Season Two Introduction

Hi, welcome to season two of the Baby Manual podcast for parents of toddlers. This season will help you feel confident as you navigate the difficulties of toddlerhood, from tantrums to sleep schedules to potty training.

I'm your host, a pediatrician and mom, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello and welcome to episode 2 of this season about your 18 month old. Wow, they grow up so fast, don't they?

18 months is a super fun age. They're really cute and so sweet at this age, but also the terrible twos have started, which means that they know the word know and they now how to use it.

Social and Language Development

So you're probably seeing a lot of personality starting to blossom right now. So with social development at this age, your 18-month-old toddler is probably starting to engage with others to play.

So they'll be handing you things to playing with with them, they will be asking you about things by pointing at them. They'll also typically point out pictures in books if you ask them like, where's the cat?

Where's a dog? They can usually point to it at that age. And they show you thing that they find interesting. Usually they just want you to tell them about the object that you've brought you or the thing they've pointed at.

They're picking up so much language at this age. Even though a lot of 18-month-olds don't have a whole lot words, typically they can only name five objects.

Some, of course, are more advanced than that than others, but five object is sort of the minimum. But they're still understanding everything that you say to them.

So try to explain everything as much as you can to then because they love to learn all of these new words. Also, I usually suggest to parents that they write down words at this age that your baby knows because it's amazing how quickly they start to pick things up and once they get a few words a day, their vocabulary just starts to explode.

It's so cool. They typically will help you as you're getting them dressed and undressed. So they'll help by moving their arms or legs in a position that makes it helpful for you.

That's a really nice thing to have. For other development, they can point out two body parts. A lot of times it's nose and belly button. Of course, some can do more than that at this age.

The separation anxiety starts getting worse right now. So it can be a little hard when you need to go to the bathroom or take a shower because they might cry outside the door waiting for you to get back out.

But the stranger anxiety typically starts to getting a bit better. You might notice that they're a lot more receptive to meeting new people at this age.

They can follow simple instructions and they do love to help out. So single step instructions like, can you throw this away for me? They love do that.

If something spills, Can you wipe this up with this washcloth right here? they love doing those wiping movements. And they also love copycatting everything that you do.

Behavior, Tantrums, and Independence

so you might see them pretending to talk on a phone or take care of a baby doll or things like that So make sure you're just encouraging them to name objects or try to repeat sounds after you by just naming whatever you see and talk and sing to them and use words that can describe emotions and feelings.

So when they seem angry or frustrated, you can just start naming it at this age. Like, oh, it looks like you are angry right now. and try to get down on their level.

If they're having a hard time, well, we say if they are giving you a harder time it usually means that they were having hard times. So if you feel like your toddler is being difficult, try and get it down at their eye level, either sit on the floor or squat down and trying to understand really what is frustrating them in the moment and help them work through it.

You can also try to eliminate tantrums by offering choices throughout the day. Let them pick between two options that are both suitable to you. For example, do you want these shoes or these issues?

Or which foot do want to start with putting the shoes on? And by letting them choose how things get done, a lot of times that can help ease their frustration.

And also, if there's things that they're absolutely not allowed to do or allowed have, try to keep those things out of sight because they are going to go for anything that's in their vicinity and they just starting to separate a little bit more from you and get that toddler independence.

So they might run across a room and pick something up that their not supposed to have. So if you try to limit the use of the word no and instead tell them what is okay and what they can have, and just try not to have those tempting things in their vision that they aren't supposed to, those are some great ways to help avoid those tantrums.

With motor development at this age, they can scoop with a spoon and they love scooping things like rice. Um, you can make little activity boxes for them with tiny toys in a thing of rice, of course, not small enough to be choking hazards because they are still putting stuff in their mouth.

But you know, um, if you have any like small animals, for example, and you put them in, a bin with rice and then give them a. They love to like scoop around it and find things in there.

And that can be really fun to have like a sensory box like that. They can typically run and can kick a ball and be extra careful if you're outside because they will chase a bowl into the street if it goes there.

They don't know yet that they're supposed to stop. So just be careful with that sort of thing. they can sit in a small chair. If you have little baby furniture at this age, they'll use it.

It's really sweet to see. Also, if they have like little strollers for their dolls, They'll try to sit on those and it's adorable. And they like to walk around holding toys at that age.

they might even have a preferred toy. And if you're going out somewhere and you want them to stay entertained, it's a great idea to let them pick their toy that they want to play with while they're there, like if your at a restaurant.

Or also you can make little kind of activity bags to bring with you at the restaurant to keep them busy. They'll usually scribble with crayons at this age, so you could even just bring crayon and paper, or most restaurants will have like a kids menu with and give you crayons.

They're no longer eating them typically, they're actually using them to scribble with and that can be really fun and can keep them busy for a bit. they can also throw a ball at this age and throw it they typically will throw overhand but not always sometimes it's underhand.

So with behavior like I said terrible twos are starting because they know how to use the word no and they start

refusing to do things and part of that is just testing boundaries to see what they But also there are some things that they just don't want to do.

So if you're giving them those choices throughout the day, little things you want this cup or this Cup to drink out of, even if it's the same looking cup to you, it might make a difference to them and they might have a preference.

And so the more choices you give them, the More they feel like they're in control of their life. But remember, what I mean by the more choices, I means the times you give choices.

Because you only want to offer two things at a time, otherwise they get overwhelmed and they can't pick. If they decide not to choose or they're having a hard time choosing, you can say I'll choose for you this time.

Give them a good 10 seconds to make that choice and then say, And, you know, of course, both options are okay with you, so just pick either one for them.

Motor Skills and Play

And as time goes on and they see that you're choosing for then, they'll start to choose for themselves if they do have a preference. Then when there's times where they really don't have choice, like, I'm sorry, we just have to get in the car right now, there'll be less likely to resist that if you've had more choices throughout the day because they feel like they're more in control.

If you think about it, if you were at work and your boss kept telling you, do this now, and kept interrupting whatever you are doing and making you do something else, you'd get pretty frustrated with it and finally just be like, no, I am finishing this thing that I'm doing right now.

But if your allowed to make your own choices throughout the day and then your bosses says, hey, need you for this, then you're a lot more willing to just drop it.

And go do what you need to. So it's the same with toddlers. They really do have that sense of wanting to do something, and they're just being dragged around for their whole life so far, doing whatever their parents want them to.

So it's great to give them those little choices and let them feel like they have independence. They do have a hard time expressing their preferences though.

So you might have seen those funny memes of like, why is my toddler crying? And it's, you know, because I gave them the wrong cracker or because the crack was broken in half and I couldn't put it back together.

They tend to have these meltdowns over things where you're like it doesn't feel like that big of a deal. But in toddler world, that stuff is a big deal and so if they are crying and having melt downs, they really are maxed out emotionally.

Try to meet them where they're at and try to help them through that. as much as possible. They start to want things that are unreasonable at this age as well.

So just keep in mind that you might need to be subbing things out for them. Like they might try to grab something that is dangerous and you can say, here, let me give you something else instead.

I see that. You want this, but here's something different that it's okay for you to have. So yeah, you want to try to modify their environment to avoid conflicts by keeping things out of the way that they're not allowed to have or out-of-sight.

Remember that if you take medicines, don't take medicine in front of your child, whether it's prescriptions or over-the-counter medicines.

Teething and Emotional Support

They'll start to learn that you're supposed to open those bottles and put those things in your mouth. So if do need to take a medication around your toddler, just turn away from them and don' let them see you opening that bottle and putting the stuff into your If they're hitting and biting, I see that a lot at this age, those are attempts to communicate.

And that's a way of saying, no, i'm not okay with what's going on and trying to get someone to stop whatever they are doing. So try to teach them how to community effectively and what is okay when they'r frustrated.

When they hit you, is it because you're not paying attention to them because your on your phone? Or is is because, you gave them something that they didn't want or you didn' offer a choice when you could have offered a So those are sometimes what they're trying to communicate.

And then sometimes with biting, if they are biting other things, like not just people, but biting objects and chewing on objects, they might be getting in their two-year molars already.

So keep an eye out for that. You might see some swellings at the back of their gum behind that first set of molers. It also might even be their first of set molards, depending on if their early or late teethers, But when the molar's come in, They'll typically want to chew on stuff and bite a lot of things and they get really mouthy and you might just need to be giving them more teething toys and also some cool things to chew on.

You could do popsicles, you could frozen pieces of fruit, wet washcloths that are frozen, things like that can really help. Even toothbrushes can be fun to you on for them, like soft toothbrush.

another sign of teething at this age. So typically they're not drooling with teathing like they were when they slimy diarrhea with the teething. So if you notice that they're just a little bit extra cranky, they are not sleeping as well.

They're biting more stuff. Maybe they might even have a low-grade fever and they've got these loose stools. Typically, those are the signs of teeting at this age.

Keep that in mind. You can also give them something like Tylenol or paracetamol outside the US for the teething. Also, ibuprofen is another option. And just double-check with your doctor about the dose because it's dosed based on their weight.

You want to anticipate that they're going to be clinging and anxious in new situations at this age.

Screen Time and Sleep

So even though they are typically okay with meeting new people, like the stranger anxiety is gone, if there is a new group of people or they go to a store or a place, They might be a little nervous at first and they might want to hang on to a bit tighter and that's normal and okay.

And you can just reassure them and sometimes just walk in with them holding their hand into that situation and let them know that it is okay and you might need to hold them a litte bit more.

I know they're getting heavier too at this age but they may want be held just a litle bit and thats really comforting to them. If you try to spend at least 10 or 15 minutes a day, which is not very long, in child-led play, like letting them pick what they're playing with and play with them and be fully engaged, put your phone across the room on silent if you need to, and just really focus on your child and do whatever they want to be doing, that can really build a strong bond and help them not to act out to try and get your attention throughout the rest of the day.

They only need short spurts of this. So 10 or 15 minutes a day is usually enough to let them feel really connected with you. Of course, longer is always better, if possible.

And then if you're thinking about having a new baby, a lot of times at one and a half, you are starting to miss that

baby phase and thinking maybe about maybe having another child.

If you want to get them ready for a sibling, read books about new babies and you can also get a doll to play with and to kind of baby themselves so that When the baby is born, you might even be pregnant already, but when that new baby comes, if they have their own little baby to play with and feed and change its diaper at the same time, they're doing that parallel play at this age where they are playing next to somebody but still doing their thing, and so that can really help them transition as well.

And then also, if you do have a new baby at this age already, letting them do little things to help out with the baby can be super helpful in preventing sibling rivalry, because then they feel like when there's a baby in the house, they also feel it's theirs, sort of like a pet.

It's their new thing to play with as well. And if they're constantly saying, no, stop touching the babies, get away from me, I'm trying to do something with a babies.

They get really jealous and angry. they want to be doing things as well. So you can let them hand you the bottle or hand to you a changing pad or a new diaper or get a burp cloth for you or give you something to help with whatever you're doing with the baby.

Or they might even just want sit next to while you are nursing and pat the new baby on the head, you know, and touch them somehow. Try to let be involved as much as possible because that can really help them to bond with that baby instead of feeling really jealous of it and angry at it.

As far as digital media goes, you want to try to restrict screen time as much as possible. Ideally, they should not be having screentime at this age unless it's for talking with family members, like over video chat.

But if you do have screen time, you want to have very high quality programming. I'm a big fan of PBS Kids and their programs for children. They have a lot of shows.

Daniel Tiger is made by the same people that did Mr. Rogers from when we were kids. So it's a cartoon version that takes place in that little neighborhood that Mr Rogers sometimes visits.

Nutrition and Feeding

And Daniel tiger is the main character and he has a lotta big feelings like toddlers do. and the parents talk to him about his feelings and how to express them.

And they have little cute, catchy songs that can also help through various situations. So if you're struggling with something with your baby at this age, I bet there's a Daniel Tiger episode about it that you can watch with you child.

They're really short episodes and that could be really helpful. Make sure you're making time for screen free play every day. So things that will help run off energy like going to playgrounds or going on walks can be really great.

Even just playing outside in the yard that's enclosed, you know, so they can't run into a street and make sure your with them outside at this time when they're outside.

Also reading together can great, playing with toys on the floor together is great and then even bath time. Try to pay attention to them during bath time.

Try not to be on your phone or even have your in the bathroom. Make sure you're watching them all the time because they could potentially drown. It takes less than 10 seconds for a child to drown if they slip under the water.

But also, you can interact with them. And this is a great time to bond when they're taking a bath. You can play with toys together and have little boats or animals or whatever in a bathtub that they can with you.

Make sure that if you are doing screen time, you don't have any screens for two hours before bedtime. And that has to do with the blue light from the screen.

It tricks their brains into thinking that it's the middle of the day and it takes a while to wind down from that. So if. You stop all screen-time for 2 hours, before bed time and make sure there's no screens at all in the bedtime, emitting that light, even your own screens.

while they're falling asleep can make it harder for them to fall asleep. So try to avoid that screen time for two hours so it gives their body enough time to naturally wind down before they actually have to go to bed.

And then if you are viewing programming together, try limit it to less than one hour total per day. And remember that screens can help children to calm down quickly, but it's one of the worst things, unfortunately, for them because they can get really addicted to that and need that screen to come down.

And so try to find other ways to help them calm when they're getting really frustrated or angry. So either distraction by just totally changing the subject or handing them a toy that you know they love.

Try removing whatever the trigger is that did make them really frustrated like that. You could even just try walking outside, sometimes just a change of scenery or into another room.

Sometimes just changing the setting can help them forget what they were so angry about and distract them into playing with something else. And remember that when they get hungry or tired, they gets really cranky.

And so just make sure that you're addressing those needs. If they have those need, s they might not even tell you that they're hungry. They might just start acting really hangry.

So try to address those before they come up if possible. With sleep at this age, they're typically sleeping 10 to 14 hours at night and they are having either no naps or one nap during the day.

And when they dropping that nap, it can be also really awkward where they get tired in the early evening and you're like, do we let them go to bed now or do try to keep them up because you don't want them waking up in middle of the night wide awake.

And I'd say if they have skipped their nap and they're seeming cranky and angry, even if it's like right around dinnertime, you know, feed them and put them straight to bed.

It's okay to let them go to bet a little bit early. Sometimes they do need that extra hour or two of sleep to compensate for missing that nap. And so Yeah, if you're not really sure, I'd say don't try to keep them up too much longer when they're seeming tired.

Try to get them to bed earlier rather than later because they start to a second wind if do keep up and then it's even harder to put them bed and they are throwing big tantrums at bedtime with that.

but again, play around with what works best with your baby. They're usually sleeping in a crib in their own room at this age, and you can consider moving to a toddler bed whenever it's safe for them to be getting up at night and okay with you guys for it, for for to them be up getting at nights.

So if they're able to get out of their bed and walk into your room and wake you up if you have a bad dream, then that's okay to putting them in the toddler's bed.

Also, if their climbing out their crib, that no longer a safe place for sleep and they need to move to the toddler bed So you can either get one of those cribs that like most of the crips nowadays will convert into a toddler bed where you put the mattress as low as possible, like on its lowest setting.

And then there's like a little half railing that covers up half of what was the crib so that they can climb out of bed. Or

you could do a floor bed, which is just putting the matress onto the floor because those are really safe.

If they roll off of that, they're not going to get hurt if the matrices directly on the. It's normal for them to wake up at night at this age and usually once or twice during the night and sometimes not at all.

Tooth Brushing and Dental Care

But if they do wakeup at nigh, they typically don't need to eat. If they're feeling thirsty, you can give them some water, but just reassure them when they are waking up and you offer a stuffed animal or a blanket and they can usually console themselves with that and fall back asleep.

If they're starting to potty train already, which we'll get to in a second, and they are wetting the bed at night, one life hack for that is you can take sheets and layer the sheets with an absorbent pad.

So you put like a sheet on and then a pad and another sheet and other pad, you know, as many layers as you have sets of sheets, so that if they do wet the bad, if you just pull off that top layer with the pad throw away the pads, put the sheet into the laundry, then they've got a fresh sheet already on the bag ready to go.

Blankets are okay at this age in bed, but no pillows until they turn two. And try not to have any food or drinks in-bed, with the exception being water in a water bottle.

It is okay while they're in bad to half a bottle of water. You don't want to any electronic devices, like I said, in the bedroom. So no TVs, no tablets.

Try not have anything even with any lights on in your room if possible. For nutrition at this age, they're having three meals and two or three snacks per day at the same time as the family.

Potty Training Basics

But keep in mind that they start to do this eating pattern somewhere between now and age three, where they eat a meal, the pick at a me and they might even skip a meals.

So you might notice that, you know, there really not hungry at all for some meals, They might be grazing throughout the day also, and the might have one meal that's huge and their asking for second and third portions of it.

So just expect that they're eating really irregularly at this age and keep offering them a big variety of foods and textures of food and try to encourage them to feed themselves.

You can give them little like forks and spoons to use at. This age. And also expect them. To be using their hands a lot while they are eating. So you want to wash their.

Hands before they eat. you should be giving them water in a cup with every meal and every snack. So either is fine, but water is the very healthiest thing for them to drink.

They don't need any juice at all. If you are giving them juice, you want to limit it to four ounces per day. And if you can, water it down because juice is about as bad for your teeth and your body as soda.

It has a lot of sugar in it and it can cause all the problems that, we all know that children are not supposed to be having soda, but juice is almost just as bad so try not to have any juice or four ounces or less per day and you could even do like if they don't like water you can just do water with a tiny splash of juice in it for flavor.

And for milk, milk is not necessary for children. It contains calcium and fat and protein, but there are so many other foods that have those in them that they usually don't need it.

So if they do love to drink milk you want to limit it to 24 ounces per day or less. And that's because too much milk can cause anemia and it causes it in a couple of different ways.

it competes with iron for absorption in the stomach. and so they're absorbing less iron from their foods when they drink Also, it makes them full and makes him not eat as many things.

And also, cow's milk can cause little microbleeds in the intestine and they can actually lose blood that way too. So children who drink too much milk, can become severely anemic.

Try to limit that milk intake as much as you can. If they're wanting milk more often and wanting larger volumes, what you could do is just water it down.

You're giving them a total volume less than 24 ounces per day. They should be having something green to eat every single day and it is okay for them to have meat, but a lot of toddlers don't love eating meat.

Sometimes it's because their molars aren't fully in and its hard to chew meat and meat is just a harder texture and requires more chewing and doesn't give you as many vitamins and nutrients as fruit and veggies do.

a lot of children will not enjoy eating meat at this age, and that's okay if they don't have meat. If they're not eating greens every day or red meat three times per week, then you might want to be supplementing them with iron.

And just double check with your pediatrician about that to see if your child needs iron supplements. Remember that you get to decide what is offered to your child and when it is.

But you can allow them to. How much they eat or whether or not they. So they're usually not picky eaters at this age or they start to become picky somewhere between one and a half and two years of age.

A lot of times they want to be trying new foods still at 18 months. Give them a big variety to pick from. And if you can, if do have things like desserts or whatever, like preferred foods, you could put them on the same plate as the non-preferred or the new foods and they'll be more likely to eat a little of everything if give them everything at the time.

And of course, they're probably gonna go for their preferred food first and eat that first, and ask for more of it. But you tell them, You can have more when this other food is gone.

Because you know that they are not wanting it because they hungry. They're wanting because like it more. So giving them that variety at every meal, but then allowing them to choose what goes into their mouth and then not giving in and giving him extra servings of things like desserts until they've at least eaten enough of the other stuff to have gotten a good variety of vitamins and nutrients.

When you're brushing their teeth, you are probably going to be helping them brush teeth at night. And a lot of times they're wanting to do it themselves.

So you can give them the choice of, do you want to start and have me finish? Or do want me to Start and you finish. Also, if that's not quite enough and they are still resistant to teeth brushing, You can let them try to brush your teeth.

because you're just going at them with a toothbrush right in their mouth and they're like, hey, I have no say in this. So letting them kind of choose things like that can help and then giving them that power to like also brush your teeth can sometimes make them more compliant with brushing their own.

You can also see if they want to help with the toothpaste on the toothbrush, but it should only be a very small smear of fluoride containing toothpaste.

If they are going to be squeezing that tube, don't let them hold the tube. But you can let the hold toothbrush while

you put the the paste on or you can even just like let a little bit come out of the tube and then let them touch the toothbrush to it to get it onto it.

And they should be seeing a dentist at least once or twice per year at this age to help avoid cavities. For elimination, they're usually starting to potty train around this age because you're starting notice when they are going to go to the bathroom.

You'll either see them go and hide to poop or you can hear them grunting or straining. A lot of times they'll tell you at this stage when you've already gone and they need to have their diaper changed.

And a lot 18-month-olds can pull their pants up and down. This is a great age to start potty training if you haven't already started with elimination communication earlier.

And I do have a whole episode on potting training and constipation and UTIs and stuff coming up next. So stay tuned for that one. They're usually voiding peeing at least six times per day and pooping once or twice per days at this age is normal.

Safety and Childproofing

Even three or four times is okay. If they're only poop every two or three days, they are probably consti-pated. Talk to your doctor about that. But here's kind of a stepwise approach to starting with.

Make sure they're drinking enough water. And you can decrease milk because I see a lot of kids get constipated when they start drinking milk, especially if it's too much of it.

So if you try to switch them to only water and limit the dairy, that can usually help as a first step. Then also increase fiber, so make sure that they are getting lots of fresh fruit and veggies every single day.

And if those two things aren't enough, you can consider prune juice as a laxative. It's like a medicine for children. So you're only giving them two ounces of prunes juice once or twice a day.

And this is one exception to the juice watering down rule where you want it to actually just be straight pruned juice because you are using it as medication and it works by irritating the gut and making everything kind of flush through.

If you give too much of it, they will get diarrhea. So go slowly with it. Try once the first day, maybe twice the next day. And if that's still not enough, then talk to your doctor about MiraLax.

Mira Lax is something that it works kind of like those Orbi gel beads where it's like a powder gel. that when it gets wet, it just soaks up that water and fluffs up in their intestines, and it will keep soaking water into the intestines.

So they have to be drinking enough water to start with in order to do MiraLaks. And you want to also increase their water intake while they're on it, because that'll just pull everything into their gut and then it You know as it gets a little bit bigger makes the poop a bit better and also softer they should flush through a lil bit easier so you can talk to your doctor about that the generic of me relaxes polyethylene glycol and it's not absorbed it all into their bloodstream it just a physical laxative in that it doesn't stimulate the intestines at all it does kind of what's up the pope and makes more of it happen so that i can work his way through faster.

So starting potty training, you can put them on the pot after they eat every time, and every that they wake up. So either just in the morning or after a nap as well.

And if they're resistant to it, if their not wanting to sit on a toilet, You can start with them sitting on their little baby pot with their clothes on and just make it fun time.

Fun playtime, like play with the during that time while they are sitting there. Because they can be sitting in little tiny

chairs at this age, they could sit in a little pot at that age.

So you can have them sit there and read them a book or play with some toys and then try having them set with the pants off and try with a diaper off as well.

You can also read books about using the potty and you keep a pot in every room in the house or you just keep it in your bathroom and have it go at the same time that you're going or have to sit on it while you are going because they love to mimic adults.

With baby boys, you want to start them peeing sitting down on the potty. They can always stand later, but try not to have them learn to stand up and pee until they're pooping consistently on you know, make sure you have them like very consistently, solidly sitting on the toilet to poop before you start letting them stand up because it is more fun and it's quicker and they can get back to playing sooner when they're standing up.

And so a lot of boys will pee and then even if they have to go a little bit, they'll hold it until next time. When they hold their poop, the intestines just keep soaking water back out of that poop and make it harder and drier.

Then the next they go, it will hurt. And then if it hurts once to poop, they're going to want to hold it the next time and then it's going get even harder to go that next.

And so that becomes this vicious cycle of constipation and it can be really hard to train them to on the toilet again once they are starting to get constepated like that.

So yeah, sitting them on a toilet every single time they need to, you know, on their potty seat or on like a regular adult pot with a potter adapter for a child can make great ways to teach them.

And if you have like a little potty signal for them, try to make it fun if can. You can have pot-ty songs or just like, yeah, it's poop time, like shake your arms, whatever, that can help them.

I don't know any really good pooping songs, but well, there is the Daniel Tiger song, if ya have to go poty, stop and go right away, flush and wash and be on your way.

And that's a great one, we used to love singing that. Also, you can, I dunno, the other ones I did were like Yay, yay, yeah, it's a potty in the USA. And come on body, let's go poty.

Oh, oh, Oh yeah. Anyway, 80s kids will appreciate those. So yeah you can come up with your own poties on if you like, or just some kind of fun like yay let us go party and make it like a fun thing for them.

You don't need to be rewarding them for going to the bathroom at this age. They don' have that like sticker charts don''t work at 18 months. they're not gonna have the association with like if I poop this many times I get this toy.

If they get a treat every time, something like a sticker every-time is great. And if you do want to be giving them inspiration for the ones that are just really not wanting to use the toilet, but you feel like they can use toilet.

You can give them one of whatever thing for trying, like one sticker for tying and then an extra one if anything comes out or just get little excited if things come out.

But the whole point of using the toilets as an adult is not because we get rewarded for it. It's because it's nice to go in a toilet and not have to sit in your own waste.

and you feel better after you go, because you have to go to the bathroom and then you'll feel after go. So really, we don't want to be offering food treats for the toilet if possible, especially not high reward treats like candies, then they're like, well, what are you going to give me if I go potty this time kind of a thing?

And it can become a real power struggle with them later on, as they are going through these terrible twos and

finding their independence. Only children can control what goes into their body and what comes out of their bodies.

You can't force them to pee or poop. And I mean, you can coerce them into eating or sort of force into foods, but they can also throw up if you do that.

So, things going in and out their of bodies are the one thing that are fully under their control, and they will use that if try to trick them in to using the potty or try and force to them go.

Bathing, Sunscreen, and Checkup

Instead, try make it a fun thing and not a power struggle thing. As far as safety at this age, childproofing should be well in place, but keep in mind things like stairway gates are important because they usually can crawl upstairs at his age but they can't walk down them safely and they fall and that can be dangerous.

Make sure you have barriers around space heaters. Try to keep them out of the kitchen and out the bathroom because those are the most dangerous rooms in the house.

You wanna keep electrical cords out-of-reach. If they see you plugging things into outlets, they will try to plug things in outlets as well. They don't have any fear around water at this age and they will walk into a pool or a lake or river and drown in seconds if you let them.

So you want to keep, you know, the best way to childproof a pull is to have a gate around it that locks that they cannot get into on their own. You know, things like bathrooms, they can turn on the water in the bathtub and fall in there and drown.

They can fall head first into a toilet and drowned. So try to keep them away from water as much as possible. The best way to child proof a bathroom is by keeping the door closed and telling them they are allowed to go in when you're in with them.

and just being really strict about that. You want to keep small and sharp objects out of reach. They do put things in their mouth and they can choke on things.

And anything smaller than the size of your elbow, which is sort of a weird measurement, or they have these little choking size tube things that you can check it in, anything small can be choked on.

So you want try to to try keep those choking hazards away from them. Remember, don't take medicines in front of them. I already touched on that earlier.

Your water temperature on your boiler should be set to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, and that's because at a temperature of 120, it's not scalding hot.

It's hot enough that if they put their hand in it and it is too hot, they can pull it out in time before they get a scald burn. You want to avoid secondhand smoke and try not to smoke in front of your children at this age because they will start picking up cigarette butts on the ground and put them in their mouth if they see you putting cigarettes into your mouth.

They want to have a rear-facing car seat until they turn two or until the outgrow it, whichever is later. So if they out grow their seat before they turned two, you need to get a bigger seat that's rear facing.

And if, they still fit in their rear, facing car, seat when they're two years old, even if their legs are scrunched up, that is actually a comfortable position to stay in and it's safest for them because toddlers have big heads and relatively weak necks.

When you hit the brakes, if there forward facing, their head goes forward and back and they get whiplash. But if they're rear-facing, their head is just cushioned by the car seat, and so their heads just gently goes into the seat

when you hit on the brakes when they are rear facing.

And so that's the very safest for them. Make sure you're not leaving heavy objects or hot liquids on tablecloths or on a coffee table or other low tables because they will grab at things and pull on them and they can hurt themselves that way.

and they do put things in their mouth. So anything poisonous or that would be dangerous for them to swallow needs to be kept well out of their reach, out-of-sight, and locked away and make sure that you have the poison control number in your phone in case they get something.

There's things you might not even think of like laundry detergent or contact lens solution, glue, whatever kind of things you have in the house could potentially get ingested and be a poison.

So if you that poison control number saved in your phone, that is who you should call right away if they swallow something. Also, if find them with something like a prescription bottle that's open, you need to call Poison Control right way and they can lead you through what to do.

Don't call your doctor's office because they're just going to tell you to Call Poisin Control. Make sure if you have any guns in the house that you either remove them from the home or you keep them locked away, unloaded, and with the ammunition in a separate place as well.

Because children who find a gun will pick it up, will point it at a person and squeeze the trigger. It's been shown in studies that they do this. So trying to keep them away from the guns as much as possible by keeping the gun inaccessible to the baby.

And this is a great time to have a fire escape plan with your whole family and even run a Fire Drill and make sure you're checking your smoke detectors often, at least once every six months.

You could even do it every month just to make that they're working. Because if that fire alarm goes off at night, you want to plan for, how are we going to get out of the house safely?

And if your child is up and able to out the of house before you, want have safe meeting spot to meet them at where they know to go there directly so that you're not running around a house that's on fire trying to find your child.

For skincare at this age, you want to bathe them as often as they get dirty, which is pretty much every day now. I feel like toddlers always smell like a cupcake that fell on the ground.

They always smells like sugar and dirt. It's they're always sticky and always getting into stuff. So yeah, they'll probably need a bath every single day.

You can also take them in the shower if you A lot of 18-month-olds don't love having water touching their face, and so if they're resisting showers, then yeah, bath is totally fine.

And again, you need to be within arm's reach at all times. Do not walk out of the bathroom when they are in the bathtub. You can use lotion on their skin if their skins tends to get dry, although if you've had a history of eczema, a lot them are starting to outgrow it now and their is getting less sensitive typically at this age.

If they're going to be outside, the sunscreen rule of 30s is if they are spending more than 30 minutes outside you need to apply the sun screen. It has to at least be 30 min before they go outside before it starts working and you want to use an SPF 30 or higher.

So SPH is the Sun Protection Factor. 30or higher will be best for their skin. Also, make sure you're using a hat and sun-protective clothing like long-sleeve swim shirts if they are going to be outside for prolonged periods.

And for insect repellent, find one that is safe for babies and it'll be safe or toddlers as well. I like the ones that have

citronella or that are more natural-based versus the one's that're chemical- based or DEET based.

Those tend to a little more toxic. And lastly, for the 18 month checkup, you wanna expect them to be a little bit clingy and sad, especially if you sit them on the table and then go sit in a chair across the room, they're gonna be really sad.

So it's okay to have them examined in your arms or just to standing next to the tables while the doctor examines them. They're going to do a full head to toe exam and they typically will be getting routine vaccines at this visit.

And once these are in, they should be all caught up until they turn four, unless their hepatitis A was given after the first birthday and they're not old enough yet at this point, in which case usually that one they'll get at age two.

We typically recommend flu shots every year in children. And so they will probably be getting those at each of their next couple checkups. Well, at least at their two year and three year check ups before they turned four.

COVID vaccines are now recommended. for children at this age. So if they're due for those they might be getting them as well, but in terms of like the routine basic pediatric vaccines, they are pretty much cut up now until they turn four.

Just double check with your doctor to make sure they have everything. Their next couple checkups will be every six months. Age two, age two and a half, and age three are the next three check ups that they will have.

All right, so great talking with you. I know this one went on a little bit longer, 18 months old. They're so sweet and so cute and sometimes a bit tricky.

So yeah, do feel free to reach out to your pediatrician or to me. You can also check out my TikTok channel. my YouTube channel. I hope that everything's going really well and you're really enjoying your baby.

And if you are thinking of having another one, I have a book called The Baby Manual. If you haven't discovered this podcast sooner, you might not know that, but The baby manual covers the first year of life.

So it's all of the advice that I give to parents at all the routine checkups for the I've had a lot of parents give me feedback even when it's their second baby because every baby is different.

So yeah, if you would like, you can pick up a copy on Amazon. It's on Kindle and it is available worldwide on amazon. Great. Thank you so much for listening and tune back in in two weeks to hear all about potty training.

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