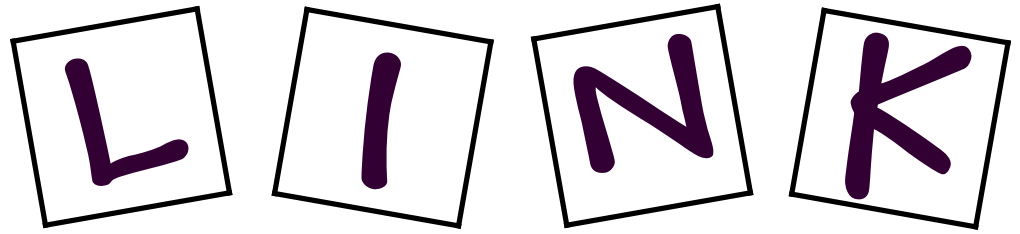


WELCOME!

The LINK letter will:

- ◊ be mailed to you before each well child visit
- ◊ tell you about each well child visit
- ◊ give you information, tips and activities for you and your growing baby



Linking the Family, Practice and Community

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE 18 MONTH WELL CHILD VISIT

Get Ready for the Visit

- Bring your child's health journal with you to the visit
- Bring a list of questions you have about your child
- Bring in any questions from the "You and Your Child" parent activities found in the last LINK letter

At This Visit Your Pediatric Clinician May

- Measure your child's length, weight and head
- Listen to your child's heart
- Look at your child's eyes, ears and mouth
- Check your child's development
- Ask about your child's sleeping and eating
- Test your child for lead poisoning or tuberculosis
- Give your child any needed immunizations
- Talk to you about injury prevention
- Talk with you about any stress or concerns you have

At This Visit You Can

- Record your child's height and weight.
- Talk with your Pediatric Team about the things that are going well and the things you worry about

THE 18 MONTH OLD - ASK YOUR PEDIATRIC TEAM!

Dear Pediatric Team:

I was so upset yesterday. My 18 month old toddler bit another child at child care! Her teacher says that a few other children in the group are going through the "biting stage" and not to worry. She said my daughter will out grow it, but I don't want it to happen again! What should I do?

Horrified Mom

Dear Mom:

It is perfectly normal for toddlers to bite and perfectly normal for parents to be very upset and embarrassed about it. Your child's teacher is partly correct. Toddlers often go through a period of grabbing or biting things. They don't always have words to express their emotions and often communicate physically by hitting or biting. Children can also be very oral, or focused on their mouths while they are learning language. Biting is an unwelcome result of that focus. As toddlers grow, learn language to communicate and learn social rules, the biting phase ends with few or no mishaps. But, biting can become a problem for some children so you are right to be concerned. Thankfully, there are many ways to deal with biting calmly and effectively if it should happen again.



For tips on handling biting, look inside on page 2.

**Your child's
18 month well child
visit is scheduled for:**

(insert date and time)

with Dr./P.N.P.:

**If you have any questions or
need to reschedule, please call
the receptionist at phone #:**



THE 18 MONTH OLD - ASK YOUR PEDIATRIC TEAM! (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Here are some suggestions for helping your child if she is biting:

1. **Be a Detective.**

Find out why your child is biting. Does your child get excited and try to kiss too hard? Is your child angry and responding aggressively to another? Is your child copying another child? Is your child looking for something to chew on? Knowing why your child is biting is the first step in planning an intervention.

2. **Let Your Child Know That Biting is Not OK.**

Calmly tell your child "no biting" and offer an acceptable alternative behavior like biting a pillow or

3. **Use Time Out If Necessary.** Some children need to be removed from the situation for a few moments of time out.

4. **Pay Attention to the Victim.**

Teach your child the consequences of biting by comforting the victim.

5. **Never Hit or Bite Back.**

That sends a hurtful, scary and confusing message to the child that some people (big adults) are allowed to bite.

6. **Be Ready With a Hug.**

Let your child know that you still love him/her, even when you have to set limits.

For more helpful hints on biting or other challenges in parenting toddlers, read:

Kutner, L. (1995) *Toddlers and Preschoolers: The Parent Child Series*: Avon Books: NY

DEVELOPMENTAL DISCOVERIES - THE 18 MONTH OLD



Sharing and Turn Taking

Sharing and turn taking can be very difficult for toddlers. They are just beginning to learn social rules and how to behave with other children. These new skills are very hard to master! Toddlers still believe they are the center of the universe, and this egocentric thought prevents them from fully understanding another person's needs. They may be beginning to understand the concept of ownership ("mine!!"), but their egocentric thought leads them to conclude that they own everything! Imagine their horror when toddlers are asked to hand over a toy to another child! Toddlers' limited understanding of sharing, their neediness and their impulsivity all contribute to the enormous difficulty of sharing. Don't expect to see much sharing until your toddler gets older and more social.

Talking and Reading

You may be discovering that your child's vocabulary is getting bigger every day! Eighteen month olds typically blossom with new language skills. They can name many objects, identify actions, ask questions and string a few words together to make sentences. Some of what your child says may be difficult to understand, but with time, you can puzzle it out.

Books and reading aloud are important ingredients in your child's language development. Children who are read to are better prepared to learn to read. Listening to books and stories is also a great way to develop your child's language skills. At eighteen months, children typically can point to named objects and actions in pictures. They may listen to a story for a minute or longer. And they may have a favorite book that they want you to read over and over again. These book activities are important learning experiences for children and will be wonderful memories for your child.

Make simple books with your toddler. Take photos of your toddler throughout the day. Choose pictures of familiar activities and toys that your toddler will recognize. Paste the photos on heavy paper and fasten the papers together to make a book. Toddlers love "reading" all about themselves!

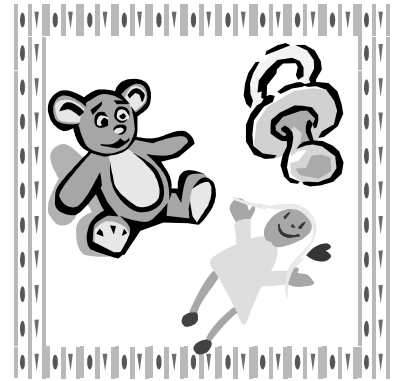


DEVELOPMENTAL DISCOVERIES - THE 18 MONTH OLD (CONTINUED)

"I'm Big, But I Still Want My Blankie"

The push-pull of toddlerhood - wanting to be independent, but needing to be close to a parent - continues with the eighteen month old. You may be feeling confused and frustrated with the messages your child gives you. One minute your toddler demands to dress "me self", and another minute your toddler is clinging to your legs and refusing to go to child care. This is a tough time for both toddlers and parents. Your child is feeling a full range of emotions at growing up - from excitement to fear and anxiety. You may both be exhausted with the intensity of it all.

Comforting objects - sometimes called transitional objects - may be very important to your child at this time. Blankies, stuffed animals or pacifiers can be familiar comforts to toddlers who are overwhelmed with new independence and growing separation from parents. You may find yourself packing that old raggedy bunny every time you go out, or frantically calling child care if that favorite blanket gets left behind. A transitional object is a helpful and healthy way for your child to cope with this difficult period of development.



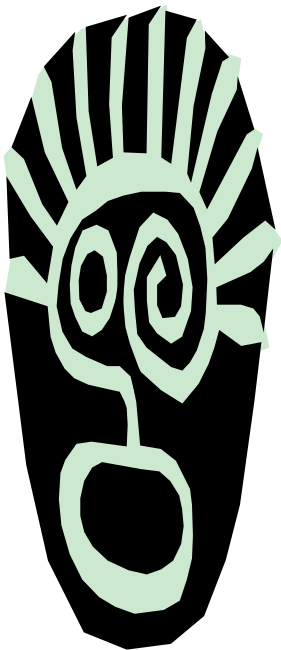
YOU AND YOUR CHILD - QUESTIONNAIRE

The toddler years bring with them the excitement of new development, along with the difficulty of parenting a growing toddler. Both toddlers and parents can feel exhausted and stressed during this time of change. Just as your toddler needs care, rest and nutrition to stay healthy, you need support, care and refueling to keep up with the demanding job of parenting. How do you take care of yourself when you're caring for your toddler? How do you rest and refuel? What supports do you turn to when you're feeling stressed?

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions about caring for yourself. Invite your partner to answer the questions too. Compare your answers. Are there ways to better care for yourself during this stressful time?

How Well Do You Take Care of Yourself?

- 1 Recall what you have eaten in the last 24 hours.
- 2 How many hours of sleep do you average a night?
- 3 When was the last time you exercised? What did you do?
- 4 What two things do you enjoy doing just for yourself such as a hobby or special activity?
When was the last time you did either of those things?
- 5 Who can you name as a support person in your life?
Who can you turn to for help or comfort?
- 6 When was the last time you congratulated yourself or someone congratulated you for all of your hard work?



Surviving the Toddler Years

Stress Management Tips for Parents

1. Eat Well

Good nutrition helps you stay well and strong. Make sure you are getting enough fluids to keep you hydrated.

2. Sleep

Get into a good sleep routine and sleep when you can. If you have a sleepless night, remember to make up for it later. Take a nap instead of washing the floor!

3. Exercise

Just a few minutes of active walking or other movement every day helps combat stress. Take time when you can to walk, run, jump or dance!

4. Take Time for You

Have a cup of tea. Get a baby-sitter and visit a friend. Take a warm bath. Start a hobby. After caring for your child all day, giving to yourself helps to refuel you emotionally.

5. Don't Forget to Laugh

Humor can energize and heal. Don't forget to see the humor in parenting toddlers. It is a tough, but funny journey!

6. Remember, "This Too Shall Pass"

Remind yourself that your child will not always be a toddler. Your child will grow out of this challenging toddler behavior.

7. Try a Relaxation Technique

Yoga, meditation, music and/or breathing exercises help many people. Stores, libraries and schools offer lots of materials and classes that could work for you. What have you got to lose?

8. Make Connections

Find support for the tough job of parenting. Join a play group. Talk to other parents. Don't go it alone!

9. Get a Baby-Sitter

There are nurturing and reliable baby-sitters out there who can help. If cost is a problem, barter services. Trade baby-sitting hours with friends.

10. Ask for Help

If you're feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, talk to your child's child care provider, Pediatric Team or another trusted adult. There is help available. Asking for help is an important gift for yourself and your child.