



Toddler Time: New Joys, New Challenges

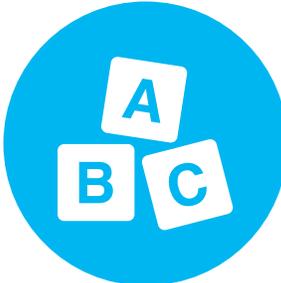
Your guide to minimizing the stress and maximizing the joy.



checklists



tips



to-dos

more

Fantastic Firsts:

Mighty Milestones for Super (OK, Normal) Kids



These Fantastic Firsts aren't what you're expecting. Sure, walking, talking, potty-training, and the other usual milestones are impressive. But developmental experts really get excited about these lesser-known gems that display even more complex leaps in development:



First "Conversation" (3-6 months)

Those lovely back-and-forth exchanges of "oohs," "aahs," and sweet glances prove that your baby—even at this tender, young age—is working hard to learn to communicate with you.



First Point (8-10 months)

This simple gesture proves your baby is cognitively more advanced than any other species on the planet. Humans are the only species that try to show others something interesting from a distance. The Powerful Point is also the precursor to abstract thinking and communication.



First "No" (1-2 years)

Saying "no" proves your baby knows that he's his own person—separate from his parents—and is comfortable asserting his opinions. Spunky, self-confident toddlers tackle learning wholeheartedly, and bounce back more easily from disappointments and frustrations. Say "yes" to "no".



First Dramatic Play (18-20 months)

It's not just a tea party. Your toddler is using imagination, memory, and persistence to learn language, social skills, problem-solving, and self-control. Each playacted scene is a masterful display of creativity, storytelling, memory, and emotional regulation. Bravo!



First Empathy (3-4 years)

First signs of empathy peek out even earlier, but by 3 or 4 your toddler is showing a full-fledged appreciation of the feelings of others. Understanding someone else's perspective requires your little guy to set aside his own.



Toddler Transitions: Growing Out of Babyish Behaviors



Sometimes, children development can be like a game of push-and-pull. Often children regress only to build up strength to make a huge leap forward. It may take time for your child to develop certain behaviors, let alone transition out of them. Remember, development does not always go in a straight line. The following are some typical transitions that your toddler might experience leading into the preschool years.

Transitional Objects: What Are They?

Transitional objects are a source of comfort and reassurance to a toddler and act as a bridge between dependence and independence. These objects include:



Blankets



Pacifiers



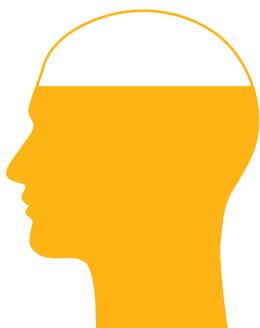
Soft toys



Thumb sucking

What They Are Not

Transitional objects are not a sign of weakness or insecurity, and there's no reason to keep your child from using one. In fact, it may even help your child adjust to independence better.



Big Change:

Transitioning from Diapers to Smarty Pants

90-95% of the brain's capacity is developed by age 3.

By age 3 children will have formed 1 quadrillion connections between neurons.

A 3-year-old toddler's brain is 2x as active as an adult's.

Source: <http://blogs.mydevstaging.com/blogs/goodyblog/files/2012/09/Rasmussen-EarlyChildhoodDevelopment2.jpg>



Sources of Comfort or Cause for Concern: Blankies, Pacifiers & Thumb Sucking

They are the most common (and often the most cursed) transitional objects in the toddler's repertoire. But before you can wean your child off of them, you need to put them in perspective.



The Blankie

Many children clutch a well-loved blanket, soft toy or other transitional object to get through the first few years of life.

- Experts agree that "blankies" are perfectly okay.
- Many pediatricians praise the use of blankies or favorite stuffed animals to help children cope.
- If necessary, let your child sleep with the transitional item to help him or her deal with separation anxiety or fears of being in the dark.

When is a Blankie a Bad Thing?

If your child becomes so attached to his or her security blanket that it prevents him or her from fully connecting with other children, your child could be stressed or struggling with other problems. Consider asking your pediatrician for help assessing the situation.

When Do Kids Grow of It?

By the time a child reaches age five or six, he or she will most likely have stuffed their blanket or toy in a closet.

Pacifiers and Thumb Sucking

Pacifiers and thumb sucking usually linger until age three. Because they can interfere with your child's growing mouth and communication skills, many experts discourage their use past age four.

To help wean your child off the pacifier and thumb:

- Limit its use, for example, to only at night or only in your arms.
- Ask your child to help set up a plan (perhaps let your child decide that he or she will limit sucking to only certain times of the day).
- Emphasize how grown-up your child is becoming.
- Don't put pressure on your child; nagging will just make the situation worse.
- Be ready to supply lots of comfort and distractions as your child learns to live without his or her comfort object.
- If your child is approaching preschool age and still clings to his or her sucking object, check with your dentist to determine if it is harming your child's oral development.



Messy Milestones:

Triumphing Over Toilet Training & Bedwetting

Toilet training and bedwetting are the twin terrors of parents who are trying to wean their toddlers from baby habits. Below are tips to help you keep cool on the road to keeping your toddler clean and dry.



Time to Go – or No?

- While many kids show interest in potty-training by age 2, others might not be ready until age 2 1/2 or even older.
- Don't be in a rush. Starting potty-training too early may make the process longer and more drawn out.
- Bear in mind that a toddler who refuses to potty-train one day might be more receptive to the idea in a few months.
- Timing and patience are the keys to success.

Manning the Poop Deck

- 1. Get situated:** Place a potty chair in the bathroom and encourage your child to sit on the potty chair — with or without a diaper.
- 2. Show how it works:** Have your child watch as you show the purpose of a potty chair by emptying a dirty diaper into it.
- 3. Bring reading material:** Read a potty-training book or give your child a toy to use while sitting on the potty chair or toilet.
- 4. Be a cheerleader:** Even if your child simply sits there, offer praise for trying — and remind your child that he or she can try again later.
- 5. Quick – it's happening!** As soon as you notice your toddler might need the toilet, get him or her in the bathroom pronto.
- 6. A royal flush:** When it's time to flush, let your prince or princess do the honors — and be sure to offer praise.



Did You Know?

Average age for potty-training in the 1940s:
18 months:

Average age today:
39 months (boys) and 35 months (girls)

The culprit:
The introduction of the disposable diaper, which made it easier for toddlers to stay in diapers longer.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/potty-training-seven-surprising-facts>

Messy Milestones:

Triumphing Over Toilet Training & Bedwetting



Getting the Better of Bedwetting

So let's say your toddler is finally, triumphantly toilet trained, but still wetting the bed at night.

- Don't be upset if he or she needs diapers at night—even through the age of five.
- Some children do not stay dry at night until age seven.
- Urinating at night is beyond a child's control: You can't teach a child to wake up to the signals from his or her own bladder.
- As your child grows, his or her bladder will become big enough to hold the urine for the whole night.

When to Call Your Pediatrician

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends talking to your child's doctor if your child still wets his or her bed at age five.
- At that stage, a doctor will probably check for signs of a bladder infection or ask questions about any family history of bedwetting.
- If there are any indications of something other than a slow development of the bladder, the doctor might recommend additional tests.
- Also consider other reasons such as life changes that may be causing your child stress and be sure to share these with the pediatrician.



Did You Know ?

22% of all children are still wetting the bed at night at **age 3**

10% of all children are still wetting the bed at night at **age 7**

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/potty-training-seven-surprising-facts>

Food Fight: Getting Your Toddler to Eat Healthy

Family meals shouldn't be a battle of wills; they should be opportunities to bond. The following information provides some healthy food for thought.

The Challenge

To serve foods that meet your kids' nutritional needs and are also tasty enough for children to actually eat and enjoy. Breastfeeding and formula provide infants with vital nutrients, which dwindle when children begin eating solid food.

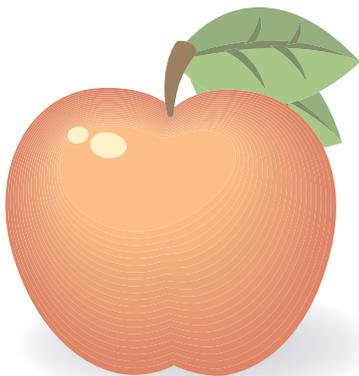
The Need

Toddlers only average 25 percent of the recommended daily intake of 700 to 100 milligrams of DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid beneficial to brain development and cognition.

The Solution

Use this simple checklist as a guidepost to help you improve your toddler's nutrition.

- Find DHA-rich foods, such as fish, pasta or milk, that work for your family.
- Dig into dairy: toddlers should consume two to three daily dairy sources, including milk, yogurt and cheese, for strong bones, muscles and teeth.
- Pile on the protein: To keep things interesting, add soy products and beans to the mix of eggs, fish and meat.
- Feed the need for healthy habits: Proper routines can lead to a lifetime of nutrition success.
- Mix it up: Introduce a variety of food to children beyond standard favorites. Options can lead to greater satisfaction, fewer complaints, and better nutrition.



Healthy, Wealthy & Wise: Kids with Good Nutrition

- **Are 10x more likely to overcome** the most life-threatening childhood diseases.
- **Complete 4.6 more grades** of school.
- **Earn 21% more** in wages as adults.

Sources:
<http://www.hmb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/3.6.2014-post-full-infographic-photo-.jpg>
<http://www.parenting.com/toddler/feeding-nutrition/rethink-toddler-nutrition>

A Developing Story: Covering the News of Your **Toddler's Growth**

News Flash: Your toddler will be undergoing some big changes in the months ahead. Below are a few of the stories that are about to break (along with a few toys and fragile items!).

12 Months



- Your toddler is on the go
- Lots of crawling
- May even take a step or two
- Shows affection
- Enjoys playing games

18 Months



- Probably walking independently
- Uses around six or seven words consistently
- May even combine words into a phrase
- May try to be more independent with feeding and dressing

24 Months



- Much steadier on the feet
- Rarely falls when moving fast
- Starts to use a fork and spoon
- Begins to be assertive and test boundaries

36 Months



- Jumps without losing balance
- Might be able to cut with scissors
- Can speak at least 1,000 words and understands more
- Can compare the height, size and weight of objects

Healthy Words of Advice: What Research Shows

- Each additional meal or snack consumed as part of a healthy diet can help your child speak 8 more words.
- Each additional hour of reading per week can contribute to your child speaking 3 more words.

Sources:

<http://growingupmilkinfo.com/child-development/>
<http://infographicsmania.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/There-Grows-My-Baby-Milestone-Guide-Infographic-infographicsmania.jpg>
<http://static.abbottnutrition.com/cms/abbottchild.com.sg/IMAGES/Abbott-ChildDevelopmentInfographic.JPG>



Toddler Care Options: *Finding What Works for You*

It is hard to think of anything more important than finding the right care for your child. With all the emotional and financial considerations involved, you need to weigh your options as carefully as possible. The following information will help put you at ease as you explore the solution that works best for you and your family.

Did You Know?

Source: <http://www.babycenter.com/toddler-childcare>

- By the age of two, almost a quarter of the 20 million children in the United States under five are cared for by a relative.
- The United States has more than 280,000 regulated home daycares — almost 3x the number of licensed childcare centers.
- Home daycares provide care for 14 percent of the more than 21 million U.S. children under six, making home daycare the third most popular option after center care and relative care.

Baby Sitters

For nervous parents who are leery of entrusting their child to a babysitter, a babysitter search can seem like a difficult and daunting task. But there are many ways to find a qualified person to care for your toddler. Be sure to ask for from your social network, call professional babysitting agencies, and place (and respond to) ads in newspapers and online.

Average Cost

Negotiable depending upon the babysitter and his/her level of experience.

Hourly rate could range up to **\$12 or more**



Daycare Centers

Daycare centers tend to be regulated and offer a structured setting where care is well-supervised. This arrangement can work well for children of any age provided the center is of high quality. Ideally, daycare offers low teacher-to-child ratios and small groups for more personalized attention. Keep this in mind for a balanced perspective when evaluating new facilities that emphasize the latest toys.

Average Cost

\$11,666 per year (\$972 a month), but prices range from \$3,582 to \$18,773 a year (\$300 to \$1,564 monthly) and go as high as \$2,000 a month in cities like Boston and San Francisco.

Source: <http://www.babycenter.com/toddler-childcare>



Toddler Care Options: *Finding What Works for You*

Home Daycare

Also known as family daycare, home daycare is provided in a home instead of a center. It's a convenient way for some parents to make a career out of staying at home and take care of other people's children. Home daycare offers a warm, friendly, homelike environment at less cost than a nanny. Some states, however, have loose licensing requirements.

Average Cost

About **\$7,761 a year** (\$646 a month) for babies and toddlers. Prices start at \$3,582 a year and go up to \$11,940 a year (\$300 to \$995 a month) but in large cities this cost is likely to be higher.



Nanny Care

A nanny provides basic care, including watching, feeding, and bathing your child in your home. The one-on-one attention of a nanny allows for a trusted bond with both parent and child. A good nanny will calm your child's fears, soothe hurts, and nurture mental and physical development.

Average Cost

Anywhere from **\$500 to \$700 a week** (\$2,167 to \$3,033 a month) for full-time care and between about \$400 and \$650 a week (\$1,733 to \$2,817 a month) for part-time hours. Costs could be lower for a live-in situation.

Relative Care

Relative care is simple: A relative — grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin — provides care in your home or theirs. This could be an ideal situation provided the relative has a close connection to your child and is trustworthy and attentive. While your relative may not be a childcare professional, he/she could provide a higher level of care based on a strong family attachment.

Average Cost

Zero. But you might want to find some type of compensation other than money, such as gift certificates, a thank-you card and flowers every few weeks.



Source: <http://www.babycenter.com/toddler-childcare>