

19-20 Months



IMITATING ...



... CURIOUS

SCRIBBLING..

... CRUISING

Oshkosh - 920-233-6630
Appleton - 920-831-1132
Menasha - 920-739-4226

DEVELOPMENTS

In the next couple months your toddler may . . .

- Use up to 20 to 50 words independently
- Walk up stairs with help
- Build a tower of four cubes
- Name six body parts
- Wash and dry their own hands
- Speak and understand you half of the time
- Combine words
- Kick a large ball on the ground without stepping on it
- Use a spoon or fork

ENCOURAGING ACTIVITIES

- Give your child plastic cups and wooden blocks to stack.
- Most toddlers have an abundance of energy, so give them a chance to release some of that energy. Let them run outside your house, pedal a bike, make a leaf pile and jump in it, pull a wagon, or play in the snow.
- Have your toddler repeat the correct body part names when dressing in the morning or during bath time.
- Count out loud as you help your toddler walk up the stairs.
- Toddlers at this age begin to recognize body parts. Ask your child to point to his nose, mouth, eyes, and ears. Then point to your own and have him name the body parts.

TODDLER HINTS

- It is normal for toddlers at this age to explore and be curious about their bodies. Remember to be patient with your child during this awkward time and to use the correct terms for each body part.
- Toddlers at this age may go through a biting stage. Please relax and do not use the "tough" methods for dealing with a biting child. Please refer to the handout included in this packet for some suggestions.
- Your toddler may try to climb out of his or her crib. Make sure the mattress is at the lowest setting and the rail is always up.
- Children at this age tend to play **ALONGSIDE** each other, usually not interactively.

I am Nineteen to Twenty Months Old

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am beginning to do so many new things that may worry you or even make you feel uncomfortable at times. I might be very curious about all of my body parts. Please tell me the correct name for body parts and try not to use the "cute" names to describe body parts.

You may also notice that I might be biting people. Please don't get too upset with me. In most cases, I am biting because I am overexcited by good feelings and I am unsure how to handle these emotions. I don't mean to hurt anyone. Instead of yelling at me or biting me back PLEASE redirect my behavior as soon as you notice I am biting others.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

At this age, I may begin to have a larger speaking vocabulary. You may notice that I am able to respond verbally with one or two word responses when someone else talks to me. I may also be pointing to familiar objects and saying their names. Please continue to ask me simple questions and name objects that we see together. Remember, I love when you read a book to me.

PLAYING

I am still content playing along side others, including other kids that are my age. A great game that will probably be challenging for me is a shape sorting box. I also enjoy toys that I can take apart and put back together again.

FEEDING

I still enjoy eating a variety of foods, but don't be too surprised if you notice that I only want to eat one type of food for awhile. It's normal for toddlers at my age to have a favorite food. Encourage me to try other foods, but please don't force me to eat something — I will eventually try new foods. Please do not feed me foods that are high in sugar or caffeine — they are unhealthy for me and they add to my energy level.

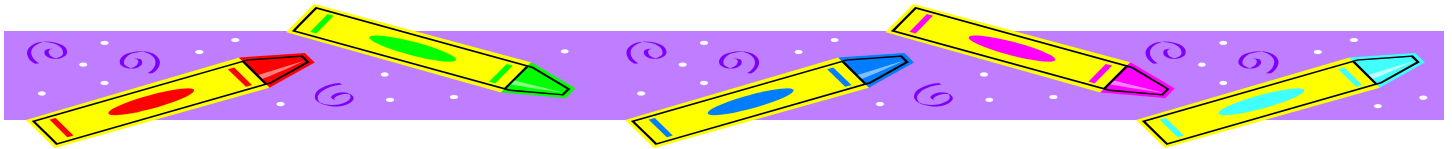
I'm not sure if you realize just how important good nutrition is for me. Lots of smart people have done tests that found that early malnutrition in life will induce permanent changes in brains. So in other words, I need nutritious foods in order for my brain to continue to develop.

SLEEPING

You can expect me to sleep about thirteen hours on the average — this may include a nap here and there. It is important to continue to establish a nighttime routine for me that includes getting me to go to bed at about the same time every night. You may also want to read a book to me before I settle down for the night.

SAFETY

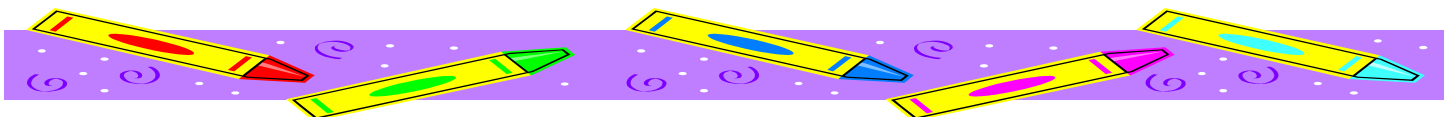
Since I am still very curious, remember I will get into a lot of things that you don't want me to. It is your job to make sure I don't hurt myself while I am exploring my world. Another place to be extra careful is with my crib. You know me, I love to climb and my crib seems like quite the challenge. Please make sure you take all precautions so that I am not able to climb out of my crib and fall. It would definitely prove to be a horrible experience for both of us.



Sharing Books with Your Toddler

Make story time a special part of your everyday activities. Toddlers often enjoy short, simple books. They often ask to hear a story over and over again. Here are some ideas.

- Choose books on topics that will interest your toddler. Does she love trucks and cars? Animals? Books about everyday routines?
- Find sturdy, cardboard books for your toddler to handle. Let her help you turn the pages.
- Young children love to join in, so look for books with flaps, tabs, pop-ups, textures to feel, and questions to answer. You can make your own book by gluing different textured materials onto index cards. Use materials such as sandpaper, cotton, foil, and burlap. Fasten the index cards together to make a book. As you read the book with your child, use one or two words to describe each texture.
- Change your voice to imitate the characters during the storytelling.
- Try to involve her in talking about the story. Read the book and talk about the pictures. Have your child find things on every page.
- Reading to your toddler regularly will boost language development. First word books are ideal for this age group.



Why do Toddlers Bite?

Not all toddlers bite other children. Sometimes a toddler classroom will go for months and months without a biting incident and then suddenly there's a "rash" of biting. Since toddlers cannot analyze and explain their actions to us we can only speculate about their motivations.

- **Teething**

Toddlers are cutting teeth and it hurts. Chewing on something relieves the itch and makes it feel better. Since there are so many other things to chew on, teething is probably not the only reason toddlers bite other children.

- **Sensory Exploration**

Toddlers are very efficient at using all of their senses to learn all about the world. They bite everything — not just their fellow man. The "oral mode", an important style of learning in infancy, is still very strong in toddlers. Both the sense of taste and the sense of touch are rewarded through biting. It feels good to bite! Skin is warm and soft and has a pleasant salty taste. Much to the horror of staff and parents, it is not infrequently the new child who is bitten! Following toddler logic, "Hmmm, I know how she looks...I know how she smells...I know how she feels...I wonder how she tastes and sounds when she screams...."CHOMP!

- **Cause and Effect**

Toddlers are the scientists of early childhood. They are constantly studying cause and effect. With biting, an action produces a predictable response — and what a response! There's a magnificent noise. Everything in the room comes to a stop. The adult in the room is sure to appear instantly. You are likely to get picked up.

- **Mimicking**

This may be why after a long "biteless" period, you suddenly have a bunch of biters. Children learn behaviors from other children, just like cup banging, waving bye-bye, etc ...

- **Self-assertion**

This is probably the most common reason toddlers bite. It is a way to express frustration when they don't yet have the language skills to do so. Biting, a child learns, is the quickest and most efficient way to register a protest.

What Can You Do To Prevent Or Cut Down On Biting?

One of the most effective techniques for changing behaviors in very young children is redirecting the undesirable behavior to the closest possible parallel activity. Considering the reasons listed of why toddlers bite, think of what other activities you could offer that would satisfy the same urges. Hopefully, you can get toddlers involved in these activities before they bite.

- **Teething**

Keep a bowl of carrot sticks around. Tell a child, " If you need to bite something, tell me and I will get you a carrot stick." One teacher keeps small sponges in ziplock bags in the refrigerator for this purpose. Another teacher puts clean wash cloths, which were wet and wrung out, in the freezer. This requires that you stay alert and perceptive of children's teething distress.

- **Sensory Exploration**

Give children plenty of opportunities to release tension through "tactile" experiences. Water play is especially soothing. Playdough also allows children to squeeze out tensions. As for the new child, encourage children to come over to her and see her and touch her while you are right there [not all at once, of course]. It may help.

- **Cause and Effect**

There are lots of ways you can allow children to cause legitimate effects on their environment. Of course, if you perceive the effect they are after to get your attention, that is another matter. The obvious and simplistic answer is to give them more attention. Look at children. Use their names. Smile. Pick them up and waltz with them for no apparent reason.

- **Self-assertion**

Communicating frustration. Here's the biggie! First, take a good critical look at the set up of your room and try to cut down on frustration to toddlers. Avoid crowding children. Make sure your room arrangement is not forcing children all into one area.

Allow for autonomy — give children options and as many choices as possible. Let them play where they want to play. This gives children a feeling of self-control and power while reducing frustration.

"Head them off at the pass." If you see frustration building in a child — grabbing toys or fighting with other children, screaming, whining, tantrums, etc ... redirect the child. Intervene and get them involved in something else.

Do not require children to share too much. Sharing is an unnatural state for toddlers — it is an emerging skill not an established skill.

Work diligently and daily on building children's verbal communication skills — both in giving messages and receiving messages. "Johnny, say 'Stop don't hit me!'" "Tell her with words instead of screams, Jenny. Say, 'I'm using this now.'" "Jason, do you hear Jenny? She said 'Mine.' That means she is using that now. You can have it when she's through. Here's another puzzle you can use."

What Do You Do When Biting Occurs?

Sometimes conditions can be just fine and children will still bite. It just happens too fast for effective intervention. The first thing you have to do, of course, is attend to the victim. Put ice on the area immediately. If there is a break in the skin the area must be thoroughly cleaned immediately. Depending on the severity, it may need attention from a physician.

Now, dealing with the biter. The trouble is, toddlers do not have a sense of the "realness" of other people. They must learn empathy. Parents may think it is okay to bite the child back. Although this may convey the message that biting causes pain, it is a remedy that absolutely CANNOT be condoned. The real message is that it is okay for adults to hurt people but not for children—that is not the message we want to send to our children.

Bring the biter face to face with the victim. Your voice should be firm without yelling. Say something like; "Biting hurts. Lisa is crying because you hurt her very much. Look at her eyes, there are tears coming out. It is not okay to bite."

If you can, get the victim to say, "It hurts. I do not want you to bite me!" Research has shown that it is important to give a strong, emphatic, emotional response. Emphasize how it hurts the victim.

Then remove the biter from the spot to the side of the room, separated from the other children. Say, "You have to sit here for a few minutes until you can play without hurting people." As much as possible, try to ignore the biter now. If the biter is getting a lot of your attention as a result of biting, even negative attention, it may reinforce the behavior. Let the child get up after a reasonable time (not longer than 5 minutes) and rejoin the group. Involve the child in something totally different if possible, something soothing like playdough.



How Toddlers Make Friends

Friendships don't form in toddler-hood; at this age, children aren't capable of sociability in the adult sense. Still looking out largely for themselves, the majority of toddlers don't possess enough empathy for others to work or play harmoniously in pairs or groups. To most toddlers the only person that matters is "me." On top of that, toddlers are still shaky on matters of right and wrong, almost totally devoid of social graces, and basically unable to control an impulse.

Nevertheless, over the next couple of years little antisocial beings can learn to share and cooperate, to be sensitive to feelings of others, to work out disagreements instead of aggressive actions, in short, to become friends. You can help your toddler reach that point by doing the following:

Focus on self-esteem.

Children need to feel good about themselves before they can reach out to others.

Socialize with your child.

The first chance a toddler gets to socialize is with their parents. So remember to model appropriate social behavior. Don't always be the magnanimous parent, giving your child first choice from the crayon box, puzzle, or muffin that you're sharing. And when playing a game, don't always let him or her win. Encourage sharing, sticking to the rules, saying "please" and "thank you." Chat about what you are doing and what you see in a way that elicits your toddler's response and helps develop conversational skills.

Start one-on-one .

It's easiest for most toddlers to socialize with only one other child at a time. So arrange frequent one-on-one play dates. Select children that your toddler seems to get along with best, keep the play dates short, and be sure there is plenty to occupy both children.

Stay away from threes.

For toddlers, three isn't just a crowd, it can be a social nightmare. Too often one of the three in the group will suffer at the hands of the other two.

Don't expect togetherness.

Unless your child has been in a play group for awhile, most interactions with peers will be known as "parallel play" — they'll play side by side in the same space, but not necessarily together. But look closely, you'll see that this parallel play serves as the primitive beginnings of social interaction. While two children may be chatting loudly to themselves, seemingly absorbed in their own play, each is also aware of the other. You can catch them sneaking looks at, observing, imitating, and, often grabbing from their playmate. By the end of the year you can expect to see more actual interaction.

Stay Neutral, and stay nearby.

Since toddlers can be unpredictable, supervision is critical in early socializing. Keep a constant watch on toddlers at play, even if it seems relatively quiet. Be ready to step in if a conflict suddenly breaks out. Simply break up the skirmish calmly, and take them off to a quiet, supervised activity.

Encourage cooperative games.

Block play, ball playing, pretend play, hide-and-seek, tag, joint creative projects (baking, arts and crafts), circle games, and games that require taking turns will give toddlers the experience they need to begin fostering friendships. Of course, en route to cooperation there may be an increase in less desirable social behaviors, such as grabbing, hitting, hair pulling, and pinching.

Don't get personally involved.

Letting your feelings get in the way of your child's social life just isn't fair. If your outgoing and your toddler is shy, don't let your frustration over this make you force socializing on your child or criticize wall-flower behavior.

Enlist support.

If your child is in preschool or daycare, but nevertheless is hesitant to play with others, turn to his or her teacher for help. The teacher can usually encourage a more outgoing child to draw a shy child into the group.

Accept your child's social style.

Each child, like each adult, has a very personal approach to socializing. Some are social butterflies from the start, others are destined to be happier with just one or two close friends at a time. Some rush into every new situation with enthusiasm, others hold back and prefer to watch from the sidelines until they're ready to make a move. Remember too, that some children, *the observers*, never want to seem to make the move at all. And that's okay.

Take note of potential problems.

Annie may want to make friends, but her aggressiveness gets in her way. Jamie may want friends, too, but his shyness is the obstacle he has to overcome. It makes sense to help children deal with issues as aggressive behavior and shyness before they cramp his or her socializing style.

Offer plenty of opportunities for practice.

Children who have lots of early exposure to other children — in a large family, in a play group, on their block, in day care — tend to socialize sooner. If your toddler hasn't yet had such an experience, consider joining or forming a play group, or at least making frequent trips to the local playground in addition to arranging single play dates.

But apply no pressure.

Parental pressure to socialize at an early age doesn't usually help toddlers win friends and influence people. In fact, given the contrary nature of this age group, it could make them more antisocial. Given plenty of time and space and your toddler will ultimately discover that child's play is, in fact, fun.



Coping With Toddler Fears



Toddler fears can not only make life miserable for all concerned, but if they get out of hand, they can be crippling to a child's growth and development. To help your toddler deal with fears:

- ◆ Acknowledge that the fears are real. They may be irrational, but they are — like adult fears — real. Though ignoring many other kinds of unwanted behaviors may help banish them, ignoring fear isn't likely to help. In fact, pretending a fear doesn't exist often intensifies it and/or makes it the basis of a lot of other fears.
- ◆ Don't force your toddler to confront them head-on either. Forcing a toddler who is afraid of dogs to pet the neighbors, dunking a toddler afraid of water into a swimming pool, or insisting that a toddler who is afraid of monsters check under the bed and in the closets, could turn a fear into a phobia. Admonishing, "be brave" or "don't be a baby" is also bad medicine. Instead combine sensitive support and understanding with gradual exposure.
- ◆ Recognize your toddler's disadvantage in fighting fear. As adults, we can often get around our fears — we can avoid confronting a fear of flying by taking a train or a fear of heights by staying off escalators. Toddlers, less able to control their environment, aren't always able to keep their fears at bay.
- ◆ Let your toddler know that everyone has fears. That even grown-ups like Mommy and Daddy are sometimes afraid. It always helps to know that you're not the only one.
- ◆ ... but try your best to control yours. If your toddler sees that you take charge of your fears calmly, he or she may learn to do likewise, based on your model.
- ◆ Don't laugh at or tease your otherwise fearful toddler. Even small people take their fears very seriously. While a little playful teasing may work wonders on a toddler who stubbornly won't get dressed for daycare, teasing a toddler who's afraid of dogs by getting on all fours and barking at them will only feed the terror.
- ◆ Boost, don't bash, your child's ego. Self-confidence can go a long way in overcoming fear. So praise every bit of progress your toddler makes — no matter how small — and avoid criticizing steps taken backwards — no matter how big. Never let your toddler feel that you love or respect him or her any less because of the fear.
- ◆ Let your toddler lean on you. Fearful toddlers need a strong, supportive hand to hold — one that helps to compensate for the confidence they sometimes lack.
- ◆ ... but not too much. Beware of letting support foster overdependence. Overprotecting may reinforce the fearful toddler's belief that there really *is* something to fear.
- ◆ Make sure you're not responsible for a fear. Sometimes, fear in a child is triggered by repeated parental warnings, actions, or threats. And while overly harsh discipline can increase fearfulness, so can an absence of discipline.
- ◆ A parent should be wary of introducing a fear when none exist. For example, saying to your toddler, "Don't be afraid," when a cat approaches you is more likely to arouse than dispel fear.

Your child may be afraid of monsters, especially at bedtime

Do you remember those monsters that lurked in your closet, the shadows on the wall, and those sounds that seemed only to exist at bedtime? Your toddler is nearing an age when he may begin to be frightened by similar spooks. Here are ways to help reduce his fears:

- » Limit your child's exposure to scary movies and books.
- » Use a dim nightlight in your child's room or let him keep a flashlight by his bed.
- » Play soft music to mask any of your house's creaks.
- » Let your child use "monster mist" to scare away scary closet dwellers. Simply apply a "monster mist" label on an ordinary spray bottle and fill it with some water.

Above all else, always be available to offer a hug and calm him when he is afraid.



What Every Toddler Needs to Thrive



♥ Show your Love

Children need love to live. Your emotional caring and support give your child a secure base from which to explore the world. Love, attention, and affection in the first years of life have a direct and measurable impact on a child's physical, mental, and emotional growth.

How do you show your love? Hug, touch, smile, encourage, listen to, and play with your child whenever you can. It's also important to respond to your child's needs for comfort and attention. It's impossible to spoil a child with love. Being there for your child when he's upset helps you build trust and a strong emotional bond.

♥ Care for your child's basic needs

For your child to be able to devote his energy to learning and growing, he has to be well fed. He also needs to be healthy, well rested, and comfortable.

To keep your child healthy, take him in for regular checkups, keep his immunizations up to date, and help him get plenty of sleep.

♥ Talk to your child

Research shows that children whose parents spoke to them extensively as young children have significantly higher IQs and richer vocabularies than kids who didn't receive as much verbal stimulation.

If you don't know what to say or your child's too young to carry on a conversation, just describe what you're doing: "Mommy is putting warm water in the tub so you can get cleaned up." Try to avoid baby talk. Your child can develop good language skills only if you speak to him correctly.

♥ Read to your child

Next to talking, reading out loud is one of the most important things you can do to help build your child's vocabulary, stimulate his imagination, and improve his language skills. It also gives you an opportunity to cuddle and socialize.

♥ Stimulate his senses

For your child to learn about people, places, and things, he needs to be exposed to them. Every new interaction gives him information about the world and his place in it.

You don't need to engage all his sense at once. Children can become over stimulated. Just let your child play with lots of different toys and objects. Choose things with a variety of shapes, colors, textures, sounds, and weights. Play music and interactive games such as peek-a-boo and pattycake, go on walks and shopping trips together, and let your child meet new people. Even the simplest daily activities will stimulate his brain development.

It's also important to give your child room to roam. Toddlers need space to crawl, walk, and run to develop strong muscles, good balance, and coordination. They also benefit from safe places where they can explore their surroundings without hearing "No" or "Don't touch" from you. The easiest way to do this is

is to childproof your home. Keep dangerous objects out of your child's reach and safe one's accessible. For instance, in the kitchen, put childproof locks on all the cabinets except for one. Fill that cabinet with plastic bowls, measuring cups, wooden spoons, and pots and pans that your toddler can play with safely.

♥ Encourage new challenges

It's important not to frustrate your child with toys and activities that are way beyond his abilities, but a little struggling goes a long way to self-improvement. When an activity doesn't come easy for your toddler, he has to figure out a new way to accomplish that task. That type of problem-solving is the stuff that better brains are made of. If he's attempting to open a box, for example, resist the urge to help him. Let him try first. If he continues to struggle, show him how it's done, but then give back the closed box so he can make another attempt on his own.

♥ Take care of yourself

Parents who are depressed or upset are often unable to respond swiftly and sensitively to their child's needs. If your feeling blue, find ways to divide the household and parenting responsibilities with your partner; if you're a single parent, surround yourself with people that can offer you help and support. And don't forget to treat yourself to some time alone once in awhile. Being a parent — especially an involved and active one — is tiring, and you need time to re-energize.

♥ Find good child care

If you work and aren't able to care for your child during the day, a quality childcare provider is essential to your toddlers healthy development. You need to find someone who can do all the things mentioned above when your not around. Whether you want a nanny, relative, or daycare center, it's important to find someone who is experienced, caring, and reputable. A genuine love for children and the energy to help them thrive should also be on your wish list.





Pretend Play/Cuddle Time



Does your toddler love to try on your shoes? Does he attempt to put on your coat, hat, or eyeglasses? By stepping, literally, into your shoes, he's showing you, and himself, that he's aware that he's growing bigger and that he wants to be like you. You may also notice him pretend playing with stuffed animals and dolls. He'll take over the "parenting" role by feeding his stuffed monkey a "banana" (which is really a yellow wooden block) or by tucking the animal under a blanket and singing it a lullaby. He may kiss the monkey's boo-boo and want to put a bandage on it. Pretend play like this is a great example of imitation, and a sign that your child is learning to empathize with others.

Many toddlers are very affectionate. Yours probably likes to sit on your lap and cuddle because he knows it's a time when he has your undivided attention — something he loves. He continues to want to help you with household chores, everything from folding the laundry and unpacking groceries to sweeping the kitchen floor. Of course he really wants to do these "grown-up" things without your help, even though odds are he can't yet. It may slow you down a little, but it's worth the time to find safe ways to assist you.

A Helping Hand, Learning how things work

Whatever you're doing, your child probably wants to do it right alongside you, especially if the job seems important. Brushing teeth, vacuuming, making beds, cooking and so on are wonderful learning experiences. Your child learns a great deal by imitation.

Her desire to help, as you know, far outweighs her ability. Even if she's not coordinated enough to help, she's storing away information for later use. But the more you insist that you don't need her assistance, the more she'll demand, "Me do it!" So your challenge is to find ways to let her in on the act.

If your child wants to help around the house, come up with some simple tasks she can do. When you're setting the dinner table, ask her to put a spoon on each placemat or have her set her own place with a plastic plate and napkin. Let your toddler toss dirty clothes and dump the scoop of laundry detergent into the washing machine. Show her how to put dirty spoons into the dishwasher, or stow her plastic plates and cups in a low cupboard so that when you're emptying the dishwasher she can put those things away herself. Listening to and learning to follow directions helps with a toddler's speaking vocabulary.

At this age your toddler is also very curious about how things work. She likes to dismantle toys and put them back together. And "hidden object" games and shape-sorting boxes are still favorites. Puzzles are also entertaining. Give your child toys that challenge her mind and help her learn how things work and go together.

Toddlers don't see the difference between work and play, so you might as well encourage her to help you while she's willing.

Playtime for Your 19 - 20 Month Old



- ❖ Stringing Spools of Thread — Give your toddler some empty spools of thread and a string. Show your child how to string the spools on the string. Make sure you supervise your child during this activity, so that they do not tie the string around a body part.
- ❖ Swinging — Children will enjoy a walk to the park and a ride on a swing. Be sure to tell your child to hang on tight and you should not let your child swing too high.
- ❖ Playing with a Phone — Give your toddler an old telephone or play phone to play with. Your toddler will begin to do a lot of “make-believe” play, which includes talking to imaginary friends on the telephone. Giving your child a play phone for himself is also a great strategy for keeping your toddler busy while you are on the telephone with your friends.
- ❖ Wagon Full of Toys — Give your child a wagon to put her toys in. She will probably enjoy pulling the wagon around the house.
- ❖ Sorting Shapes — Make your own shape sorter to keep your toddler busy. Trace various shapes (like milk carton tops, tennis balls, etc.) on the top of a large shoe box. Cut the shapes out and have your child sort the objects through the correct cut-out shapes.

Energy Outlets

Most toddlers are a bundle of energy. The challenge is to find outlets for that endless energy that are safe, acceptable, and not to wearying for tired parents trying to keep up. When your child is bouncing off the walls, try channeling the energy into one of these activities.

Indoors

- * Punching and kneading bread dough
- * Punching a punching bag or a pillow
- * Drumming on pots
- * Pounding on hammering toys
- * Dancing to lively music
- * Kiddy aerobics
- * Pillow fights
- * Tumbling
- * Jumping up and down

Outdoors

- * Free play: running, jumping, climbing
- * Playground play: swings, slide, jungle gym
- * Ball kicking and throwing
- * Pedaling a trike
- * Splashing in a kiddie pool
- * On rainy days, splashing in a puddle
- * Roller skating (for an older toddler)
- * Pulling weeds in the garden
- * Rolling an oversized ball

