

HEALTH builders



Helping Hands

Let your toddler help you in the kitchen. Give him a simple task that is safe, for example, let him help tear up lettuce leaves for a salad, peel the husks off corn, or stir water into pancake mix. As he helps, talk with him about what he is doing. Ask questions about the color of the food, and what it feels like or smells like. Talk about how it is important to eat different kinds of healthy foods. Be sure he helps you in a place that's away from a hot stove, oven or other hot or sharp objects.



Try Something New

Make a “try something new” dinner once a week, or once a month. Take your child grocery shopping with you, and let her pick a vegetable, fruit, or meat that she hasn’t tried before. (You can give her a few things to pick from if you want to limit the choice.) Talk about what you will do with the food. Will you cook it or eat it raw? What color is it and what does it smell like? Why is it good for you? When you are getting it ready to eat, let your child help you wash it, or arrange it on the serving dish or plates.



Make Up a Snack

Let your child experiment with tastes and textures, and create his own healthy snack. For example, offer slices of toast, apples and bananas, along with a small scoop of yogurt and slices of cheese, and see how he combines them. Help your toddler use words to describe the new snack, like crunchy, or sweet, cold or the color that it is. Have fun coming up with a name for the snack, like "Ben's Banana Bites." Share Ben's Banana Bites with other family members!



All About Teeth

Here's a fun way to start teaching your child to take care of his teeth. You will need a child-size toothbrush and you can use child's toothpaste without flouride (but water alone is fine too). First, look together in a mirror at your child's teeth and talk about them. Count the number of teeth on the top of your toddler's mouth. Then count the bottom teeth. What color are his teeth? Are they hard or soft? Look at his tongue. What color is it? Is it hard or soft? Let your child feel a tube of toothpaste with the lid on. What does it feel like? Is it squishy? Hard? Soft? Then put a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush. Help your child brush his teeth, top, bottom, inside, tongue. Let him rinse the toothpaste out with water. End by talking about what you use your teeth for. Start with some silly ideas:

Do I use my teeth to drive a car? No!

**Do I use my teeth to swing on a swing?
No!**

Help your child come up with chewing, talking (say the letter "T" together), and smiling.

A Sunscreen Game

Make a game out of putting sunscreen on your child. First, find a sunscreen that is made for children, and test it on a small area of your child's arm a few days before you plan to use it, to check for any allergic reaction. Stand in front of a mirror where your child can see herself. Put some sunscreen in your palm, and help your child put dots of it on your face and then on hers. Say the words of where you are putting it, your nose, cheeks, ears, and chin. For example:

Let's put sunscreen on Mommy's nose.

(Help her put it on your nose and rub it in.)

Great job. Now let's put some on Crystal's nose!

(Let her look in the mirror and help put it on her nose and rub it in.)

Continue for her face, arms and legs.

Help her so that she doesn't get sunscreen in her eyes.



Washing Hands

Washing hands will help to keep your toddler free from germs that can cause colds and other illness. Help your child wash his hands often – after using the toilet, after eating, coughing or blowing his nose – many times throughout the day. He needs more than a quick rinse with water. Teach him to use soap and warm water and sing the happy birthday song while he scrubs. When the song is done, then he's scrubbed enough to get rid of the germs!





I'm Growing!

Find a place at your house where you can mark your child's height as he grows. It can be a door frame, a wall, the refrigerator – anywhere that you can write directly on the surface, or put up a piece of tape to mark

the spot. Have your child stand with his feet flat on the floor and his back to the wall or door frame. Make a mark where the top of his head is, and put the date and his age next to it on the wall or on the piece of tape marking the spot.

Do this every couple of months.

Your child will love to see how he is growing!



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two year old

Take 10

With your child, practice counting slowly to 10, breathing deeply after each number. Encourage your child to imitate your deep breaths, and do this several times with your toddler during happy play or quiet times. This is a good way to calm and slow down yourself and your child. Practice slow counting and breathing during happy, non-stress times. Then, when you are in a stressful situation with your child (for example, is she is having a tantrum, being aggressive, or crying), see if you can use this method to calm your child. Let your child see you using this approach yourself – she will learn from copying you!



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two year old

Don't Rush Me!

The world we live in is a busy place. Being in a hurry all the time is hard on little children (and adults too!). It can make your toddler anxious, nervous and just plain fussy. When you have a few minutes to yourself, think about your daily activities. When are you most in a hurry? Is it in the morning trying to get kids and yourself ready for the day? Is it when you are trying to get dinner on the table? Then try to think of practical ways that you can change your routine to help keep from being hurried. For example, if getting the children dressed in the morning is always rushed, think about choosing their clothes the night before and laying them out for the next morning.



The No TV Box

Your toddler needs to spend lots of time playing actively to be healthy. Watching a lot of television is not good for your two year old. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children two years and older watch no more than one to two hours of television a day. But sometimes it's just easier to let her watch TV instead of having to think of something else for her to do! Here's a way to help break the TV habit. Make a "No TV" box or plastic jar with your two year old. You can decorate it together and then cut up pieces of paper to go into it. Talk with your child about the fun things she likes to do. It can be things she already does every day like coloring or playing with blocks or puzzles, or it can be something new – visiting a pet store and seeing the animals, going in search of a new park, making a fort with blankets and pillows, going to the library, collecting leaves or rocks or shells. Put all the ideas of things to do on the pieces of paper and put them into the "No TV" box. Next time your child needs a break from TV, you can help her get the special "No TV" box and have an activity all ready!

Notes