

will have less control over your child's eating once she reaches school age. The heavy advertising of snack foods on TV may influence children.



Teach (and model) the good health habits of nutritious eating and regular exercise now so that your toddler can get her best start toward a healthy life.

PLANT SAFETY

Toddlers are naturally curious. One way to explore new things is to touch and taste. When you think about some of the awful things that toddlers put in their mouths, it's amazing they're not sick all the time! Some toddlers are fascinated by plants in the house and yard and, of course, may try to eat them. Certain plants are poisonous when eaten, however. Your county Extension office can help you identify these. Be sure to keep a first aid book handy, and post the phone number for a poison control center at your telephone.

NOTE TO PARENTS

Although routine is important to your toddler, one of the frustrations of parenting a toddler is the feeling of being in a rut. Doing the same things over and over every day can be boring. Now may be the time to do something different. Break your routine! If you feel your child still needs the security of the same schedule, get away by yourself. At-home parents might enjoy an afternoon off — go shopping or to a movie, join an interest group or exercise. If you work outside the home, your routine is probably just

as rigid. A day off might be great. Or try a new weekend activity. Trust your child to a babysitter or relative for a night or weekend. As your child gets older, she will enjoy new activities, too. Take a walk in the rain, or go someplace you have never been. Plan a trip to the zoo or the library. Brief schedule changes within your daily routine make everyone feel more alive and refreshed.



Next Issue:
Books, music, television and more!

*Prepared by Don Bower,
Extension Human Development Specialist,
and reviewed by Mary Anne Pace-Nichols, Karen
Shetterley, Katrina Bowers, Holly Alley, Judy Hibbs,
Esther Maddux and Cindy Darden.*

Putting Knowledge to Work

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Gale A. Buchanan, Dean and Director

The University of Georgia
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1-2-3 Grow!

28-30 MONTHS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
The University of Georgia
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28-30 Months

1-2-3 Grow!

HOW DOES YOUR TODDLER GROW?

From 28 to 30 months of age, your toddler will probably show a longer attention span and ability to concentrate. Your toddler will also become more sociable in play. At this age, children are beginning to learn how to cooperate and ask for help. Your toddler may drag you to the sink for a drink of water instead of shrieking with frustration.

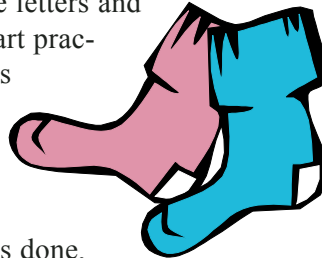
Their longer attention span allows toddlers to practice new activities over and over. Thinking skills are also improving. With your help and guidance, many 2½-year-olds can name and sort shapes and identify colors. Simple puzzles are fun to do now that eye-hand coordination is improving.

You may have noticed that your toddler goes through periods of being cooperative and agreeable, and then turns cranky for what seems like no reason. Such extremes of behavior are common. Some people compare the moods of toddlers to those of teenagers. Both toddlers and teens are changing quickly. Take these changes as a positive sign of your child's growth, and try to help and encourage your child's efforts. Soon, his moods will level off.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

You are your child's first teacher. Try to introduce new ideas to children during your daily routine. A child will usually catch on quickly and enjoy playing any new learning "game." Here are some ideas:

- Teach colors as you do the wash, look through books and magazines, or choose clothing. Talk about what you see. "I like that blue shirt you are wearing." "Do you want to wear your blue shirt or your red shirt?" "Look at the big green truck." As your child learns colors, begin to ask questions. "What color is that flower?"
- Teach shapes while playing with toys and using everyday objects. A ball is round; a table is square; a piece of paper is a rectangle. While eating, make fun food shapes by cutting a square slice of cheese into triangles or strips. Many sorting toys and books about shapes are available, too.
- Sorting and matching tasks are important in helping children learn size, shape and color differences. This skill will be the basis for reading as a child learns to recognize letters and words later on. Start practicing sorting skills now by having your toddler put all the shirts in the wash basket. When your wash is done, sock sorting is great fun. "Can you find the red sock that matches this red sock?" While putting dishes away, help your child sort spoons, knives and forks.



- Use your imagination to create different learning games. The more your child uses her senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch the easier it will be to classify, sort and match.

I'M OK!

When a child feels good about himself, he is more likely to succeed in everything he tries.

Children begin to form a picture of themselves while they are very young. Now is the time for you to help your toddler to develop good feelings about himself.

What is self-esteem? It is the thoughts, feelings, and ideas a child has about himself. It is how much he likes, accepts and respects himself. Does he have confidence that he will do well?

Strong self-esteem comes from loving, caring relationships with other people. Parents, grandparents, friends and teachers who are supportive and accepting will help your child develop a good sense of self. Constant criticism, neglect and punishment will cause a child to believe he is no good. Children (and older people too) who believe they are "bad" tend to act that way. Before your child can trust and share with others, he must learn to accept and trust himself.

Some parents confuse a "strong-willed" child with strong self-esteem. They believe they must "break" a strong-willed child, almost like you would break a wild horse. Actually, their efforts to punish him probably only make the situation worse! Strong-willed children usually have low



self-esteem. Punishing and nagging only confirm how bad he is, in his mind. Build a child's self-esteem and a friendly, cooperative attitude will follow.

ACTIVITIES/GAMES/TOYS

Toddlers like to get their hands into things. Why not help? Here is a play dough recipe that you can make on the spur of the moment.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups flour
- ¾ cup water
- 1 cup salt
- food coloring (optional)

Mix ingredients together; knead with hands until smooth. To store dough, put in airtight container and refrigerate.

Toddlers usually enjoy "squishing and mashing" rather than making recognizable objects. For more fun, provide small cups to pack the dough into or cookie cutters to make designs (watch out for sharp edges). Finger paints, playing in water or sand, cutting paper with safety scissors and touch-and-feel books also build finger skills.

TODDLER FOOD

As your toddler continues learning to feed himself, you will notice his preferences for certain foods at different times. He may demand nothing but peanut butter and jelly for three days straight. Next week, it may be cheese and fruit. As long as you don't make too big a fuss and continue offering a variety of nutritious choices, he'll be okay.

One habit to watch, however, is the "snack food syndrome." Good, well-balanced eating habits need to be established early. You