

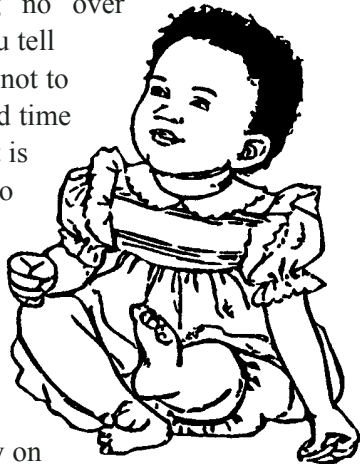
No parent can be perfectly fair about everything. When a child complains about fairness, that is a sign that he needs to be reassured that you love him. Avoid getting caught in fairness battles by finding time for each child and encouraging them to work and play together.

GUIDANCE

Although your toddler is showing more independence, he still does not know right from wrong. One of your most important jobs as a parent is to teach your values to your children. This is a gradual process, though, taking years and years.

By “toddler proofing” your home, you can provide the freedom a toddler needs to explore with a minimum of limits. “Toddler proofing” means removing hazards so your toddler can explore safely. When it is necessary to set rules, be consistent in making your toddler follow them every time. The best way a toddler learns rules is by repetition.

Try to avoid saying “no” over and over. When you tell children only what not to do, they have a hard time figuring out what it is they are supposed to be doing. For example, when your toddler tries to climb on the living room table, instead of saying “no,” say, “We play on



the floor.” You may also have to show the child how to get back down. Children are not yet able to respond quickly to commands. If the misbehavior continues, try distracting them by getting them interested in another activity.

Some parents pay attention to a toddler only when he is misbehaving. What does that teach? In your toddler’s mind, he learns that the best way to get attention from Mom and Dad is to misbehave!

You can turn this little game around. Catch your toddler being good! Ignore her misbehavior (when you can), and give attention and encouragement for behavior you like. You’ll find that your whole relationship with your child will become much happier!

Next issue:

Toys and games, teething,
toilet teaching and more!

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Putting Knowledge to Work

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1-2-3 Grow!

16-18 MONTHS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
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16-18 Months

1-2-3 Grow!

HOW DOES YOUR TODDLER GROW?

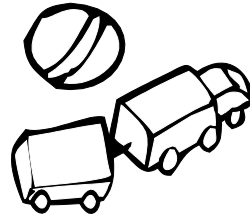
Toddler talk is quickly growing from “Mama” and “bye-bye” to people’s names to simple phrases and questions. You can help her speak and understand by talking, listening and responding. Use short sentences and simple words, but avoid baby talk. Remember, a child will copy what you say. As your child tries to “repeat” your words, encourage her efforts. Avoid correcting mistakes, but continue using each word or phrase correctly. Eventually, the words will come out right.

Your toddler is also beginning to understand simple commands such as “Show me your toy.” To help develop this understanding, try this: When you say, “Put the block in the box,” go through the motion while you say the words. This should help even more!

It is exciting to watch a toddler’s face concentrate intently, trying to figure out what the new game is. Be sure to show how happy you are when she catches on and speaks correctly or follows directions.

YOUNG FRIENDS

The 16- to 18-month-old enjoys playing near other children and watching them. Your toddler is probably not yet ready to play regularly with other children of the same age. The young toddler has difficulty sharing. Many parents try to insist on sharing toys, but most toddlers don’t understand sharing. The first step in teaching sharing is helping a child learn that some things are his. This gives him a sense of security and also an understanding of the words “mine” and “yours.” Gradually teach sharing by being a good example. If he asks for a drink of your milk, say, “I will share my milk with you.” Avoid problems when children play together by providing plenty of toys for all. Soon your toddler will be happily sharing with young friends.



SLEEP

At this age, most toddlers sleep about 12 hours and wake early. Often they get so busy they don’t even know they are tired.



But you will recognize an overtired child by excess energy, whining and more frustration. Naptimes are usually needed twice a day, but the amount of sleep may vary. Be flexible about naps, but insist when you see the

signs of sleepiness. Bedtime may be easily managed by having a regular bedtime. Don’t use going to bed as a punishment — this will mean bedtime is something to avoid. Avoid rough-and-tumble play for an hour or so before bedtime. This is a good time to relax with a quiet game or books and maybe a snack.

DRESSING

Your toddler may have been undressing himself for some time now. Many like the challenge of trying to get their clothes off. Some enjoy not wearing clothes at all! Soon your child will be trying to put his clothes on, too. Help him learn this important self-help skill by buying clothes that are loose and easy to put on. Sturdy clothes with simple fasteners work well.

YOUR EVERYDAY ROUTINE

Toddlers love routine. Because their memory is so short and they cannot think into the future, a 1-year-old needs routine in order to know what to expect. When routine is changed, the toddler’s sense of security and safety is upset. Try to establish a reasonable routine that is convenient for the whole family. When you change your usual schedule, a brief explanation may help. Routine will become less important as your child grows, but for now it will help him feel secure.



BROTHERS AND SISTERS

If you have other youngsters at home, you have probably already seen how older children sometimes resent the attention paid to new babies. Older children may worry that you don’t love them as much anymore. They may test your love by misbehaving or demanding that you pay attention to them. Unfortunately (for older children), toddlers require lots of your time and supervision. You may feel you have less free time than ever before. It is important to find time for each of your older children as well. Explain to them that, even though they might feel left out sometimes, you still love them very much. You also need their help, because they are more grown up, with taking care of the baby. Whenever they help out for you or the baby, show your appreciation. Some parents feel guilty when their children accuse them of not being fair.