

EARLY CHILDHOOD – 15 MONTHS

Promotion of healthy habits

Injury prevention

Continue to use a toddler car seat and make sure it is properly secured each time it is used.

Continue to test the water temperature with your wrist to make sure it is not hot before bathing the toddler.

Supervise the toddler constantly whenever he is in or around water, buckets, the toilet, or the bathtub. Young siblings should not be left alone to supervise a toddler (e.g. in the bathtub or in the house).

Continue to empty buckets, tubs, or small pools immediately after use. Ensure that swimming pools have a four-sided fence with a self closing, self-latching gate.

Continue to put sunscreen on the toddler before he goes outside to play.

Continue to keep the toddler's environment free of smoke. Keep the home and car nonsmoking zones.

Do not leave heavy objects or containers of hot liquids on tables with tablecloths that the toddler may pull down.

Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove. Keep the toddler away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, and space heaters.

Ensure that electric wires, outlets, and appliances are inaccessible or protected.

Exclude poisons, medications, and toxic household products from the home or keep them in locked cabinets. Have safety caps on all medications.

Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and alcohol out of the toddler's sight and reach.

Keep Syrup of Ipecac in the home to be used as directed by the poison control center or the health professional. Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

Do not give the toddler plastic bags, latex balloons, or small objects such as marbles.

Never underestimate the ability of a 15 month old to climb. Some children may climb out of the crib at this age. Ensure that the crib mattress is on the lowest rung.

Continue to use gates at the top and bottom of stairs and safety devices on windows. Supervise the toddler closely when he is on stairs.

Confine the toddler's outside play to areas within fences and gates, especially at a child care facility, unless he is under close supervision.

Keep the toddler away from moving machinery, lawn mowers, overhead garage doors, driveways, and streets.

Ensure that a toddler riding in a seat on an adult's bicycle is wearing a helmet. Wear a helmet yourself.

Teach the child to use caution when approaching dogs, especially if the dogs are unknown or eating.

Choose caregivers carefully. Discuss with them their attitudes about and behavior in relation to discipline. Prohibit corporal punishment.

Nutrition

Encourage the toddler to eat at family mealtimes and give him two to three nutritious snacks per day.

Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable. Encourage conversation.

Encourage the toddler to feed himself.

Let the toddler experiment with a variety of foods from each food group by touching and mouthing them repeatedly. He may become more aware of and suspicious of new or strange foods, but do not limit the menu to only foods the toddler likes .

Offer the toddler nutritious foods and let him decide what and how much to eat. Toddlers will eat a lot one time, not much the next. "Food jags" are common.

Anticipate that the toddler's rate of weight gain will be slower than in his first year.

Give the toddler drinks in a cup.

Ensure that the toddler's caregiver feeds him nutritious foods.

Avoid giving the toddler foods or small toys that may be aspirated or cause choking (e.g. peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs or sausages, carrot sticks, celery sticks, whole grapes, raisins, corn, whole beans, hard candy, large pieces of raw vegetables or fruit, or tough meat).

Oral health

Continue to brush the toddler's teeth with a tiny, pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Children under the age of four or five years do not have the manual dexterity to clean their own teeth adequately.

To protect the toddler's teeth, do not put him to bed with a bottle or prop it in his mouth.

Give the toddler fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in the toddler's drinking water.

Schedule the toddler's first dental visit if it has not already occurred.

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Promotion of social competence

Praise the toddler for good behavior and accomplishments.

Encourage language development by reading books to the toddler, singing him songs, and talking about what you and he are seeing and doing together.

Encourage play, which is a way of learning social behaviors.

Encourage the toddler's autonomous behavior, curiosity, sense of emerging independence, and feeling of competence.

Develop strategies to manage the power struggles that result from the toddler's need to control his environment.

To set limits and discipline a toddler of this age, use distraction, gentle restraint of the toddler, removal of the object from the toddler or the toddler from the stimulus, and "time outs". Use discipline as a means of teaching and protecting, not punishing.

Although hitting, biting, and other aggressive behaviors are common, discipline the toddler so that he learns not to do them.

Continue to reinforce good sleeping habits. Maintain a regular bedtime ritual.

Encourage the toddler to use a transitional object, such as a stuffed animal or favorite blanket, to learn self-quieting behaviors.

Recognize that toilet training is part of developmentally appropriate learning. Delay toilet training until the toddler is dry for periods of about two hours, knows the difference between wet and dry, can pull his pants up and down, wants to learn, and can give a signal when he is about to have a bowel movement.

Limit television watching to less than one hour per day of appropriate programs. Watch programs with your child.

Anticipate that the toddler may touch his genitalia.

Take some time for yourself and spend some individual time with your partner.

Pick the toddler up. Cuddle him, hold him, and talk with him.

Spend some time playing with the toddler each day. Focus on activities that he expresses interest in and enjoys.

Listen to and show respect for the toddler.

Show affection in the family.

Spend some individual time with each child.

Help the toddler express such feelings as joy, anger, sadness, fear, and frustration.

Create opportunities for each family member to interact with and play with the toddler every day.

Promote family communication. Play games with the toddler.

Share meals as a family whenever possible.

Reach agreement with all family members on how to support the toddler's emerging independence while maintaining consistent limits

Discuss with the health professional your own preventive and health-promoting practices (e.g. using seat belts, avoiding tobacco, eating properly, exercising and doing breast self-exams or testicular self-exams).

Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g. WIC), housing or transportation if needed.

Learn about and consider attending parent-toddler play groups.

Learn about and consider attending parent education classes or parent support groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations.

Discuss with the health professional choosing and evaluating child care programs. Discuss the child care arrangements you have made.