

the magic of everyday **moments**

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you by the
Johnson & Johnson
Pediatric Institute,
L.L.C.
And
ZERO TO THREE®



15-18 months

The Magic of Everyday Moments™: 0-4 Months

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The Magic of Everyday Moments™ campaign is an initiative between ZERO TO THREE and the Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute, L.L.C.



ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit organization of renowned pediatricians, educators, researchers, and other child development experts who specialize in the first years of life.



Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute, L.L.C., is a company solely dedicated to improving maternal and children's healthcare through the advancement of continued learning and research in pediatrics, child development, parenting and maternity care. Through partnerships with leading healthcare professionals, developmental specialists and inter-national organizations, **Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute, L.L.C.**, identifies, develops and implements initiatives and programs that help shape the future of children's health around the world.

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The Magic of Everyday Moments

Loving and Learning Through Daily Activities

If you are like most parents today, your greatest challenge is probably caring for your child while also taking care of yourself and your responsibilities. The competing demands on your time and energy make finding the time to connect with your child no small challenge. But daily activities, such as getting dressed and doing household chores and errands don't need to take time away from bonding with and enjoying your child. In fact, these everyday moments are rich opportunities to encourage your child's development by building her: **self-confidence; social, communication and thinking skills; and her capacity for self-control.** Most of all you build her desire to learn about her world.

The booklets in this series are not intended to be general guides to everything that is happening at each specific age. Instead, they focus on how, through interactions with your baby during everyday moments, you build a strong and close relationship—the foundation of your child's learning and her healthy growth and development.

If your child's development is delayed, you can adapt the information in this booklet to meet your child's individual needs. If you are at all concerned about your child's development, consult your pediatric health care provider.

It's the special interplay between parent and child that makes everyday moments so meaningful. The potential is limitless. The starting point is you.



What's it like for you:

If you're like many parents of young toddlers, you may be feeling both exhilarated and tired, as children this age tend to be very intense—physically and emotionally. Chances are, your toddler is not only walking, but running and climbing as well. So you may be doing a lot more chasing after him just to keep up and keep him safe. If you are a parent who loved the infancy stage—holding, cuddling, and swaddling—a fast and furious toddler might throw you for a loop. Many parents also have some mixed feelings at this age. They may feel joy at seeing their child so capable and independent, and sadness at seeing their “baby” grow up. But rest assured, your child still needs you, just in different ways. He needs you to be a “safe base” to come back to when he ventures out on new explorations. And he needs you to be his coach, helping him master new challenges and cheering him on as he makes new discoveries.

This second year is also often a time of strong emotions—for toddlers and their parents. Toddlers know what they want. However, they don't yet have the skills to carry out all their plans and desires. This can mean lots of frustration and breakdowns—fondly known as tantrums. These tantrums may make you want to crumble too, right at the time when your child needs you to be his rock. Your guidance and boundaries will help him feel confident and safe.



helping hands

When you encourage your child to be a helper, he not only learns new skills, he feels competent and important.

If your toddler could talk:

Let me try, too! I love to do what you do. When you sweep the floor, mow the grass, or make dinner, it might seem boring to you, but it is fascinating to me. I watch and imitate you. I can even follow some very simple directions, like “Put the napkin on the table.” When you let me help, it makes me feel important and capable. It also helps me learn new skills. I love it when you let me put one of the ingredients in the bowl or give me my very own “pint sized” broom or toy-mower. It may take me a couple of tries. I may even make a bigger mess! But, it’s great practice and helps me learn how things work. Tell me I’m doing a good job, and I’ll keep trying

What your toddler is learning:

When you encourage your child to help you, you’re promoting his development in many ways. Just like adults, helping makes children feel valued. It also lets them know they have useful skills. This builds their self-esteem. Helping out also provides endless opportunities for your child to learn new concepts. He learns “cause and effect” when you have him push the washing machine button and he hears the water start. He learns about numbers when you count the toys that he puts back on the shelf. He learns about colors as you describe the fruit he takes from the grocery bag. When you give simple instructions, your child learns new words and how to follow directions. You are his favorite and best role-model. When he imitates you, he learns how the world works. Imitation helps develop his thinking and language skills in the months to come.

What you can do:

- Encourage your toddler’s efforts, “You are doing a good job sweeping. You’re a big help to me.”
- Provide ways for him to help. He can count the washcloths with you or hand you a shirt from the laundry basket.
- Set aside a special, lower cabinet in the kitchen with “safe” objects. This allows him to “work” side by side with you.
- Talk to him about what you are doing. “We have to make the bed. You can hand me the pillows.”

going to appointments

A close-up photograph of a doctor with glasses and a gold watch examining a young child's arm. The doctor is wearing a white lab coat and has a stethoscope around his neck. The child is looking down at their arm. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a medical setting.

When you help your child manage the many services that need to be performed on him to keep him healthy, you help him learn to take good care of himself and how to cope with what can be stressful experiences.

If your toddler could talk:

There are so many people I have to see—doctor, dentist, barber, and more. I may get a little nervous. Sometimes there are too many people and too much noise...or other kids crying. You can help by letting me know where we're going ahead of time, (But not too far in advance—that may confuse me.) Try to schedule my appointments during my best time of day—when I'm not too hungry or tired. In the waiting room we can play with the toys or you can help me name the animals on the wallpaper. This helps me feel comfortable. When it's time for my check-up or hair cut, I may protest because I've just started to have fun, or because I may be a little afraid. Sometimes, I don't want to be touched—including my hair! When they tell me what they are going to do before they do it, I feel safer and more in control. I love it when the doctor lets me listen to her heart and sticks out her tongue! When I get a little older, maybe I'll pretend to be a doctor and give you a check up, too.

What your toddler is learning:

Visits to professionals are a part of our everyday lives. Doctors, dentists, barbers, and even shoe salespeople come in close contact with your child. Depending on her temperament, these visits may be exciting or distressing. You help your child learn to handle fears and challenges by preparing her for these visits and providing the support and comfort she needs. In the coming months, you can use pretend play to help her manage these experiences. Encourage her to play the different roles of patient, doctor, nurse, or parent. Pretend to give a doll a check-up or check her toy alligator's teeth!

What you can do:

- Talk about the different jobs and the tools each person uses – thermometer, toothbrush, “foot-measurer,” and scissors—and how they help us.
- Read books about going to the doctor, dentist, or barber. Let her pretend to be one of these professionals —just make sure all her “tools” are safe.
- Let her see the doctor look in *your* mouth or the barber comb *your* hair so she knows it is okay.
- Comfort your child. Whenever possible, let her sit on your lap. Bring her favorite stuffed animal, doll, or blanket.



Reading Your Child's Cues

What follows is a chart that describes what children are learning at this stage and what you can do to support the development of these new skills. You will see that the age ranges are broad. This is done intentionally because children develop at their own pace and in their own way. Whether a child reaches a milestone earlier or later within the normal timeframe is not significant.

what to expect

between 15 and 18 months:

Again!

Young children learn through repetition. Rolling a ball repeatedly or reading the same book over and over builds brain connections.

- Allow your child to try things over and over or until he tires of it.
- Add a new twist after he's mastered a skill: bounce the ball to him instead of rolling it.
- Routines are important. They are another form of repetition and help him feel in control.

Let Me be Your Baby

Your toddler can do so much more on her own. But, she still needs to know that you will take care of her and be her "safe base."

- Encourage her to try new things. Allow her freedom to discover, giving her the support she needs to feel safe exploring.
- Comfort and reassure her when needed. Allow her to act like a baby. This will make it more likely that she'll choose being a "big kid" more often.

I Want That one!

Your child can communicate better now. He will try to let you know what he wants by using words, facial expressions, gestures, and sounds. Tantrums may begin around this time. They may range from pouting to even breath-holding.

- Give him choices that he can handle and that you can too!
- Help your child learn to manage his feelings when he can't have what he wants. Let him know you understand his disappointment. Try offering alternatives.

I can do it!

Your toddler may be able to follow simple directions.

- Make up games of following directions. "Go get the truck, book, toothbrush, etc." This is great practice in a fun, playful way.
- Let her help you with simple chores. Ask her to put her shirt in the laundry or a healthy snack on the table.

what you can do:

what to expect

between 15 and 18 months:

Talk with Me

Your toddler is learning new words. She's realizing the power words have to let others know what she's thinking and feeling.

- Talk with her —especially during daily routines, like family mealtime. The more you talk, the more words she'll learn.
- Turn off the TV and sing with your child. It's a wonderful way to teach your child new words and ideas.

I'm on the move!

Your toddler may not only be walking, but running. He may even be trying to jump or climb.

- Make time to go outdoors in a grassy area where it is safe to run.
- Provide safe obstacles to crawl under, over, and through when indoors.

In the danger zone

Your toddler's new mobility means she is even better at getting into "off limits" areas.

- Get on her level and see what new areas might need child-proofing.
- Create lots of "yes" places to explore to reduce the "no's" you have to say.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers handy, like poison control.

So many books, so little time

Young children love books and stories. Reading and story-telling are wonderful ways to promote language development. They help your child learn new words and concepts.

- Give her books with photos of children doing familiar things like going to sleep, saying good-bye and hello, and going to the potty.
- Make stories a part of your daily routine such as during bedtime, bath time, and meal time. Encourage her to share her own stories too.

what you can do:



What Your Baby Needs Most

We know that you want to do your best to nurture your baby's healthy development. We also know that many parents are overwhelmed by busy days, and the thought of adding extra activities to boost their child's development may simply be too much.

That is the power of the magic of the everyday moment. What your baby needs most to thrive is you. Nothing else can replace the power of what your child learns as he explores the world and shares his discoveries during everyday moments with you.

We hope this booklet has shown you that the magic of parenting is not in any toy you buy or in the latest product claiming to make your baby smarter. The magic is in your everyday interactions that help your child build the crucial capabilities — such as confidence, curiosity, cooperation, and communication — needed for lifelong learning and success.

**Remember, everyday moments
are rich bonding and learning
opportunities. Enjoy the magic of
these moments with your child.**

*Don't miss the other booklets in
The Magic of Everyday Moments™ series:*



For more information on early childhood development, go to:

Johnson & Johnson
**pediatric
institute**
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National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

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