

## EARLY CHILDHOOD – 15 MONTHS

### Promotion of healthy habits

#### Injury prevention

All toddlers should be in a rear facing car safety seat until they are 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat's manufacturer. The car safety seat must be secured in the back seat and your child must remain securely in it at all times during travel.

Test the hot water heater thermostat to ensure that it is set at less than 120°F. Continue to test the water temperature with your wrist to make sure it is not hot before bathing your child.

Supervise your child constantly and be sure they are always within arm's reach whenever they are in or around water, buckets, the toilet, or the bathtub. Young siblings should not be left alone to supervise (e.g., in the bathtub or in the house). Empty buckets, tubs, or small pools immediately after use.

Ensure that swimming pools have a four-sided fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.

Put sunscreen on your child before they go outside.

Keep your child's environment free of smoke. Keep your home and car nonsmoking zones.

Do not leave heavy objects or containers of hot liquids on tables with tablecloths that your child may pull down.

Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove. Keep your child away from hot stoves, fireplaces, irons, curling irons, and space heaters.

Ensure that electric wires, outlets, and appliances are inaccessible or protected.

Exclude poisons, medications, and toxic household products from the home or keep them in locked cabinets. Have safety caps on all medications.

Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and alcohol out of your child's sight and reach.

Keep the number of the poison control center near the telephone.

Do not give your child plastic bags, latex balloons, or small objects such as marbles.

Never underestimate the ability of a 15-month-old to climb. Some children may climb out of the crib at this age. Ensure that the crib mattress is on the lowest rung.

Continue to use gates at the top and bottom of stairs and safety devices on windows. Supervise your child closely when they are on stairs.

Keep your child away from moving machinery, lawn mowers, overhead garage doors, driveways, and streets.

Ensure that guns, if in the home, are locked up and that ammunition is stored separately. A trigger lock is an additional important precaution.

Ensure that your child is wearing a helmet if riding in a seat on an adult's bicycle. Wear a helmet yourself.

Teach your child to use caution when approaching dogs, especially if the dogs are unknown or eating.

Choose caregivers carefully. Discuss with them their attitudes about and behavior in relation to discipline. Prohibit corporal punishment.

### Nutrition

Encourage your child to eat at family mealtimes and give them 2-3 nutritious snacks per day.

Make mealtimes pleasant and companionable.

Encourage conversation.

Encourage your child to feed themselves.

Let your child experiment with a variety of foods from each food group by touching and mouthing them repeatedly. They may become more aware of and suspicious of new or strange foods, but do not limit the menu to only foods they like.

Offer your child nutritious foods and let him decide what and how much to eat. Children at this age will eat a lot one time, not much the next. "Food jags" (your child will eat only one food item meal after meal) are common.

Anticipate that your child's rate of weight gain will be slower than in their first year.

Give your child drinks in a cup.

Ensure that your child's caregiver feeds them nutritious foods.

Avoid giving your child foods or small toys that may be aspirated or cause choking (e.g., peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs or sausages, carrot sticks, celery sticks, whole grapes, raisins, corn, whole beans, hard candy, large pieces of raw vegetables or fruit, or tough meat).

### Oral health

Brush your child's teeth twice a day with plain water and use a soft toothbrush.

To protect your child's teeth, do not put them to bed with a bottle or prop it in their mouth. If a bottle is given at bedtime, use water only.

Give your child fluoride supplements as recommended by the health professional based on the level of fluoride in your drinking water.

Schedule your child's first dental visit if it has not already occurred.

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### Promotion of social competence

“Stranger anxiety” and separation anxiety are considered to be a normal process of your child’s cognitive development.

Praise your child for good behavior and accomplishments.

Use simple clear words and phrases to promote development and improve communication. Encourage language development by reading books, singing songs, and talking about what they are seeing and doing.

Encourage play, which is a way of learning social behaviors.

Encourage your child’s curiosity, sense of emerging independence, and feeling of competence.

Develop strategies to manage the power struggles that result from your child’s need to control their environment.

To set limits and discipline a child of this age, use distraction, removal of the object or your child from the stimulus, “time out,” structure, and routines. Use discipline as a means of teaching and protecting, not punishing.

Although hitting, biting, and other aggressive behaviors are common, discipline your child so that they learn not to do them.

Continue to reinforce good sleeping habits. Maintain a regular bedtime ritual.

Encourage your child to use a comforting object, such as a stuffed animal or favorite blanket, to learn self-quieting behaviors.

Recognize that toilet training is part of developmentally appropriate learning. Delay toilet training until your child is dry for periods of about two hours, knows the difference between wet and dry, can pull their pants up and down, wants to learn, and can give a signal when they are about to have a bowel movement.

Limit television watching to less than one hour per day of appropriate programs. Watch programs with your child.

### Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

Take some time for yourself and spend some individual time with your partner.

Pick your child up. Cuddle, hold, and talk with them.

Spend some time playing with your child each day. Focus on activities that they express interest in and enjoy.

Listen to and show respect for your child.

Show affection in the family.

Spend some individual time with each child.

Help your child express such feelings as joy, anger, sadness, fear, and frustration.

Create opportunities for each family member to interact with and play with your child every day.

Promote family communication. Play games with your child.

Share meals as a family whenever possible.

Reach agreement with all family members on how to support your child’s emerging independence while maintaining consistent limits

Discuss with your health professional your own preventive and health-promoting practices (e.g., using seat belts, avoiding tobacco, eating properly, exercising and doing breast self-exams or testicular self-exams).

### Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g., WIC), housing or transportation if needed.

Learn about and consider attending parent-toddler play groups.

Learn about and consider attending parent education classes or parent support groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations.

Discuss with your health professional choosing and evaluating child care programs. Discuss the child care arrangements you have made.