



4147 Westport Road
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18-24 Months

Your child is in the toddler age period – walking and toddling around and learning from all the activity and new experiences. Children are just beginning to think and understand more complex ideas. These milestones make this an especially significant time. The new things your child knows: words, memories, and resulting personality will fascinate you and your family.

There are many joys at this age from the delight your child takes in new abilities to watching your child's increasing curiosity and competence. Certain areas like motor development and speech progress rapidly, usually much faster than emotional maturity. This is very normal. Children do not have an adult outlook on life especially in the areas of controlling emotions, sharing, patience, and concepts of time, just to name a few.

Behavior and Guidance

Even though children are acquiring new words regularly they are still unable to express their feelings in words, especially negative ones, so normal temper tantrums begin. Children express displeasure, anger, fatigue, hunger, and frustration by stiffening their bodies, crying, kicking, and sometimes hitting or banging their heads. All this behavior seems very negative to parents and is very upsetting to most, but remember, children of this age do not have mature ways to express these feelings.

Since we do not want to encourage this behavior we usually recommend ignoring temper tantrums by turning away or leaving the room until the tantrum stops. Then, reward the silence by a comment, smile, or other positive attention/distraction. It is a fact, if we want to change a child's behavior ignoring the undesirable activity should gradually teach your child the temper tantrum is not achieving what they want, and they need to try something else. Occasionally, if your child is having a temper tantrum due to frustration or fatigue and is out of control for some time we suggest holding your child in a calm, firm bear hug to help him/her cease body activity and regain control.



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Other useful methods to help make behavior as desirable as possible include:

- Arranging your home for your child's comfort. Remove breakables from the family room. Put toys only in places safe to play. Place stools near bathroom sinks, lower coat hooks, have small tables and chairs available, etc.
- Distract with humor. Remember, at his "no" stage to try to ask questions that cannot be answered no. Use "It is time to ..." instead of "Do you want to ...?"
- Ignore the small stuff. In other words, ignore as much as possible!
- Reinforce good behavior. Catch your child being good and comment on it. Make sure you give more positive responses to your child than negative ones. More yes than no.
- Allow for as much curiosity and exploration as safely possible. Encourage trying with your guidance and watchful eye. Autonomy, the feeling of being able to "do on my own," is an especially important attitude at this age.
- Utilize timeouts for misbehavior. Timeout allows for time away from the area of negative behavior then returning to attempt better behavior. Timeouts should be a boring place with no distractions. The goal is to separate the child and allow him/her to pause and cool off. Set a timer. A good rule of thumb is 1 minute per age of life.

Nutrition

Normally, growth rate slows down in the second year, so appetite may drop off. Flexibility is important in providing a nutritious diet. Offer healthy snacks. Try lots of safe finger foods as well as continuing to work with a spoon and fork. Try to limit juice to no more than 4 ounces per day but preferably none at all. Drinking only milk and water is best. We strongly advise weaning from a bottle if your child is still taking one.

Try not to become anxious about your child's decreased appetite, small meals, playing with food, etc. It is more important to control what your child eats than how much he/she eats. Encourage a healthy variety. Limit sweets, fats, and junk food. Small portions will lead to feelings of success at mealtimes.



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Mealtime manners will develop gradually through practice and example. Tension related to eating does not help anyone. Avoid force feeding and get in the habit of eating together as a family with the TV off. Try to discuss anything but the food, eaten or not eaten.

General Health and Hygiene

Make baths fun and relaxing with toys for play, pouring, etc. Brushing teeth twice a day with a rice-size amount of fluoride toothpaste should be a routine by this age. Allow your child to brush your teeth or a doll's teeth to aid in cooperation. Plan to see a dentist by no later than 2 years of age. Begin to teach hand washing as the best way to prevent infection especially after using the restroom and before meals.

Toilet Training

By this age, children are often aware before or as they urinate or have a bowel movement. However, it still may be awhile before they are aware in enough time to make it to the potty. It is fine to be getting used to a potty chair or big toilet with support for the feet. Children usually accomplish toilet training by age 2-3.5 years. We encourage gentle support for children while they learn.

Safety

- Your child should remain in a car seat that is rear-facing for a minimum of 2 years. Check the height and weight requirements as you may need to invest in a larger rear facing convertible car seat as your child grows.
- Lock back doors and use gates for potentially dangerous areas such as bathrooms, basements, etc. Install window guards on upstairs windows and place outlet covers in all electrical outlets.



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- Always directly supervise children around swimming pools, bathtubs, treadmills, exercise bikes, etc. Near or in water, keep your child close enough to touch to prevent drowning.
- Lock away poisons, cleaning and lawn supplies, medications (even over-the-counter medications), etc. Poison control may be reached at 1-800-222-1222.
- Report to us if your child eats paint chips, especially during renovations, or if you have any reason to suspect lead poisoning in your child.
- Keep small chokeable objects away from your child.
- Prevent burns and scalds. Turn the hot water thermostat to 120 degrees or less. This will help prevent severe scalding even if your child turned on the hot water accidentally. Keep all hot liquids out of reach and do not carry your child while carrying a hot liquid. Turn pan handles to the back of the stove and be especially cautious around irons, space heaters, fireplaces, and curling irons/hair straighteners.
- Remember plastic bags and un-inflated balloons or balloon pieces are potential choking and suffocation hazards.
- Consider carefully the safest method of carrying your child on a bicycle. If you decide to carry your child on a bicycle, helmets are needed for both of you!
- If guns are owned, store unloaded and locked with ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- Have smoke detectors and fire extinguishers on each level of your home and check regularly to ensure they are working properly.

A Few Words on Being a Parent

Remember to enjoy your child! Remember, in the same storms and confusions of temper tantrums, the no phase, and independent behavior, your child is carrying out a vital part of development. He/she is learning to deal with the world more independently and separate from you. Allow this, with your guidance, patience, and good humor! Be as positive about your response to behaviors as possible. Appreciate the new skills and personality evolving and



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remember there are many, many more years to learn and develop self-control! We are available to discuss any concerns you may have. Please consult with our office staff as questions arise.