

Baby's First Wish

Cooperative Extension Service
New Mexico State University

A happy & healthy life

Dear Parents

35 & 36 Months

Isn't it amazing how fast your child grows?

Your child is almost 3 years old and growing more independent and capable every day.

Your child can do many things by himself at this age. He can sort and put away forks and spoons; he can carry piles of clean clothes to the bedroom; he can set the table with napkins and silverware.

It takes time and energy for you to show him how to do a new job, but it is worth the effort. He does love to help, doesn't he? Children often say, "Me do it" as they strongly promote their right to become their own person. "Let's do it together" or "I will help too" usually works better than "You can't do that" or "No, I'll do it," or "You're too little."

Encourage your child's cooperation; it will build his confidence and help him grow into a helpful, responsible person.



Questions Parents Ask What should I do about bed-wetting?

Q. My almost 3-year-old son is dry during the day, but still wets the bed at night. This worries me and besides, it's a real bother. What should I do about it?

A. Your toddler is right on schedule. Most 3-year-olds are dry during the day, but they usually continue to wet at night until they

have passed their third birthday. Your little one doesn't want to wet his bed. He is simply not yet able to hold his urine, wake up, and get to the toilet at night.

Don't scold or punish him for bed-wetting. That could make him nervous and upset and then it would be even harder for him to stay dry at night. If your child is older than 3 and you are concerned about bed-wetting, put your child in training pants covered by waterproof pants. Use a plastic sheet on the bed and leave the light on so he can find the bathroom. Be sure he goes to the toilet before going to bed. Meanwhile, try to be relaxed and understanding about his nighttime wetting. Praise his successes and calmly accept his failures. In the long run, this will be the best way to help him become dry at night.

This is the last issue of *Baby's First Wish*. We hope the series has been helpful to you in your very important and exciting job as parents.

Health



Hearing Testing

A hearing test is an important part of your child's regular medical check-up. When a child is under 3 years of age, hearing is tested by observing your child's response to sound and her ability to learn new words.

Three-year-old children can learn how to take formal audiometric hearing screening tests. Be patient with them until they understand what to do and can cooperate fully.

Language is an essential tool for learning. It allows the toddler to store information, exchange ideas, and express feelings. A hearing problem interferes with the development of normal language and learning.

Infants and toddlers frequently have colds that can lead to ear infections. If ear infections are not detected and treated, the toddler may have hearing problems. Early discovery of possible hearing problems is the key to successful treatment and the prevention of hearing loss. Parents can protect their child's hearing by making sure that infections are identified and treated and that hearing is routinely tested by their doctors or health care providers.

Guidance And Discipline

From Discipline To Abuse

Cooperative, well-behaved and responsible children get that way because they are taught and guided by their parents. In *Baby's First Wish*, we have described the best ways we know to guide children and none of these ways involve physical punishment. We believe, and studies show, that physical punishment does not teach children well; it usually hurts the child more than it teaches.

Physical punishment, such as pinching, hitting, spanking, or shaking, can seriously hurt a child. This is abuse. Depriving a child of food or care, or keeping a child tied up or locked in a room is, of course, abuse. But you can also abuse a child with words. Threats of physical or other feared punishment are abuse. It is abusive to threaten that scary things will happen to the child if he doesn't behave—that the bogeyman will take him, that loved ones will stop loving him or leave him or die. It is abusive to make a child believe he is unloved, stupid, wicked, or hopeless.

Our suggestions on discipline are written to help parents learn to discipline effectively without abuse. Our stress management suggestions are to help parents control their tensions so that they do not take out their anger and frustration on their children. Children who are abused or unfairly or harmfully punished are more likely to become uncooperative than children who are guided and disciplined more gently and patiently.

Some Guidance Ideas

A Reminder

- Have a few simple rules, explain them to your child, and stick to them.
 - Try to keep calm when disciplining your child.
 - Praise your child's good behavior.
 - Tell your child what to do, rather than what not to do.
 - Give your child reasonable, limited choices.
 - Prepare your child for new situations.
 - Save your "nos" for times when your child is in personal danger or is in danger of hurting other people or damaging property.
 - Change the situation whenever possible rather than trying to change your child's behavior.
 - Remember, discipline is teaching; it's one way to show love to your child.
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Nutrition

A Daily Food Guide



Use this daily food guide to plan a balanced day's diet for your toddler:

Fruits 2-4 servings,

Vegetables 3-5 servings

One of the servings of fruits and vegetables should be high in vitamin C, such as oranges, grapefruit, tomato or green pepper. At least every other day, give your child one serving of a food high in vitamin A, such as broccoli, sweet potatoes, carrots, greens, cantaloupe, winter squash, or pumpkin.

Examples of 1 serving are:

1/3 cup orange juice

1/4 baked potato

1/4 cup green beans

1/4 apple

1/4 cup cooked carrots

1/4 of a canned peach

1/2 cup lettuce and tomato salad

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans, or

Peanut Butter 2-3 servings

Examples of 1 serving are:

1 hard-cooked egg

2 ounces of hamburger

1/2 cup beans

1 small chicken leg

2 tablespoons peanut butter

Milk or Cheese 4 servings

Some milk may be in cream soups, custard, pudding, flan, ice cream, or other foods.

Examples of 1 serving are:

1 slice of cheese

1/2 - 3/4 cup milk

1/2 cup yogurt

3/4 cup cocoa

Bread, Tortillas, Cereals, Rice, Macaroni, Spaghetti, Grits, Cornbread, Biscuits 6-11 servings

These are made from whole grain or enriched flour or enriched meal.

Examples of 1 serving are:

1/4 - 1/3 cup oatmeal

1/2 slice bread

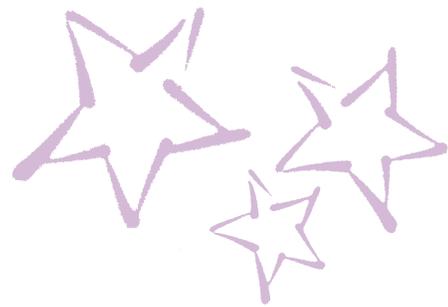
1 piece cornbread

1/4 - 1/2 cup dry cereal

1 pancake

1/2 tortilla

1/4 cup rice



Are You Listening?

Are you really listening to your toddler? Sometimes young children feel that instead of listening to them, their parents mostly interrupt, instruct, advise, or criticize. They are often right! This can lead to misunderstanding, stress, and anger. Children whose parents don't listen well can feel that they and their ideas are not very important. Check yourself: Do you talk back before you listen? If so, try active listening.

Active listening is trying hard to hear and understand the other person without interrupting, jumping to conclusions, judging, preaching, or getting mad. It means showing respect for the other person and her ideas, even if you don't agree with them. It means waiting until others have finished before responding.

Listening is a vital part of the good communication you want to have with your child. It takes patience and practice to develop good listening skills, but try it. You may find your conversations with your child easier and less stressful. As an extra reward, your child may imitate your good example and start listening more to what you have to say.

Homemade Toys That Teach

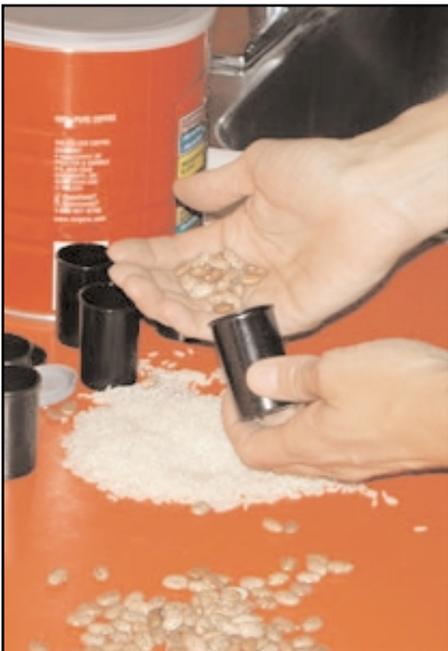
Sound Match

Why?

Sound match is an entertaining learning game toddlers can play with you or with an older friend. The game helps toddlers learn to match sounds and tell one sound from another. It requires only simple, no-cost supplies, and it is very easy to make.

Materials

- Six plastic 35mm film containers (You can get these free at stores that develop film or you can save them yourself if you are a photographer.)
- Fillings to make the containers rattle, such as rice, coffee grounds, beans, small pebbles, etc.



Making The Toy

Partly fill two containers with something hard that rattles like beans. Be sure each container sounds like the other when you shake it. Then partly fill two more containers with grains of rice. Check to see that they sound the same. Partly fill the last two containers with coffee grounds or some other filler. Coffee grounds will make a soft, swishy sound. When you shake the three kinds of containers you will discover that each pair sounds different.

Tape the tops of the containers closed to keep your toddler from swallowing the fillings.

Playing

Sit down with your toddler and give him three of the film cans, one with each kind of filling. Keep the other three for yourself. Take turns rattling one of the containers, having the other person find the matching sound in their own set.

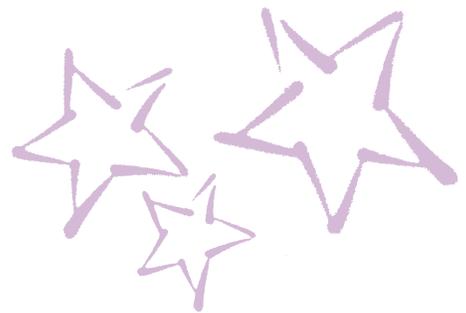
Another way to play this game is to put all six film containers between you. Pick them up one at a time and shake them. Encourage your toddler to do the same.

Together, pick up and shake, pick up and shake until you have a sound match for each. Point out that these are the same sounds. Point out when the sounds are different. Your child will want to see what it is inside the containers making the noise.



The two of you can think of other sound-making items to put into pairs of containers. In this way, you can work together in changing and enjoying this simple toy.

Remember, do not put anything in the containers that will hurt your toddler. Be sure to tape on the tops so that they cannot be removed by your child.



Big Bag Blocks

Bag blocks can be used for jumping on, tossing, or hiding under. They can make houses, mountains, and castles.

To make each block, crumple sheets of newspaper and stuff them into a bag. Large grocery bags make the best blocks. Keep stuffing until the bag is nearly full. Then fold over the bottom end and tape it shut securely. Make at least 10 bag blocks—the more the better!



Games For Growing

Silly Questions

Purpose Of The Game

To encourage your child's imagination and use of words.

How To Play

Ask your child to imagine what would happen if something silly occurred, such as what would happen if I put on my glasses upside down, or candy bars grew on trees, or people walked on their hands instead of their feet? Let your child make up some silly questions for you, too. Have fun guessing and acting out these

silly questions. You might be pleased and surprised with your child's imagination.

What Is It?

Purpose Of The Game

To help your child observe and understand the things in her world.

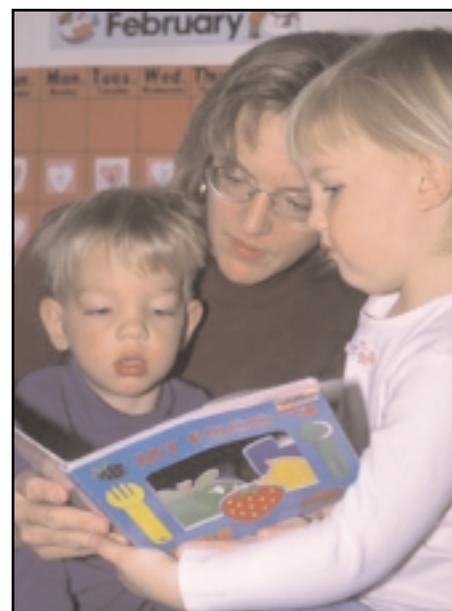
How To Play

Sit in a familiar room with your child, look around the room and pick out something you can

describe in two ways—what it looks like and what it does. Then giving these two descriptions, ask your child to guess what you are thinking of. For example, I can see something that is red and rolls along the floor, or I can see something that is white and you drink from, or I see something that is tall and you sit on. Remember to let your child have a turn at asking you to guess, too.

What We Know

Talking To Children And Talking With Children



The way parents talk to their child influences their child's development. Some mothers talk almost always *to* children. Talking to a child means using a lot of "directions," such as "dos" (Let's take the dishes off the table now), "don'ts" (Don't pull the cat's tail), and refusals (Not now). It also includes a lot of teaching, mainly in providing new knowledge (The cat is black), and asking questions (What shape is the block?).

Talking *to* children is OK; all good parents talk *to* their children some. Studies show, however, that

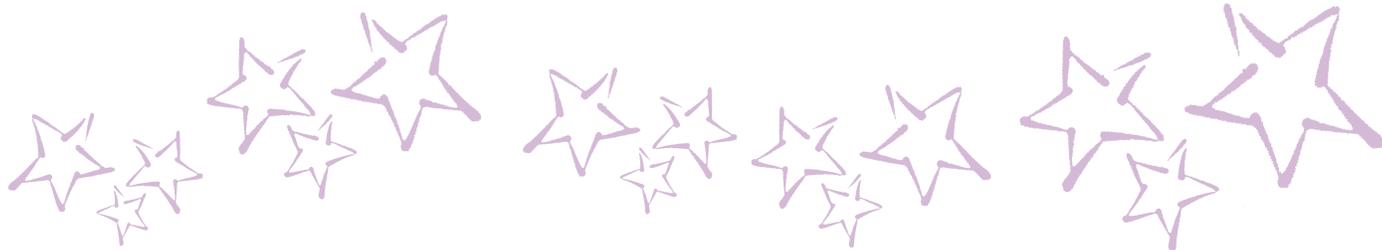
when parents almost always talk *to* and not *with* their child, the child's language learning is limited.

Parents talk *with* their child when they match their talking to the child's questions and activities. This may mean staying on the topic the child has started or starting a new topic based on what appears to be the child's interests.

In talking *with* the child, you show you care about your child's interests, experiences, and needs, and that you want to learn more about them. You have a conversation in which each of you

talks and listens to the other. Such comments as "What do you want to do with that box?" "Tell me about your visit to Grandma's," and "You seem to be sleepy" may start these kinds of conversations.

Talking *with* children and listening to them increases their confidence and helps them feel important. It means that they have something to say that is worth being listened to and responded to. As children get more pleasure from their talking, they want to work harder at learning to do it well.



Looking Ahead

Your child is 3 years old—no longer a toddler. You may wonder what's ahead and what you can do to help your child grow up healthy, happy and responsible. Your toddler is off to a good start already.

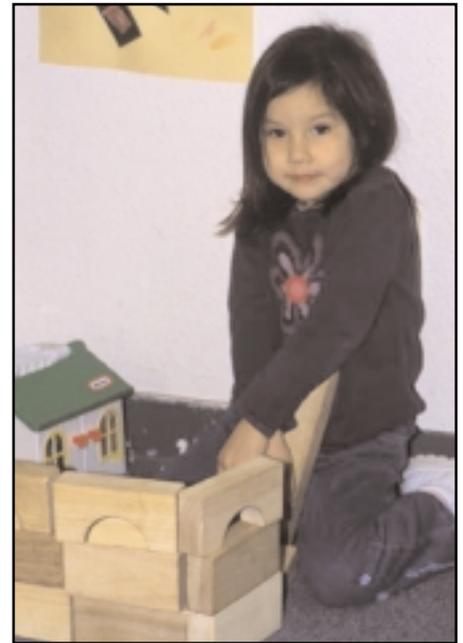
During these first 3 years, you have helped your child feel important and successful. You have helped him learn about himself and his surroundings, and you have taught him to trust, respect, and enjoy others.

This foundation has prepared him to become the kind of person you want him to become. The good relationship you have will help you continue to support and guide him, as he faces future deci-

sions about school, friends, drugs, sex, and other important issues.

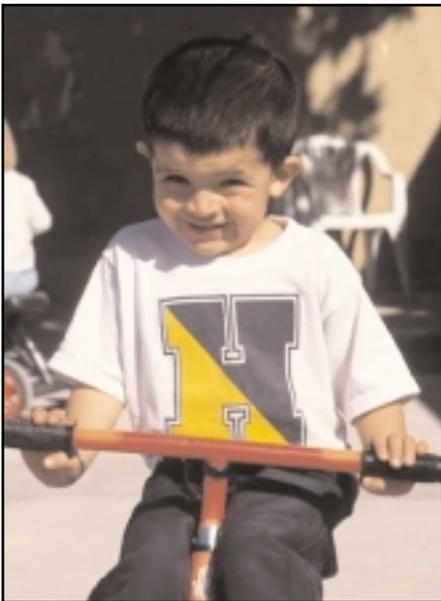
Building your child's self-esteem now will help him resist the negative pressures of other teens later on. Keeping the lines of communication open now will help him feel he can talk to you about difficult and confusing questions in the years to come. Encouraging your child's enjoyment of language and learning will help him succeed in school.

Parenthood is a rich, exciting opportunity for you to grow with your child. Trust yourself. You can offer your child the support, values, and skills to handle whatever comes along in the future.



Toddler Talk

Help Me Learn In Lots Of Different Ways



- Share your interests with me. If you enjoy fishing, include me. If you like cooking or gardening, I'd like to help.
- Give me simple instructions, such as, "Please put the paper in the trash can." After I do it, let me know how pleased you are by saying, "Thank you." I'll learn to be polite if you are.
- Show me how to take things apart and put them together. Give me an old coffee percolator or pieces of pipe with connecting joints to screw on and off. These things will keep me busy for quite a while.
- Make or buy me a small backpack. I'll wear it around the house and on walks. I will put my own special treasures in it. Wearing it makes me feel very grown up.
- Let me choose magazine pictures and help me make my own picture book. Let me change the pictures from time to time. I will like looking at the book and talking about the pictures.

Baby's First Wish

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Another 4-H Prevention Program

Order Alert: *Baby's First Wish* is an educational program from NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service. This newsletter series is designed for parents with young children. To order the series, contact your county Extension office. 2002

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