



Early Learning Digest

Research-based early childhood development information provided by LifeBalance Solutions



Sponsored by:



August 2016

Subscribe to Early Learning Digest at <http://bit.ly/EarlyLearningD>

On the Move with Safe Exploration

Between the ages of 1 and 3, toddlers are literally scooting away from babyhood in search of new adventures. They're learning to talk, walk and run, and to assert their independence. As a parent, you are focused on keeping your toddler safe. Supervision and safety precautions such as gates and electrical covers are important.

It is important for your child's emotional, social, and physical development to have ample opportunities to safely explore. Exploring gives toddlers a chance to work on important motor skills. Whether it's kicking a ball or climbing stairs, they can persist until they get it right. Not only does this add skills, it boosts their sense of confidence and competence.

So how do you provide safe exploration opportunities for your toddler?

Supervise, but step back. Pay attention to your urges to help. After providing the materials your child needs, fight the urge to over-manage the activity. If your child wants to bang blocks together, don't intervene unless someone might get hurt.

Correct, when necessary. If your child does something dangerous, unhealthy, or destructive, such as walking with pens, eating crayons, or throwing stones, gently instruct her about the proper use of the object. For example, "Chairs are for sitting" or "You can bang the spoon on the pot." Toddlers will push boundaries and ignore your initial request. If gently dissuading them doesn't work, try to distract them with other activities and items.



Remember, it's all about the journey.

Anyone who has tried walking a child to the library or a friend's house knows that the journey is full of distractions and stops. Kids often want to examine everyday items most of us overlook. Bugs, rocks, lawn ornaments, fallen leaves, even parked cars are fascinating to toddlers. Encourage them to touch bark, examine twigs, watch spiders, or look at the colors of lights and shop signs.

As a parent, you might feel impatient to get your child to the activity you've planned. But to kids, this exploration is doing something. With careful supervision, you will encourage and allow the safe exploration your toddler needs for healthy development.

Source: "Safe Exploring for Toddlers," by Mary L. Gavin, MD, <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/exploring.html>, June 2015.

Baby-Proof Furniture for Safety

Every 45 minutes, a child visits the emergency room because of a TV tipping over. It's something that most parents don't even think about. Securing your TV and furniture is an important part of baby-proofing your home. Here is what you need to know to get started:

- Check the stability of the TVs in your home.
- Mount flat-screen TVs to the wall to prevent them from toppling off stands. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to ensure that you have a secure fit.
- If you have a large, heavy, old-style TV, place it on a low, stable piece of furniture.
- Use brackets, braces or wall straps to secure unstable or top-heavy furniture to the wall.
- Install stops on dresser drawers to prevent them from being pulled all the way out. Multiple open drawers can cause the weight to shift, making it easier for the dresser to fall.
- Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers.
- Avoid placing remote controls, food, toys or other items in places where babies might be tempted to climb up or reach for them.

Source: "TV and Furniture Tip-Overs Safety for Babies," *Safe Kids Worldwide*, <http://www.safekids.org/tv>, 2016.



Volume 6, Issue 12



Safety for Preschoolers

As your child becomes more independent and spends more time outside, it is important that you and your child are aware of ways to stay safe. Here are a few tips to protect your child:

- Tell your child why it is important to stay out of traffic. Tell him to not play in the street or run after stray balls.
- Keep your child on the sidewalk when riding a tricycle or bicycle and always have him wear a helmet.
- Check outdoor play equipment. Make sure there are no loose parts or sharp edges.
- Provide your child with safe, age-appropriate play equipment, like balls and plastic bats, but let your preschooler choose what to play.
- Be safe around water. Teach your child to swim, but watch him at all times when he is in or around any body of water. This includes kiddie pools.
- Teach your child how to be safe around strangers.
- Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with harness until he reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat's manufacturer.



Once he outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, start using a booster seat with seat belt placed in the back seat of the vehicle.

Although preschoolers are becoming more independent, supervision is still the best way to prevent major injuries. You provide your child's best protection!

Source: "Preschoolers (3-5 years of age)," Center for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/preschoolers.html>, June 2016.



for Families at

<http://bit.ly/solutions-for-families>

Test Your Knowledge...

- 1) T F It is important for your child's emotional, social, and physical development to have ample opportunities to safely explore.
- 2) T F Preschoolers do not require forward-facing car seats.
- 3) T F Securing TV and furniture is an important part of baby-proofing your home.



If you have concerns about your child's growth and development, please talk to your child's health care provider or call 1-866-693-GROW (4769), to talk to a professional and find out how you can get connected with various resources in Minnesota.



Mom Enough® is an internet-based talk show for parents and caregivers. Mother-daughter co-hosts Marti & Erin Erickson invite you to explore with them the many facets of motherhood in today's world – from confronting the daily joys and struggles of helping kids grow up well, to balancing work and family, to considering the big questions of how society views and values mothers and mothering. Listen each Monday at www.momenough.com.

A learning activity for every day of the year!



Getting Ready for Kindergarten

A Calendar of Learning Activities for 3, 4 and 5-year-olds, order the 2016-17 school year edition at www.KindergartenCalendar.org.