



**Bright  
Futures**

# Bright Futures Parent Handout

## 18 Month Visit

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

LANGUAGE PROMOTION/HEARING

### Talking and Hearing

- Read and sing to your child often.
- Talk about and describe pictures in books.
- Use simple words with your child.
- Tell your child the words for her feelings.
- Ask your child simple questions, confirm her answers, and explain simply.
- Use simple, clear words to tell your child what you want her to do.

FAMILY SUPPORT

### Your Child and Family

- Create time for your family to be together.
- Keep outings with a toddler brief—1 hour or less.
- Do not expect a toddler to share.
- Give older children a safe place for toys they do not want to share.
- Teach your child not to hit, bite, or hurt other people or pets.
- Your child may go from trying to be independent to clinging; this is normal.
- Consider enrolling in a parent-toddler playgroup.
- Ask us for help in finding programs to help your family.
- Prepare for your new baby by reading books about being a big brother or sister.
- Spend time with each child.
- Make sure you are also taking care of yourself.
- Tell your child when he is doing a good job.
- Give your toddler many chances to try a new food. Allow mouthing and touching to learn about them.
- Tell us if you need help with getting enough food for your family.

SAFETY

- Use a car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.

SAFETY  
TOILET-TRAINING READINESS

TOILET-TRAINING READINESS

### Toilet Training

- Signs of being ready for toilet training include
  - Dry for 2 hours
  - Knows if he is wet or dry
  - Can pull pants down and up
  - Wants to learn
  - Can tell you if he is going to have a bowel movement
- Read books about toilet training with your child.

SAFETY

- Have your child's car safety seat rear-facing until your child is 2 years of age *or* until she reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the car safety seat's manufacturer.
- Everyone should always wear a seat belt in the car.
- Lock away poisons, medications, and lawn and cleaning supplies.
- Call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222) if you are worried your child has eaten something harmful.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs and guards on windows on the second floor and higher.
- Move furniture away from windows.
- Watch your child closely when she is on the stairs.
- When backing out of the garage or driving in the driveway, have another adult hold your child a safe distance away so he is not run over.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- Prevent burns by keeping hot liquids, matches, lighters, and the stove away from your child.
- Have a working smoke detector on every floor.

TOILET-TRAINING READINESS

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

- Have the parent of the same sex as your child or an older brother or sister take your child to the bathroom.
- Praise sitting on the potty or toilet even with clothes on.
- Take your child to choose underwear when he feels ready to do so.

### Your Child's Behavior

- Set limits that are important to you and ask others to use them with your toddler.
- Be consistent with your toddler.
- Praise your child for behaving well.
- Play with your child each day by doing things she likes.
- Keep time-outs brief. Tell your child in simple words what she did wrong.
- Tell your child what to do in a nice way.
- Change your child's focus to another toy or activity if she becomes upset.
- Parenting class can help you understand your child's behavior and teach you what to do.
- Expect your child to cling to you in new situations.

### What to Expect at Your Child's 2 Year Visit

#### We will talk about

- Your talking child
- Your child and TV
- Car and outside safety
- Toilet training
- How your child behaves

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:  
1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org



**Bright  
Futures**  
prevention and health promotion  
for infants, children, adolescents,  
and their families™

American Academy  
of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



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## **Home Safety**

To help ensure your home is a safe place for your child, please review the following guidelines.

### **Bedroom Dangers**

1. The changing table can be a dangerous place for an unattended child. Always use the safety belt and keep a hand on your child at all times.
2. Baby powder should be kept out of reach of children. Avoid using it around your baby's face because talc or cornstarch in the powder can injure a baby's lungs.
3. All window coverings ideally should be cordless but if you do have drapery or blind cords make sure these are tied up without loops so your child can't reach. Loose cords can strangle a child.
4. Babies should sleep on their backs until the age of 1 year to decrease the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. The crib should be free of clutter (no stuffed toys, pillows, quilts, comforters or anything that could cover their face). The mattress should be firm, covered with a tight crib sheet, and fit snuggly in the frame. The slats should be no wider than 2 3/8 inches. Make sure the head and foot board does not have any cut outs that your child may become trapped. The crib must be correctly assembled with all hardware tightened securely. Nothing with strings or ribbons should be hung over the crib.
5. Make sure night lights are away from drapes or bedding to avoid starting a fire. You should buy only "cool" nightlights.
6. Make sure all outlets in the home are covered with plug protectors.
7. Make sure window guards are secure to prevent a fall from the window.
8. Depending on the size of your home you will probably have multiple smoke alarms. Make sure there are alarms outside of every bedroom or any place where people sleep. Batteries should be changed yearly and tested monthly to make sure the alarm still works.
9. The best type of toy chest is a box or a basket without a lid. If you have a chest make sure the hinges hold the lid open, the chest is non-locking, and has air holes in case your child gets trapped inside. Any furniture that a child could pull down on top of their body should be secured to the wall to prevent this.
10. If you have a humidifier it should be cool mist to prevent burns and should be kept clean to avoid bacteria or mold growth

### **Kitchen Dangers**

1. Any sharp objects, hazardous materials, or anything that could be harmful to your child if ingested or handled (cleaning supplies, dishwashing detergent, vitamins, medicine, matches, lighters, etc.) should be kept in drawer or cabinet with child safety locks.
2. Keep stools or chairs away from counters. Use back burners and point pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep your child away from the stove when it is on. All appliances should be out of reach of your child and unplugged when not in use. Appliance cords should also be kept out of your child's reach.
3. Make sure your dishwasher and stove have a childproof lock. Make sure knob protectors have been placed on stove knobs.
4. Make sure your child's high chair has a safety belt with a strap between the legs.
5. Keep a working fire extinguisher on hand at all times and know how to use it.

### **Bathroom Dangers**

1. Since there are many potential hazards in the bathroom keep the door closed with a childproof doorknob cover to keep your child out when not with you. Keep the toilet lid down and consider a lock for the lid.
2. Always stay within arm's reach of your child when he is in the bathtub. A child can drown in even a few inches of water. You should also make sure the bathmat is non-skid and the tub has nonskid strips to prevent falls.
3. Just like in the kitchen keep all medications, cleaners, toiletries, or any potentially hazardous items in a childproof locked cabinet. Make sure all medications have child resistant caps. Make sure all electrical appliances are unplugged and out of reach. Outlets should have ground fault interrupters (GFIs).
4. The hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F to avoid burns. Usually you can adjust your hot water heater.

### **Other General Home Dangers**

1. Make sure all furniture and any other heavy items like a TV or lamp are secure so they can't fall on your child.
2. Some houseplants are poisonous so keep out of reach of children. Teach your child to never pick and eat anything from an indoor or outdoor plant.
3. Make sure any sharp edges on tables, fireplace, etc. are padded.
4. Make sure all electrical outlets are covered with a childproof cover. There should be no frayed, worn, or damaged electrical cords and outlets should never be overloaded. Cords should also be kept out of reach of children. Run them behind furniture and don't let them hang down for children to grab.
5. All fireplaces should be blocked from access and lighters and matches kept in a locked cabinet. Only use candles when an adult is present. Candles should never be left unattended.
6. Homes without firearms are safest for children, but if you must have a gun make sure it is stored unloaded in a locked safe. Ammunition should be stored locked in a separate area.
7. Make sure your family has a fire escape plan. You should practice home fire drills with the entire family.
8. All stairs should be blocked with a child safety gate.
9. Make sure all areas of your home are free of small parts, small toys, coins, balloons, plastic bags, or anything which may present a choking hazard.
10. Paper shredders should always be unplugged and out of reach of children. Treadmills should also be unplugged and cord concealed from children.
11. Make sure the poison control number is posted by all phones and programmed into your cell phone. Teach your child how to call 911 in an emergency.

### **Pool and Playground Dangers**

1. Home playground equipment should be assembled correctly, on level ground and anchored firmly. The swings should be made of soft material such as plastic, rubber, or canvas. Wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber should be under the equipment. The recommended depth of the mulch is 9 inches for play equipment up to 7 feet high.
2. Pools should always have at least a 4 foot fence surrounding them and separating them from the house. The fence gate should swing out, self-close and self-latch. The latch should be high and out of reach of children.
3. You should have easy access to rescue equipment such as a shepherd's hook or a life preserver. A phone should also be easily accessible.
4. Learn CPR. Your skills could save your child's life!

