

Norman Pediatric Associates
Parent Handout 15 Month Visit

Profile: The 15 – 18 month-old walks without assistance with a wide stance and outstretched arms. He/she can climb stairs with assistance. His/her grasp is very refined. He/she enjoys throwing, rolling, pushing and pulling toys. He/she is eager to explore his/her environment. Your child will look for hidden objects in the last place seen. He/she will begin to explore through trial and error. He/she is learning cause and effect relationships and will repeat activities he/she likes. Your child will look to parents to assist him/her in helping with solving their problems. Your child will begin to add gestures to his/her speech. He/she enjoys watching and imitating activities. Describe your child's gestures with words. Use simple, clear phrases to talk to your child. When reading, use simple words to talk about the pictures. Try to give choices to your child. Allow your child to choose between 2 good options for food, toys, drinks, or books.

Feeding/Nutrition: The toddler should be completely off the bottle and should be using a cup for all liquid drinks. Whole milk should be limited to 16 - 20 ounces a day, preferably served with meals. Sweet drinks, colas, juices and teas should be avoided. Your child should be receiving three healthy meals per day. Do not give junk food. He/she should be feeding his/herself at this point, even though it may be messy. Make toddlers part of family meal times. Continue to give 400 IU of Vitamin D drops or 0.5 ml of Poly-vi-sol drops daily to your toddler.

Sleep/Bedtime: Make the hour before bed calm and loving. Have a bedtime routine which includes reading a book. Put your child to bed at the same time each night. Early is better. Try to tuck in your child when he/she is drowsy but still awake. Avoid giving enjoyable attention if your child wakes during the night. Use words to reassure and give a blanket or toy to hold for comfort. Do not allow your child to sleep with you at night.

Toys and Activities: Toddlers continue to be avid explorers. He/she will continually experiment to discover how a toy is made and what happens when it is thrown. For these reasons, toys for this stage of childhood should be especially able to withstand hearty play. Climbing, sliding, small jungle gyms, Tykebikes, pull and push toys, hammering toys and nesting and stacking toys are good choices for this age group.

Safety: Learn CPR.

This is a most dangerous age since your child is mobile but has little ability to control behaviors and has poor depth perception. Safety-proof the house, yard, and porches. Toddlers need to be supervised when they are in and near water: this includes buckets, bathtubs, and toilets. Set your hot water heater temperature to lower than 120°F. Use sunscreen with a minimum of SPF 30 and apply 30 minutes before the toddler goes outside to play. Panhandles on the stove should be turned inward. Keep poisonous liquids, cleaners, and medications locked and elevated out of reach. Keep matches, electric lighters, firearms, and alcohol out of reach. Have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your home. Keep child gates up at the top and bottom of stairs. Place guards on windows on second floor and higher. Keep furniture away from windows. The toddler should be kept away from small appliances, fireplaces, space heaters and moving equipment such as lawn mowers, overhead garage doors, as well as driveways and streets. Teach the child to use caution when approaching dogs, especially if the dogs are unknown or eating. Constant attention is necessary. Lower the height of the crib mattress. Injury is the biggest threat to your child's life. You may use bug sprays containing less than 30% DEET to prevent bug bites.

Car: Insist that your toddler remains in the car seat. Continue to use a car seat in the back seat of all vehicles, facing the rear of the car until your child is 2 years of age. Never put your child's seat in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger airbag. Everyone should wear a seat belt in the car.

Smoking: If a member of the family smokes: STOP SMOKING - Ask us for help if you cannot stop smoking. A smoke free environment is important for your child's health. Make your home and car "no smoking zones".

Teeth/Oral Health: The toddler's teeth need to be brushed daily after breakfast and before bed with a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste, a rice-grain size smear. Avoid sharing cups and spoons with your child or cleaning a pacifier in your mouth.

Separation anxiety: Your toddler may become disturbed by your disappearance. It is founded on your child's attachment to the parent and his/her conscious awareness of his/her need for the parent. This behavior can take many forms: crying, touching the mother, waking at night, and always being under foot. The important thing to remember is that this is a normal part of development and with reassurance and a secure relationship, separation will become easier.

Temper tantrums: Temper tantrums (breath holding, screaming, etc.) are very common in children this age. They often occur when children are frustrated, tired, or hungry. These tantrums also occur in children who are testing the limits of their parent's control and need to have these limits clearly defined. It is helpful if parents can determine the cause of the tantrums, as some can be prevented. When the child is having a tantrum it is best to ignore his/her behavior, but be sure he/she is in a safe place when you do so. Punishing the child is not recommended and may result in the tantrums occurring more frequently. Praise the child for good behavior and accomplishment. Limit the need to say "No!" by making your home and yard safe for play. Be patient with messy eating and play. Your child is learning.

Negativism: "No" is used as a means of learning which behaviors are acceptable: parents must demonstrate that acceptable behavior has more power to gain attention and approval than unacceptable behavior. Avoid opportunities for the toddler to use the negative response "no"- do not ask them to make a choice; state what is to be done. Set limits; do not give in to unreasonable requests, maintain cheerful, fun-loving, well organized daily routine. Provide a large, stimulating, safe environment.

Immunizations: The first MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine and the first Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine will be given today. Remember that both of these vaccines can cause rashes in about 5% of children 1 – 3 weeks from now. The rashes are not contagious and last only a few days.

Oklahoma Poison Control:
(405) 271-5454 (OKC area)
1-800-222-1222 (state wide toll free)
Rev. 04-2014