

### EARLY CHILDHOOD – 18 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 she is in or around water, buckets, the toilet, or the bathtub.

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.

Ensure that the toddler wears a life vest if boating. Inflatable flotation devices or "knowing how to swim" do not make a toddler safe in the water.

Put sunscreen on the toddler before she goes outside to play or swim.

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

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

Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, alcohol, firearms, and electrical tools locked up and/or out of the toddler's sight and reach.

Exclude poisons, medications, and toxic household products from the home or keep them in locked cabinets. Have safety caps on all medications. Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

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

Never leave the toddler alone in the car or in the house.

Do not expect young children to supervise the toddler (e.g. in the house, apartment, playground, or yard).

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.

Discuss with the health professional what to do for falls, cuts, puncture wounds, bites, bumps on the head, bleeding, and broken bones.

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

#### Nutrition

Encourage the toddler to eat with the family by serving her in a highchair or booster seat at table height. A toddler will often eat better with a trusted adult nearby.

Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable. Encourage conversation.

Give her two to three nutritious snacks per day. Provide snacks rich in complex carbohydrates, and limit sweets and high-fat snacks. Avoid using snacks as a reward or giving the toddler cookies or sweets because she "hasn't eaten all day."

Continue encouraging the toddler to feed herself with her hands and drink from a cup. She may also be using utensils.

Encourage the toddler to experiment with food, deciding what and how much to eat from the nutritious foods that you offer. Toddlers will eat a lot one time, not much the next. Food jags are common. A toddler's intake will vary considerably over any 24-hour period, but it should be balanced over several days.

Let the toddler develop clear likes and dislikes.

Do not allow feeding to serve as the focus of a power struggle.

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

Avoid giving the toddler foods that are easily aspirated.

#### Oral health

Continue to brush the toddler's teeth with a small, pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

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.

Model appropriate language. Encourage language development by reading books to the toddler, singing her songs, and talking about what you and she are seeing and doing together.

Reinforce self-care and self-expression.

To promote a sense of competence and control, invite the toddler to make choices whenever possible. (The choices should be ones you can live with, e.g., "Red pants or blue ones?")

Encourage the toddler to be assertive in appropriate situations, yet provide limits when they are needed.

Decide what limits are important to you and your toddler. Be specific when setting these limits. Briefly tell your toddler why she is being disciplined. Attempt to be as consistent as possible when enforcing limits.

Keep time out or other disciplinary measures brief. Do not hesitate to pick the toddler up, hold her, or remove her from dangerous or conflictual situations. Reassure the toddler once the negative behavior has stopped.

When disciplining the toddler, make a verbal separation between her and her behavior: "I love you, but I don't like it when you do \_\_\_."

When possible, give the toddler a "yes" as well as a "no." For example: "No, you can't play with the remote control, but you can play with the blocks."

Do not get into a power struggle with your child. Prepare strategies for sidestepping conflicts and appropriately asserting your power. You can control only your own responses to the toddler's behavior. For example, you cannot make a toddler sleep, but you can insist that she stay in her room.

Teach the toddler about disciplinary measures such as time out when she is most capable of learning (e.g. when she is rested, fed, and not angry).

Prepare strategies to deal with night awakening, night fears, nightmares, and night terrors.

Encourage self-quieting behaviors, such as quiet play or the use of a transitional object.

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 her pants up and down, wants to learn, and can give a signal when she 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 her genitalia.

#### Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

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

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

Listen to and show respect for the toddler.

Show interest in child care activities.

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.

Keep family outings relatively short and simple. Lengthy activities tire the toddler and may lead to irritability or a temper tantrum.

Do not expect the toddler to share her toys.

Acknowledge conflicts between siblings. Whenever possible, attempt to resolve conflicts without taking sides. For example, if a conflict arises about a toy, the toy can be put away. Do not allow hitting, biting, or other violent behavior.

Allow older children to have objects that they do not have to share with the toddler. Give them a storage space that the toddler cannot get into.

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. Discuss with the health professional possible programs for your child: preschools, early intervention programs, or other community programs.

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.

Find out what you can do to make your community safer. Advocate and participate in a neighborhood watch program.