

find out what they are. To them, this is no different from exploring ears, nose, hair or a new toy. Some toddlers rub their genitals when they are anxious, and this usually makes their parents anxious! Don't punish or shame your toddler for this. It won't become a problem unless you make it one. If you find it embarrassing in public, calmly pull his hand away and occupy him with something else.

CLOTHING

Toddlers love to show you the new skills they learn. Getting dressed by themselves is a proud moment! A toddler who wants to dress himself needs clothing that is simple and sturdy. When you buy toddler clothes, look for these features:

- A minimum of fasteners that frustrate little fingers. When zippers, snaps or buttons are necessary, the larger, the better. Nylon self-stick tape closures are especially easy.
- Trim or design features that help your child tell the front from the back. Embroidered designs or a V-neck are examples.
- Pockets that are large and easy to reach
- Large neck openings and ample room
- Elastic waistbands are easy to pull up, especially when toilet teaching is going on
- Color-coordinated wardrobes so that many items go together

Your toddler may have preferences for certain colors or styles. Whenever possible, let your child choose the clothing that makes him feel best. Your 1-year-old is probably wearing toddler sizes. These are designed for children who are still chubby in the middle and need extra room for diapers. Because

children can grow and change sizes quickly, it is a good idea to measure height, weight, chest and waist before each shopping trip. Match your child's measurements to charts provided on packages or store displays. Keep in mind that fancy, expensive toddler outfits are cute but may get too small very quickly.

NOTE TO PARENTS

Caring for a toddler includes a few frustrations along with lots of tender and laughable moments. One way to get through the difficult times is by remembering the special moments that only a parent can share with a child. Take time to enjoy the toddler years because they happen only once. Before you know it, your child will be off to school and will have a life very separate from yours. So when you feel tired and discouraged (yes, all parents sometimes feel this way), remember the little things he does to make you feel special, how peaceful he is when he is asleep, and all the other joys of parenting.

Next issue:
Thumb sucking, outdoor play
and learning games!

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Putting Knowledge to Work

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County Extension Agent



1-2-3 Grow!

19-21 MONTHS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
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19-21 Months

1-2-3 Grow!

During the second half of your child's second year, you may be surprised at the little person your toddler is becoming. This is a time for getting better at walking, talking and relating to others. The 19- to 21-month-old is continuing to grow towards independence by learning more about his environment and more about himself as a unique person.

HOW DOES YOUR TODDLER GROW?

You can expect to see these behaviors now or over the next few months:

- walks steadily, squats, throws, kicks
- uses whole body to play; carries, pulls, moves big toys
- likes to hug, kiss and snuggle up close for a moment, then move on to more play
- says from 3 to 50 words; names objects around the house; asks for food, drink, and bath room; puts simple sentences of 2 or 3 words together ("See doggie!")
- drinks well from cup
- begins to favor either her right hand or left hand (if she scribbles with her left hand, don't try to change the crayon to her right hand or vice versa. She may or may not change her preferred hand over the next few years, but it is important to let her preference develop naturally)

Your toddler may be disobedient on purpose now and may become quite a challenge! This is his way of testing limits. Many toddlers discover the power of biting and hitting at this age. These behaviors often happen when the toddler gets so frustrated in some activity that he loses self-control. Although such behavior should be corrected, it will decrease as your toddler learns to use words to express his feelings. A toddler who can say, "I don't want to do that!" is less likely to push or bite. Ask your child to come and find you when he gets frustrated and you will help him find a solution. Never hit or bite a child "to show them what it feels like." If your toddler is in childcare, talk about this behavior with your child-care provider.

Your reaction to challenging behavior is exciting for your toddler to see. Patience and consistency in your rules and reactions are important. Try ignoring this stubborn behavior by walking away or getting involved in another activity. Reward cooperation with a "thank you" or hug. Remember, your child wants to please you and gain positive recognition, so provide encouragement whenever you can.

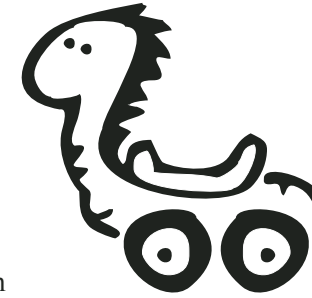
ACTIVITIES/GAMES/TOYS

What new activities can you provide to satisfy your toddler's fantastic curiosity? Simple puzzles and shape sorters encourage thinking skills by helping your child tell the difference between sizes, shapes and materials.

Digging in a sandbox (and often your flowerpots) feels wonderful for toddler fingers. Moving sand from one place to another lets her learn about the feel of different materials. At this age, children are starting to understand physical properties. For example, a piece of wood is hard and does not change shape, but sand will sift, spill and pack down.

One way to explore new materials is to take a walk around your yard, the neighborhood or even indoors together. Look at all the different things you come across. Name them and talk about what they do. This also helps to increase your toddler's use of new words.

At this age, many toddlers enjoy riding toys they push with their feet. Big places to hide are popular, too. A big cardboard box with a wide opening or an empty cabinet or closet makes a great hiding place (Be sure doors don't lock.). When your toddler hides, an exclamation of "Where is Laurie?" is likely to bring squeals of laughter and a door pushing open to reveal the "secret" hiding place.



TEETHING

Molars (the back teeth) are continuing to come in. The discomfort of growing teeth may cause your child to be whiny. His appetite may also slow down. A soft teething ring or chewy food may help relieve the pain. If your child has trouble sleeping at night, a pain reliever may help. Check with your doctor for suggestions.

Any time your toddler is not feeling well, a little extra attention often helps. Sitting together in your favorite chair with a book or just quiet conversation makes the pain more bearable. The satisfaction of being able to provide comfort is one of the joys of parenthood that you and your child will remember for a long time.

TOILET TEACHING

Most toddlers are very interested in what goes on in the bathroom. Just being interested does not mean that they have the physical or mental ability to control their bladder or bowels, so don't try to rush toilet teaching.

Now is the time to introduce a child's potty. Let your child sit on it and get comfortable in the bathroom. Talk about the process of elimination. You have probably already found words to describe urine and bowel movements that your toddler can understand and say.

Your toddler will benefit from a good model in the bathroom. Many parents willingly give up their privacy knowing that their child will learn from watching and talking about these natural body processes. Along with their fascination with what you are doing comes curiosity about the toilet, what is in it and how it works.

Many toddlers at one time or another remove their diapers and play with their bowel movement. You may want to shriek with disgust. Try to remain calm but show your disapproval calmly but firmly.

Patience will help you and your toddler master toileting. Accidents will happen. If they happen a lot, try going back to diapers for awhile. Most toddlers continue to wear diapers at night after they have learned daytime control.

Trying to teach toileting before your toddler is physically ready will just be frustrating for you and her. Toilet learning has nothing to do with how smart your toddler is. Waiting till the time is right shows what a smart parent you are!

SEXUAL CURIOSITY

Along with interest in toileting comes a natural curiosity about sexual differences. Infants and toddlers often explore their genitals to