PEDIATRIC AFFILIATES
OF HAMPTON ROADS

200 GRAYSON ROAD, SUITE 101
VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA 23462
(757) 473-3200
www.doc4kids.com

TIPS FOR PARENTS

18 MONTHS OLD

FEEDING

A child's eating habits are becoming engrained at this time and you'll notice he/she is developing preferences for certain foods. Be sure to give your child a variety of foods from each of the 4 basic food groups (i.e. protein, fruits/vegetables breads/grains, and dairy/fat). There should not be an overabundance of any one type of food. Restrict junk food as this leads to poor nutrition and obesity. Encourage regular family meals and leave the TV off. TV during meals does not encourage family conversation and bonding that is so vital to a healthy nurturing environment.

Mealtime should not be a battle. Offer your child the various foods and have a reasonable time period for him or her to finish the food. Don't "punish" the child for refusing to eat, like making them sit until all the food is gone. Praise them if they eat to your satisfaction. Remember that you are choosing WHAT your child eats, your child chooses HOW MUCH to eat. Also, pay attention to how much liquid nourishment your child is taking. He or she should not be drinking more than 4-6 ounces of juice per day and 16-24 ounces of milk. If your child is taking a lot of calories from liquids, he or she will not be hungry for solids at mealtime. Continue your child on 400 IU of Vitamin D (1 cc of POLY VI SOL) or 1 Flintstone Vitamin per day.

SLEEP

At this age, children may attempt to manipulate their parents into allowing them to stay up late at night. The working parent, home from the office with only a few hours to spend with the child, feels compelled to play. Children tend to get hyped-up and the parent later experiences difficulty getting the child to go to bed. Our suggestion to parents experiencing difficulty getting the child to sleep is to "wind down" the evening activities before putting the child to bed. Rank the nighttime routine activities from MOST STIMULATING to LEAST STIMULATING. While

playing with your child, go through this list in exactly the same order each night. The child will get the "cue" early in the night that bedtime is near and he/she will taper down the excitement and prepare for bed. Children do best with a set bedtime. Try to make bedtime realistic for the child's needs, not based on how late you had to work. You may notice your child has some bedtime fears or night awakening. If this occurs, bring it to the Doctor's attention. Continue reading to your child nightly, this is a great way to have special parent/child time and encourages speech in the child.

TOILET TRAINING

This would be the EARLIEST time that we would suggest starting your child on the potty. Don't worry if your child shows no interest. It is the RARE child that has an interest in the potty at this age. All you need to do is help them become familiar with whatever type potty seat you will be using later. If you have problems or questions about toilet training your child, ask us for literature on toilet training.

SAFETY

Children are naturally curious at this age and they can't think of all of the possible dangers before acting; therefore, falls are common. Children will move furniture around to get to higher places. Be sure to childproof your medicine cabinet and other storage areas for non-childproof medications, household chemicals and poisons. Remember that your garage or garden shed may contain dangerous chemicals and pesticides that should be secured from children. Don't forget to cover electrical sockets. Remove dangling cords from hair curling irons or hair dryers near sinks. Your child should still be in an approved infant car seat facing toward the back of the car in the center seat. Pools should always have a 4-1/2 foot fence around it. Don't rely on your instincts when not watching the child. All firearms and ammunition must always be stored unloaded and locked in separate, secure containers. NEVER give Syrup of Ipecac. Please call the Poison Control Number or us if your child has swallowed a poison. The Poison Control Number is **1-800-222-1222.**

DISCIPLINE/DEVELOPMENT

The child now will attempt to "tug on your heart strings" to get their way by crying excessively. They may even start to bang their heads on the floor. There is no problem in "giving in" occasionally. You do not have to win EVERY battle. Realize that when you pick up a crying/whining child, you may be rewarding that behavior. Pick up your child when they have stopped crying/whining. You should not allow the child to manipulate you into situations that compromise your ideals as a parent. You should

control the amount of TV watched and the types of food the child eats by limiting junk food. This is the age that parents may (inappropriately) start to spank their child. Avoid this form of punishment. The "out of bounds rules" should be set and adhered to by both parents.

If there are any inconsistencies in what is allowed from either parent, the child will pick up on this and will learn to manipulate all caregivers. It is a good idea for parents to discuss together how they wish to discipline their children. All caregivers, including grandparents and babysitters, should adhere to the parent's discipline plan. T. Barry Brazelton's books can be a "gold mine" of information. Another good source for parents concerned about discipline is the book, "1-2-3 Magic".

Please take time to fill out the MCHAT Questionnaire that we have given you. This is a very sensitive screening test for the early stages of Autism. We will be happy to go over the results with you today.

IMMUNIZATIONS/LABORATORY TESTS

If not done previously and if your child is at risk, he/she will have a finger stick blood test to check for lead poisoning. We will obtain this with a small needle from your child's finger. Your child will get the second HAV (Hepatitis A Virus) today. Any other immunizations that your child has not received at this point will be given to bring your child "up to-date". The Influenza vaccine will be given to your child if it is Flu season. Please call us with any questions. We'll see you next for the 2-year old evaluation. If your child ever needs pain or fever relief, you may use Tylenol (160 mg/tsp) and give $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp every 4 hours as needed.

BOOKS AND WEBSITES

www.healthychildren.org

"1-2-3 Magic" by Thomas W. Phelan

Good Luck!!!!

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