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15-18 MO WELL CHILD VISIT

DATE _____ WT _____ HT _____ HC _____

DIET

- children at this age are often picky eaters; it's OK to have the same things over and over again if they are healthy foods, you covering all the food groups, and the child is growing/developing well
- offer small portions so as not to overwhelm the child; offer nutritious snacks
- child should be off the bottle and drinking from a sippie or regular cup exclusively by 18mo

DEVELOPMENT

- walks alone, stoops, "toddles", falls and gets up a lot
- has 3-6 word vocabulary and uses gestures (pointing) to communicate; speaks with 2-3 word sentences by 2 years
- points to a few body parts and understands simple commands
- scribbles, stacks a few blocks
- mimics activities like sweeping, vacuuming
- good toys include: stuffed animals, toys to push/pull, open/close, riding toys, musical toys, books
- pays attention to a story being read and points to pictures in a book
- teach feeling/emotional words like mad or sad

GUIDANCE

- continue with regular bedtime routine; takes 1-2 naps/day
- read books, sing, encourage physical activities; involve child in practical activities like sweeping, dusting,
- limit TV watching to 2 hours/day; set a good example by limiting your own TV viewing time
- NO TV IN KID'S ROOM
- encourage play with other toddlers and family routines/traditions
- develop child's self-esteem by positive reinforcement and support of their abilities; praise good behavior; "catch them being good"
- ignore tantrums and they go away quickly

SAFETY

- use car seat until at least 4yrs and 40#; new recommendations state to keep children rear facing in car seat until child is two years old
- NEVER leave child unattended in the bath
- keep toilet lids closed
- no plastic balloons and bags
- poison control #
- prevent burns
- lower crib mattress and get child in toddler bed once they can crawl out of the crib

Alone Time Guidelines

One-on-one

(no phone, no TV, no doorbells, no siblings, no other adults)

Predicable

(preferably at the same time every day, esp. for young children, but if not then on some other regular schedule)

Interactive activity of the child's choice

(give young children a set of three possible choices)

Non-contingent

(independent of earlier behavior)

Ideally 10 minutes for toddlers, 20 min for preschoolers, 30 min for school age kids; do whatever you can do consistently.

Appetite Slump in Toddlers

Characteristics of a child with a normal decline in appetite:

- child doesn't eat much, never seems hungry
- is between 1-5 years old
- child's energy level is normal
- child is growing normally

The Cause....

Between 1 and 5 years of age many children normally gain only 4 or 5 pounds each year even though they probably gained 15 pounds during their first year. Children in this age range can normally go 3 or 4 months without gaining weight. Because they are not growing as fast, they need less calories and have poorer appetites. How much a child chooses to eat is governed by the appetite center in the brain. Kids eat as much as they need for growth and energy.

Many parents try to force their child to eat more than they need because of the fear that a poor appetite might cause poor health or a nutritional deficiency. This is not true. Forced feedings actually decrease a child's appetite.

Expected Course.....

Once you allow your child to be in charge of how much she eats, the unpleasantness at mealtime and your concerns about their health should disappear in a matter of 2-4 weeks. Your child's appetite will improve when she becomes older and needs to eat more.

Helping a poor eater rediscover their appetite....

- put child in charge of how much they eat; the most common reason for some children never appearing hungry at mealtime is that they have had so many snacks throughout the day; they graze all day and never get that hungry. Limit the amount of juice and milk they have per day; max juice = 4oz and max milk = 24oz. If your child refuses one or two meals a day occasionally, this will not hurt them.
- never feed your child if they are capable of feeding themselves; most children can hold a bottle by 6-9 months and use a spoon by 12-15 months
- offer finger foods; items they can pick up to feed themselves
- serve small portions initially and give them more as they eat what has been offered. It can be intimidating to be offered a huge amount of food you know you can't finish
- consider daily vitamins if recommended by your physician to cover a specific food group you are having trouble getting your child to eat
- make mealtimes as pleasant as possible
- avoid conversations about eating; don't discuss how little they eat in front of them and don't praise them for eating a lot at one time; just follow their lead
- don't extend mealtime; give them a reasonable amount of time to eat and then take the food away. They will learn to eat when the food is offered

Preventing Struggles around Meals

The main way to prevent feeding struggles is to teach your child how to feed herself as early as possible. By the time your child 6-8 months, start working on holding their own bottle, By 12-15 months, work on holding a spoon and feeding themselves finger foods. Don't insist that child empty the bottle, finish the jar of food or clean their plate.

Call our office with concerns if:

- your child is losing weight
- child hasn't gained any weight in 6 months
- your child has symptoms of an illness
- your child gags or vomits food
- following these guidelines hasn't improved mealtimes at home within a month
- you have any questions or concerns

Follow four rules about rules

Kids need boundaries, and rules are what provide those boundaries. These four guidelines will help you create effective family rules.



1. Make your rules clear and consistent

You must apply rules consistently for them to be effective over the long term. And we are talking long term, because you're going to be repeating these rules many, many, many, many times.

Sometimes this is easy. Telling my toddler not to touch the stove is something I do swiftly and with a tone of urgency, every time she gets close.

Sometimes I'm not so quick. For example, my toddler likes to stand on the dining table. Oh, she knows the rule. Even as she hoists a leg up, she shakes her head and says, "No climbing onna table." If I stop her every single time, that is much more effective than if I *almost* always stop her but occasionally laugh at the little tap dance she does up there. (Can you tell I've already messed this up?)

It's also easier to be consistent about a few rules that are very important to you, rather than trying to enforce twenty rules at once.

Easy or not, the fact remains: if you're inconsistent about applying the rule, your child will be confused about whether it's really a rule.

You'll have plenty of chances to practice as your kid tests a rule again and again to learn its relative importance, to establish the limits of his independence, to test your reaction—and maybe to try to get that laugh out of you one more time.

2. Give the reason for the rule

Your child will be far more likely to follow a rule if you add just one line: the explanation for it.

"Please close the screen door."

"Please close the screen door. We would be so sad if the cat ran away."

The second request sounds a lot more reasonable, right?

Say your child doesn't obey, and you enforce the rule via a consequence. Children who hear reasons for rules are able to make the connection between the rule and the misbehavior: "I shouldn't do that because [whatever reason you gave]." Over time, this thought process allows your child to incorporate the rule into her own set of values, consider other applications for the rule, and eventually comply with the rule even when no one is looking.

Children who don't hear reasons for rules can draw only one conclusion: "I shouldn't do that because I'll get in trouble." Their behavior ends up being guided by an external threat of punishment rather than by an internal set of morals. Strong morals—the personal beliefs we use to judge right and wrong—provide kids with an important set of tools for navigating the world as they grow up.

3. Help your child follow the rule

Like us—except far more often—kids forget things, get distracted, and make mistakes. Reminding your kids of your expectations and agreements helps them engage critical thought and offers them a chance to practice self-regulation.

Prompt your child just before an event where a rule usually gets broken; say, your child has trouble turning off the TV, or hits during playdates, or whines while shopping.

"What's our rule about begging for toys at the store? And what will happen if you break our rule?"

Notice the absence of bad behavior and praise it:

"You're playing really nicely. Great job."

"Thank you for sitting still. I know it's hard."

At the first hint of an infraction, repeat the prompt:

"What's our agreement?"

"What do you need to be doing right now?"

"Would you like to turn off the TV or would you like me to?"

If these fail, calmly go to your chosen consequence:

"You know the rule. We're leaving the store now. I'm hopeful that next time you'll make a different choice."

4. Set rules together

Have you ever had a boss who commanded your every move and didn't want to hear your input? It feels horrible. You practically want to rebel out of spite. It also sets up a power struggle: neither person wants to lose, and whoever does is bound to resent it.

Don't be that boss. Instead, involve your children in setting rules. It's important to do this when everyone is calm, not in the middle of some rule-breaking. The process makes your children feel respected, valued, and treated fairly. Plus, their good ideas might surprise you. Go team!

Set a time to talk. Say you notice that your child is spending more time than you'd like in front of the TV. You tell him so, and that at dinner you'll talk about creating some rules around TV time.

Frame the problem. Together with your child, list the priorities for the afternoon: homework, dinner, playing, reading, bedtime. "So," you say, "we have thirty minutes per day for TV." Get input: "Are there other things you'd like time to do each day that are important to you?"

Encourage input on those aspects where you can be flexible. For example: "When would you like to watch your thirty minutes of TV? Before dinner or after dinner?" "What are some ideas for consequences if you don't turn off the TV when I ask you to? What could we do so that I don't have to ask?"

State the rule you've agreed to. "OK, our agreement is that you can watch thirty minutes of TV after doing your homework. And that if you don't turn off the TV when the timer goes off, you'll lose tomorrow's minutes one by one."

TRY THIS

How consistent are you really? Step back and consider, from your child's perspective, what message he might be getting from your actions—not just your words.



TIME OUT

Time out is a way parents can stop unacceptable behavior by removing a children from the area of trouble or concern and away from others. Time out gives both parent and child time to “cool off” and regain emotional control. For a child who is under two years old, it reminds him/her who is in control. The older child has the opportunity to think about his/her behavior and learn to apologize. This helps the child with the development of a conscience.

Time out can be used when a child begins to crawl, but certainly by 15 months should be employed if simple distraction and redirection are no longer working. By age 4-6 years, it can gradually be replaced by consequences and by 8-10 years, it is no longer effective. The parent and child should understand the rules before time out is used.

Place for Time Out

The best place to start a time out program is in a portable playpen because it’s boring and safe and allows the parent to leave the room briefly knowing the child can’t get hurt. Once the child understands the time out concept, a corner, stair step or chair can be used provided they cannot see other people, the TV, or have access to toys. The kitchen or bathroom should be avoided because of the potential for injury. Dark closets or basements are poor choices too because they can be scary for children. If you are in a public place, a bench, the ground or facing a wall or tree will work.

Length of Time Out

A good rule of thumb is 1 minute per year of age with a maximum of 5 minutes. The child should be quiet during the time out. If he or she is throwing a fit about being in time out, don’t start the timer until they are quiet. A simple, “You can scream and fuss as long as you like, but I’m not starting the timer until you are quiet.” usually stops this type of stalling behavior. A kitchen timer can help both the parent and child know when the time out is over.

Putting your Child in Time Out

Apply the “3 strikes and you’re out” philosophy. After the third request for a specific behavior, the child is put in time out and told why. **EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO CRY AND HAVE A TANTRUM AND TEST YOU!** The first time you use time out your child will try to call your bluff. Expect this and be consistent. If your child goes right back to what they were doing, he goes right back to time out. Even if this goes on numerous times, keep putting him back in time out to prove to him that this will happen every time. Once the child figures out you are serious and consistent with the rules they will resist less because they learn they can’t win. You are teaching your child that you are in charge and rules will be enforced.