

## ▪ **Toddlers (18-36 months)**

### **Communication**

- Label or name objects, describe events and reflect the feelings of your child to help them learn new words.
- Use firm, rational communication reflecting logical consequences of your child's actions when disciplining. Allow your child choices that are acceptable to you.
- Show genuine interest in your child's daily experiences.
- Express love, concern, and forgiveness often.

### **Teaching**

- Teach your child values through example, reinforcement, and stories.
- Direct negative behavior, such as throwing balls at people into a productive experience, such as throwing balls at a target or into a basket. This can be creatively done with running in the house, hitting, yelling, being destructive, etc.
- Answer your child's questions on their level.
- Foster your child's independence by giving them choices that are acceptable to you and respecting their selection.
- Teach your child new skills - how to dress themselves, throw a ball, ride a tricycle, etc.

### **Monitoring**

- Monitor the safety of their play environment and what they get into.
- Monitor your child's health - proper nutrition, immunizations, enough sleep, etc.

### **Thought Processes**

- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about the hopes and dreams of being the kind of father you want to be. Have you in any way lost touch with some of these hopes and dreams. Why?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about a person in your life who you have noticed parents in a way you feel is admirable. What can you learn from their example?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about the memories you have of your own father. What did you decide about how you would like to father your child based on those experiences.
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about times you enjoy most with your child. Notice the aspects of your relationship you think you are doing right.
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about times you felt personally challenged in interactions with your child. What are some of your strengths from which you can draw on to better meet these challenges?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about what you believe others (partner, children, relatives, friends, community, etc.) expect of you as a father. How do they differ? When have you met or not met these expectations?
- Create a story about the kinds of stories you would want your child to tell of you as their father

### **Errands**

- Drop off and pick up your child from day care if your child is enrolled.

### **Care Giving**

- Routine tasks of eating, toileting, dressing, etc, are important opportunities to help children learn new words, about their world, and how to regulate own behavior.
- Bath your child- play dramatically with toys like boats, ducks, water wheels, etc.

### **Child-Related Maintenance**

- Be involved in the toilet training process. Inappropriate techniques such as punishment or shaming should not be used. It should be accomplished when the child is ready and in a spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm.
- Help with the cooking, cleaning, and laundry associated with your child.

### **Shared Interests**

- Build off child's demonstrated initiative and interests. Become an "expert" in their area of interest and facilitate exploratory, hands on learning.

### **Availability**

- Be available for bed time routines, bathing, story time, play time, etc.

### **Planning**

- Plan field trips that would be of interest to your child. A trip to the fireman station, post office, flower shop, apple orchard, bakery, animal farm, museum, etc. Allow for a lot of exploratory time. Bring things to the child's level of understanding.

### **Shared Activities**

- Play reciprocally with your toddler, modeling how to play imaginatively (playing jungle animals, fireman, house, etc.) and proper social roles and behaviors in certain settings.
- Read, sing, do finger plays, act out simple stories, etc with your child. Flannel boards or magnetic boards allow the child to manipulate the figures and tell their stories.
- Take your child to a park with small climbing equipment that he or she can go around, in, and out of with swings, and low slides. Facilitate large muscle play.
- Play in different mediums such as sand, water, rice, beans, etc, with your child. Bring along funnels, measuring cups, waterwheel, shovels, buckets, etc....be creative and explore.
- Go exploring with your child in an empty field, at a park, in a new setting, etc. Follow their initiative and interests and build or scaffold on actions/ideas.
- Work together building a fort, making a tent, etc.
- Include your child in some of your outdoor tasks such as washing the car, weeding the garden, taking out the garbage, fixing the car.

### **Providing**

- Provide child with large crayons, water color markers, large paper, clay, etc. for child to explore and manipulate art materials.
- Provide your child with simple books, pictures, puzzles, music, and time and space for active play such as jumping, running, and dancing.
- Providing unstructured materials for music, dance, and dramatic play enable your child to enjoy the process of creating their own ideas and solving their own problems.

### **Affection**

- Bed time is a good time to cuddle, hug, and kiss your child.

### **Protection**

- Install the car seat properly.
- Always buckle up your children in the backseat.
- Install Electrical outlet covers that are large enough not to be a choking hazard if taken out.
- Install cabinet and drawer locks on locations that contain dangerous materials such as cleaning chemicals, sharp tools or appliances, medicine cabinets, etc.
- Install window blind cord wraps designed to prevent strangulation from window blind cords.
- Many house plants can cause illness or death. Keep out of reach of children.
- Install a child gate to block off stairways, or places of the house you do not monitor regularly.

### **Supporting Emotionally**

- Toddlers rely on adults to help them deal with their intense feelings and rapid fluctuations in moods. Adults must be especially careful to give toddlers many

chances to figure things out for themselves, while remaining available to them if they ask for assistance.

- Toddlers struggle with independence, and dependence, initiative and passivity, self-awareness and confusion, confidence and doubt, etc. You need to be resourceful in providing your child with needed emotional security.