successful in earlier stages of development. Regression is common in toddlers because almost any additional stress hinders their ability to master present developmental tasks. Any threat to their autonomy, such as illness, hospitalization, separation, disruption of established routines, or adjustment to a new sibling, represents a need to revert to earlier forms of behavior, such as increased dependency. This can include refusal to use the potty chair; temper tantrums; demand for the bottle or pacifier; and loss of newly learned motor, language, social, and cognitive skills.

At first, such regression appears acceptable and comfortable for children, but the loss of newly acquired achievements is frightening and threatening because children are aware of their helplessness. Parents become concerned about regressive behavior and frequently force the child to cope with an additional source of stress —the pressure to live up to expected standards. Brazelton (1999) suggests that these predictable times of regression, or **touchpoints**, are an opportunity to prepare parents for the next step in their child's development.

When regression does occur, the best approach is to ignore it while praising existing patterns of appropriate behavior. Regression is a child's way of saying, "I can't cope with this present stress and perfect this skill as well, but I will eventually if given patience and understanding." For this reason, it is advisable not to attempt new areas of learning when an additional crisis is present or expected, such as beginning toilet training shortly before a sibling is born or during a brief period of hospitalization.

Promoting Optimal Health during Toddlerhood

Nutrition

During the period from 12 to 18 months old, the growth rate slows, decreasing the child's need for calories, protein, and fluid. However, the protein (13 g/day) and energy requirements are still relatively high to meet the demands for muscle tissue growth and high activity level. The need for minerals (such as iron, calcium, and phosphorus) may be difficult to meet, considering the