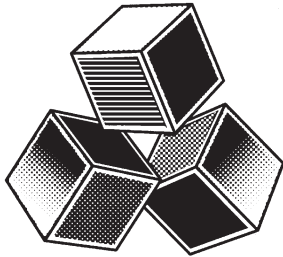


35 and 36
Months Old



PARENT EXPRESS

A Guide for You and Your Child

Dear Parent:

Isn't it amazing how fast your child grows!

Your child is almost 3 years old and growing more independent and capable every day.

Your child can do many things by himself at this age. He can sort and put away forks and spoons, he can carry piles of clean clothes to the bedroom, and he can set the table with napkins and silverware. It takes time and energy for you to show him how to do a new job, but it's worth the effort.

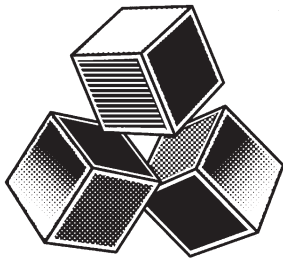
He does love to help, doesn't he? Children often say, "Me do it," as they strongly promote their right to become their own person. "Let's do it together," or "I will help too," usually helps better than "You can't do that," or "No, I'll do it," or "You're too little."

Encourage your child's cooperation; it will build his confidence and help him grow into a helpful, responsible person.

This is the last issue of *Parent Express*. We hope the series has been helpful to you in your very important and exciting job as parents.

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Parents can protect their child's hearing by making sure that infections are identified and treated and that hearing is routinely tested by their doctor or other healthcare provider.

Testing Hearing

A hearing test is an important part of your child's regular medical checkup. When a child is under 3 years of age, hearing is tested by observing your child's response to sound and her ability to learn new words. Three-year-old children can learn to take formal audiometric hearing screening tests. Be patient with your child until she understands what to do and can cooperate fully.

Language is an essential tool for learning. It allows a child to store information, exchange ideas, and express feelings. A hearing problem interferes with the development of normal language and learning.

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers frequently have colds that can lead to ear infections. If ear infections are not detected and treated, children may develop learning problems. Early discovery of possible hearing problems is the key to successful treatment and prevention of hearing loss.

Parents can protect their child's hearing by making sure that infections are identified and treated and that hearing is routinely tested by their doctor or other healthcare provider.

A Question about Bedwetting

My almost 3-year-old son is dry during the day but still wets the bed at night. This worries me and besides, it's a real bother. What should I do about it?

Your child is right on schedule. Most 3 year olds are dry during the day, but they usually continue to wet at night until they have passed their third

birthday. Your little one doesn't want to wet his bed. He is simply not yet able to hold his urine, wake up, and get to the toilet at night.

Don't scold or punish him for bedwetting. That could make him nervous and upset and then it would be even harder for him to become dry at night. If your child is older than three years and you are concerned about bedwetting, put your child in training pants covered by waterproof pants. Use a plastic sheet on the bed and leave the light on so he can find the bathroom. Do not give him beverages near bedtime. Be sure he goes to the toilet before going to bed.

Meanwhile, try to be relaxed and understanding about his nighttime wetting. Praise his successes and calmly accept his failures. In the long run, this will be the best way to help him become dry at night.

A Daily Food Guide

Use this daily food guide to plan a balanced day's diet for your child. Serving sizes are much smaller than an adult's.

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans, Nuts, and Peanut Butter

2 servings

One child may eat:

- ▶ 1 hard-cooked egg
- ▶ 1 ounce hamburger

Another child may eat:

- ▶ ¼ cup beans and 1 small chicken leg or 2 tablespoons peanut butter

Milk and Cheese

3 servings

Some milk may be in cream soups, custard, pudding, ice cream, or foods made with lots of milk.

One child may eat:

- ▶ 1 slice cheese and two 8-ounce glasses of milk

Another child may eat:

- ▶ ¼ cup milk on cereal
- ▶ ½ cup cream of tomato soup
- ▶ ¼ cup cottage cheese and two 8-ounce glasses of milk

Fruits and Vegetables

5 servings

One serving should be high in Vitamin C (oranges, grapefruit, tomato, green peppers, or greens). At least every other day, give your child one serving high in Vitamin A (broccoli, sweet potatoes, carrots, greens, cantaloupe, winter squash, or pumpkin). French fries are high in fat and are not the best vegetable choice.

One child may eat:

- ▶ ½ cup orange juice
- ▶ ½ small baked potato
- ▶ ¼ cup greens
- ▶ ¼ banana
- ▶ ¼ apple

Another child may eat:

- ▶ ¼ banana
- ▶ ¼ cup cooked carrots
- ▶ ¼ cup corn
- ▶ ¼ canned peach
- ▶ ½ cup orange juice

Bread, Cereals, Rice, Macaroni, Spaghetti, Grits, Cornbread, and Biscuits

6 servings

These are made from whole-grain or enriched flour or meal.

One child may eat:

- ▶ ¼ cup cooked oatmeal or grits
- ▶ 1 slice whole-grain bread (2 servings)
- ▶ 1 biscuit
- ▶ 3 small whole-grain crackers
- ▶ ¼ cup rice

Another child may eat:

- ▶ 1 small piece cornbread
- ▶ ¼ cup pasta
- ▶ ½ hamburger bun
- ▶ 2 graham crackers
- ▶ 1 pancake (2 servings)

Are You Listening?

Are you really listening to your son or daughter? Sometimes young children feel that, instead of listening to them, their parents mostly interrupt, instruct, advise, or criticize. They often are right! This way of responding to your child can lead to misunderstanding, stress, and anger.

Children whose parents don't listen well can feel that they and their ideas are not very important. Check yourself: do you talk back before you listen? If so, try active listening.

Active listening is trying hard to hear and understand the other person without interrupting, jumping to conclusions, judging, preaching, or getting mad. It means showing respect for the other person and her ideas, even if you don't agree with her. It means listening carefully to her

feelings. It means waiting until others have finished before responding.

Listening is a vital part of the good communication you want to have with your child. It takes patience and practice to develop good listening skills, but try it. You may find your conversations with your child easier and less stressful. As an extra reward, your child may imitate your good example and start listening more to what you have to say.

Talking to Children and Talking with Children

The way parents communicate with their child influences their child's development. Some parents almost always talk to their child. Talking to a child means using a lot of directions such as do's ("Let's take the dishes off the table now"), don'ts ("Don't pull the cat's tail"), and refusals ("Not now").

Talking to a child also includes a lot of teaching, mainly in providing new knowledge ("This cat is black") and asking questions ("What shape is this block?"). Talking to a child is important; all good parents talk to their child some of the time. Studies show, however, that when parents almost always talk to and not with their child, the child's language learning is limited.

Parents talk with their child when they match their comments and discussion to the child's questions and activities. This may mean continuing the topic the child has introduced or introducing a new topic based on what appear to be the child's interests.

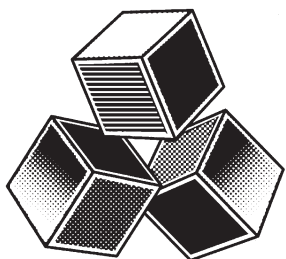
By talking with your child, you show you care about your child's interests, experiences, and needs, and that you want to learn more about him. You

have conversations in which each of you talks and listens to the other. Comments such as "What do you want to do with that box?" "Tell me about your visit to Grandma," and "You seem to be sleepy," may start these types of conversations.

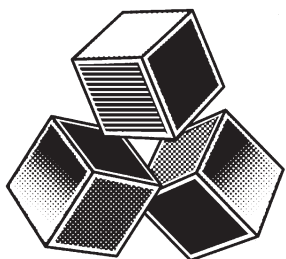
Talking with a child and listening to him increase his confidence and help him feel important. To a child, it means that he has something to say that is worth being listened to and responded to. As a child gets more pleasure from his talking, he will want to work harder at learning to do it well.

Two's and Three's Talk Help Me Learn in Many Different Ways

- ▶ Share your interests with me. If you enjoy fishing, include me. If you like cooking or gardening, I'd like to help.
- ▶ Give me simple instructions such as, "Please put the pot in the cabinet." After I do it, let me know how pleased you are by saying, "Thank you." I'll learn to be polite if you are.
- ▶ Show me how to take things apart and put them together. Give me pieces of pipe with connecting joints to screw on and off. They will keep me busy for quite a while.
- ▶ Let me choose magazine pictures and help me make my own picture book. Let me change the pictures from time to time. I will like looking at the book and talking about the pictures.
- ▶ Make or buy me a small backpack. I'll wear it around the house and on walks. I will put my own special treasures in it. Wearing it makes me feel grown up.



Talking with a child and listening to him increase his confidence and help him feel important. To a child, it means that he has something to say that is worth being listened to and responded to.



It is abusive to threaten that scary things will happen to the child if he doesn't behave—that the bogeyman will take him, that loved ones will stop loving him, will leave him, or will die. It is abusive to make a child believe he is unloved, stupid, wicked, or hopeless.

Homemade Toys That Teach Sound Match

Purpose

This toy helps your child learn to match sounds and tell one sound from another. Sound Match is an entertaining learning game that your youngster can play with you or with an older friend. It requires only simple, no-cost supplies, and it's very easy to make.

Materials

- ▶ 6 plastic food containers or metal spice or herb containers. After the food that came in them is gone, wash and dry them completely.
- ▶ Duct tape
- ▶ Fillings to make the containers rattle, such as dry rice, dry coffee grounds, dried beans, or small pebbles

Making the Toy

Partly fill two containers with something hard that rattles, like dried beans. Be sure each container sounds like the other when you shake it. Then partly fill two more containers with grains of rice. Check to see that they sound the same. Partly fill the last two containers with coffee grounds or some other filler. Coffee grounds will make a soft, swishy sound. Tape lids to secure the containers. When you shake the three kinds of containers, you will discover that each pair sounds different from the others.

Playing

Sit down with your child and give him three of the containers, one with each type of filling. Keep the other three for yourself. Take turns rattling one of the containers, while the other one of you finds the matching sound in his or her own set.

Another way to play this game is to put all six containers between you. Pick them up one at a time and shake them. Encourage your child to do the same. Together, pick up and shake, pick up and shake—until you have a sound match for each. Point out when the sounds are different as well as when they are the same. Your child will want to see what is making the noise inside the containers.

The two of you can think of other sound-making items to put into pairs of containers. In this way, you can work together in changing and enjoying this simple toy.

Do not put anything in the containers that will hurt your little one. If you think he will be playing with the containers alone, be sure to tape the tops on the containers so they cannot be removed.

Big Bag Blocks

Bag blocks can be used for jumping on, tossing, or hiding under. They can make houses, mountains, and castles.

To make each block, crumple sheets of newspaper and stuff them into a large paper or cloth bag. Do not use plastic bags. Children could suffocate if they accidentally put plastic bags over their heads. Keep stuffing until the bag is nearly full. Then fold over the top end and securely tape it shut. Make at least 10 bag blocks—the more the better!

Games for Growing Silly Questions

Purpose

This game encourages your child's imagination and use of words.

How to Play

Ask your child to imagine what would happen if something silly occurred, such as: What would happen if I put on my glasses upside down? What would happen if candy bars grew on trees? What would happen if people walked on their hands instead of their feet?

Let your child make up some silly questions for you, too. Have fun guessing and acting out these silly questions. You'll be pleased and surprised with your child's imagination.

What Is It?

Purpose

This game helps your child observe and understand the things in her world.

How to Play

Sit in a familiar room with your child. Look around the room and pick out something you can describe in two ways—what it looks like and what it does. Then, giving these two descriptions, ask your child to guess what you are thinking of.

For example, "I can see something that is red and rolls along the floor", or "I can see something that is white and you drink from", or "I see something that is tall and you sit on."

Remember to let your child have a turn at asking you to guess, too.

From Discipline to Abuse

Cooperative, well-behaved, and responsible children become that way because they are taught and guided by their parents. In *Parent Express* we have described the best ways we know to guide children; none of these ways involve physical punishment. We believe, and studies show, that physical punishment does not teach children well; it usually hurts the child more than it instructs.

Physical punishment such as pinching, hitting, or shaking can seriously hurt a child. This is abuse. Depriving a child of food or care or keeping a child tied up or locked in a room is also abuse.

Another kind of abuse uses words. Threats of physical or other feared punishment are abusive. It is abusive to threaten that scary things will happen to the child if he doesn't behave—that the bogeyman will take him, that loved ones will stop loving him, will leave him, or will die. It is abusive to make a child believe he is unloved, stupid, wicked, or hopeless.

Almost all parents want to do what is best for their child. Some may abuse their child, thinking that this is the best way to help him learn. They may be copying what they have learned from their own parents. Other parents may abuse their child because they lose control of their feelings. Some parents who abuse have very stressful and difficult lives. They don't have the will or the patience to discipline their child without abuse.

Our suggestions on discipline are written to help parents learn to discipline effectively without abuse. Our stress management suggestions can help parents control their tensions so they don't take out their anger and frustration on their child. Children who are abused or are unfairly or harmfully punished are more likely to become uncooperative than children who are guided and disciplined more gently and patiently.

Some Guidance Ideas

- Have a few simple rules, explain them to your child, and stick to them.
- Try to stay calm when disciplining your child.
- Praise your child's good behavior.
- Tell your child what to do rather than what not to do.
- Give your child reasonable, limited choices.
- Prepare your child for new situations.
- Save your *no's* for times when you child is in personal danger or is in danger of hurting other people or damaging property.
- Change the situation whenever possible rather than trying to change your child's behavior.

Discipline is teaching; it's one way to show love to your child.

Looking Ahead

Your child is 3 years old—no longer a toddler. You may wonder what is ahead and what you can do to help your child grow up healthy, happy, and responsible.

Your child is off to a good start already. During these first three years, you have helped your child feel important and successful. You have helped him learn about himself and his surroundings, and you have taught him to trust, respect, and enjoy others. This foundation has prepared him to become the type of person you want him to become. The good relationship you have will help you continue to support and guide him as he faces future decisions about school, friends, drugs, sex, and other important issues.

Building your child's self-esteem now will help him resist the negative pressures of others later on. Keeping the lines of communication open now will help him feel he can talk to you about difficult and confusing questions in the years to come.

Encouraging your child's enjoyment of language and learning now will help him succeed in school. Continue to have fun reading to him often, every day if possible. Select books

about ideas and events you think he is curious about. Take him to the public library and let him choose books for himself, then read them with him. Also, let him see you reading for fun on your own!

Parenthood is a rich, exciting opportunity for you to grow with your child. Trust yourself. You can offer your child the support, values, and skills to handle whatever comes along in the future.

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Parent Express guides you through parenting of children through age 36 months. For other publications in the 27-part series, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office.

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