








HOW IS MY BABY/TODDLER LEARNING TO BE INDEPENDENT?



Each day a baby is becoming more and more his own person. But there are special challenges babies and toddlers face as they test their independence.

Separation can be a difficult experience, especially for babies between 8 months and 18 months. They have figured out who their important people are, and are sad or frightened when they can't be with these people. Think about how you feel when you have to say good-bye to someone you really love. These attachments that babies form are very important in their development and we want to support them.

We help children deal with separation by:

-  posting family pictures in our classroom
-  making sure that children have a familiar toy or blanket to comfort them
-  making our room comfortable and home-like
-  establishing regular routines that children can count on to be generally the same each day
-  talking about their feelings and reassuring them, "I know you're sad, but your mommy is coming back after your nap."








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Once babies feel secure with us, separation becomes easier. However, they will always know that you are their parents, and you will always be their first choice!



When we see a baby or toddler trying to accomplish something, such as climbing up into a small chair, we do not rush in to assist. We allow the baby a chance to attempt it on his own. When he is successful, we call attention to it. "Wow, Thomas, you must feel great! You did that all by yourself!"

We try to provide a place which safely encourages children to make choices and try things on their own. Of course, we are careful to always be supervising their choices, but we believe it builds the child's independence and self-confidence to make a choice and see it through.



Released by Don Bower,
Extension Human Development Specialist
Developed under contract by Linda J. Grant

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Leaflet CHFD-E 24-09

July, 1999

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Gale A. Buchanan, Dean and Director

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