safety

- Remove sharp-edged furniture from rooms where your toddler is most of the time. Make sure furniture and shelves are secure and won’t tip over if the child tries to climb on them.
- Never leave hot drinks or foods on tables or counter edges or a curling iron where your toddler can touch it. Keep pot handles turned to the rear of the stove.
- Never leave your child alone in or near water or the car – not even for a moment.
- Always use a safety seat made for your child’s weight and height when your child rides in a car. Buckle the safety seat in the back seat. Never leave your child unattended in the car.
- Don’t let your child eat dirt or paint chips. These can be a source of lead poisoning.
- Check storage areas for kerosene, solvents, paints, drain cleaners and other poisons. Lock them up high or throw them away.
- Do not allow baby to play with items that contain batteries, especially small coin sized batteries. Batteries can both choke your baby and burn his insides.

Nutrition

Most toddlers enjoy feeding themselves and become skilled with a spoon and cup by about 24 months of age. During this learning period, expect a messy face and spilled milk. Don’t expect too much in the way of table manners. Lay a sheet of plastic under your child’s chair to catch spills. Offer small amounts of drink and food at a time. If your child is a picky eater, relax. Most children will get enough food. Expect appetites to vary from day to day.

Is it time to re-certify your child for WIC? If so, don’t miss your appointment. You’ll be missing out on the benefits of the program.

Bowels

By the time your child is 2, you should have a potty chair. Show it to your child, but don’t force him to sit on it. Let it be his idea. Talk to your child as he sits on the potty chair with his clothes on or off. If your child protests this, she may not be ready. Just keep trying.

In the meantime, you can teach your child “why we use a potty chair”. This is done most easily by sitting the child on the potty chair after she has had a bowel movement in her diaper. The diaper should be unfastened and the stool dropped into the potty. After a week or so, your child should learn what the potty chair is for.

Dental Care

Parents need to be in charge of tooth brushing to assure that all tooth surfaces are adequately cleaned. You can let your toddler “brush” while you brush your own teeth. Praise him when he tries. Do not use toothpaste on his brush until your toddler can spit when told to do so. When you use toothpaste on his brush, use only a thin smear you can see through, since he may swallow some of it. After your toddler “brushes” his teeth, you will need to brush his teeth again to be sure all the teeth are cleaned. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentists recommends your child have his first dental visit by age 1. Contact your dentist immediately if your child has an injury that results in a tooth becoming discolored, broken or pushed out of position.

Immunizations

Check with your child’s health care provider for more information regarding influenza (flu) vaccine. Visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines for a complete immunization schedule.

Sleep

Many children wake in the middle of the night frightened. Try turning on a light to let children see they are in a familiar place. Most of the time when children are reassured, they calm down and go back to sleep. In general, you can reduce nightmares by making sure your children have an active play life, but are not over fed or over-stimulated at play or before bed. Don’t talk about the “boogie man” or allow your child to watch scary movies.

Exercise/Play

Toddlers are normally highly active in their play and do not need organized exercise. They have not learned to share yet and sometimes don’t play well with other toddlers.

Symptoms of Illness

Your toddler may be able to tell you when he feels sick or if something hurts. Watch for fever and change in appetite or activity. Toddlers with ear infections often have fever and cold symptoms, not just “playing with their ears.”

Discipline

Children younger than 3 years old can’t always follow directions. Your toddler’s memory and ability to reason aren’t fully formed, so you shouldn’t expect the same behavior from your child all the time. If he does something wrong and you talk to him about it one time, but ignore him the next time he does it, he’ll be confused. You teach him what you expect of him by being consistent. A good way to bring out the best in your child is to give praises often. Toddlers like attention. By rewarding good behavior with praises, your child is likely to get the attention he needs without negative outbursts.

Language

Since your child can move around easier and see things more closely, he will learn more new words. He will be able to put two words together. Show your child objects in your house and tell him their names slowly. Soon your child will be able to point to these items and name them too. Teach him parts of the body. Name clothes (shirt, pants, shoes) while dressing and undressing your child. Listen to what he says even if you can’t understand it. Make him feel that what he says is very important.

Sexuality

Toddlers will begin to notice that boys and girls are different. They will begin to ask questions about bodily functions during toilet training. This is a good time to give very simple explanations in an honest, open manner. For more information contact Guilford County Public Health at 336-641-7777 or www.myguilford.com