Safe Exploring For Toddlers

**On the Move:** Toddlers—it’s hard to imagine a more fitting name for this stage of development. Between the ages of 1 and 3, toddlers are literally scooting away from babyhood in search of new adventures. They’re learning to talk, walk and run, and to assert their independence. For many in this age group, “outside” and “play” are becoming common requests.

As a parent, you’re focused on keeping your little one safe. Supervision and safety precautions, such as gates and electrical outlet cover, are important.

But you’ll also want to offer your toddler chances to explore. That means close supervision but with opportunities to enjoy different environments. From a walk in the woods to a trip to a museum, parents can give kids the space and freedom to investigate, which is an important part of helping them grow.

**Why Explore:** Exploring the inside and outside world—with supervision, of course—is important for toddlers’ emotional, social, and physical development. They learn more about the world and how it works. It’s one thing to see an orange, but it’s another to hold it in your hand, feel its cool smooth surface, smell its fragrance, maybe even taste it. That development is all the better if you ask questions: What color is it? Is it big or little?

Exploring also gives toddlers a chance to work on important motor skills. Whether it’s kicking a ball or climbing stairs, they can persist until they get it right. Doing so not only adds skills, it boosts their sense of confidence and competence. In other words, they begin to think: “I can do it!”

Letting kids explore is one way to see that toddlers get enough daily physical activity. Exploring fits well in that free-play category below. For kids 12-to36-months-old, current guidelines from the National Association for Sports & Physical Education (NASPE) recommend:

- At least 30 minutes of structured physical activity (adult-led)
- At least 60 minutes unstructured physical activity (free play)

Copied from KidsHealth.org from The Nemours Foundation
Colour Sorting Pom Pom Drop

Make a fun game for color sorting and fine motor skill coordination using rainbow cardboard tubes and colored pom poms! A great indoor or outdoor activity for toddlers and preschoolers to enjoy again and again.

The first step is to paint some long wrapping paper tubes in rainbow colors and let them dry. When ready, stick them to the inside of a large, under the bed type storage box, using double sided sticky tape. Leave about 2 inches from the bottom so the Pom Poms can drop through.

Fill the tub with lots of plain, sparkly and colorful Pom Poms to match the tubes as close as possible. You can add some of the large tweezers for children for easy grabbing if you’d like.

This is a great way for little ones to learn cause and effect, matching and sorting, addition and subtraction. All are pre-math activities.

Follow your kiddos lead and just let play naturally happen and learning just follow.

This activity and other wonderful and fun, creative activities for you and your little people can be found at:
Theimaginationtree.com
WV Birth to Three is a statewide system of services and supports for children under age three who have a delay in their development, or may be at risk of having a delay, and their family. Birth to Three falls under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Essentially, this means that Birth to Three is a teaching program.

I think that as parents, with children, with developmental delays we sometimes just want someone to “fix” our child. We often forget that we have a responsibility in this process. We should remember that we are the most important part of the team that is put together for our child. As a teaching program, Birth to Three is there to give us the tools for success; it’s up to us to implement them.

I remember being a twenty-three year old new mother and the sheer panic I felt when my daughter was born with spina bifida. I made a promise to myself and to her that we would do everything we could to make sure she had a wonderful life. The things I wanted for her were what all parents want for their children. I wanted her to be healthy and experience as many as the milestones as she could like other children her age. I wanted her to grow up, go to school, have a career, have a family and be able to live on her own. The only problem was that I had no clue how to do that.

That’s when I met with a social worker at the hospital and she started throwing around terms like SSI, Medicaid, CHIPS, Early Intervention and other stuff that had acronyms. I had no idea what all of this meant but I knew that these were things that would help me keep my promise to my daughter.

One week after my daughter came home from the hospital I had my first visit from Birth to Three. I was still in panic mode and the worker was once again throwing around a lot of words that I didn’t understand. Then we started seeing therapists and they were speaking their therapist language that didn’t quite sink in. But we kept every appointment and I did my best to grasp what they were trying to do.

Gradually I started building relationships with all these new people who had suddenly entered my world. My panic started to disappear and my confidence grew. I realized that I could ask them to explain to me what they were doing and what all these words meant. Sometimes they had to explain over and over but they did it patiently. I even started making my own suggestions and have them try different things that I thought would work better. I learned to be a voice for my daughter.

Nineteen years later we are still working on the goal of her being independent but I am nowhere near any kind of panic. Even all these years later, I remember what Birth to Three taught me. Here are some of my tips to get the most out of your experience with Birth to Three:

1. **Make that commitment.** Decide that this is a good thing for your child and put in the time. You can’t build those relationships if you don’t keep your appointments.
2. **Be present during your appointments.** Since Birth to Three is a teaching program the whole purpose is for the therapists to show you what to do. You can’t learn if you are on your smartphone or trying to get housework done while the therapist is there.
3. **Do your homework.** There’s no way that a child is going to progress if the only time therapy is happening is when the therapist is there.
4. **Communicate.** Don’t be afraid to ask questions. If you don’t understand what your homework is, ask to be shown again. Ask to be shown as many times as it takes for you to understand and be confident doing what the therapist is suggesting. You are also not going to know what doesn’t work for your child if you’re not following through. Don’t ever be afraid to tell a therapist that you don’t think something is working or if you discover another way that may work better for your child. You know your child best.

Amy Knapp, PP RAU 6
How do I know if My Child Has a Food Allergy?

A food allergy happens when the body reacts against harmless proteins found in foods. The reaction usually happens shortly after a food is eaten. Food allergy reactions can vary from mild to severe.

Because many symptoms and illnesses could be wrongly blamed on “food allergies,” it is important for parents to know the usual symptoms. The following is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) about food allergies and how to recognize and treat the symptoms. There is also important information about how to keep your child safe and healthy at home and in school if he has a food allergy.

**Symptoms of a food allergy**

When the body’s immune system overreacts to certain foods, the following symptoms may occur:

- **Skin problems**
- Hives (red spots that look like mosquito bites)
- Itchy skin rashes (eczema, also called atopic dermatitis)
- Swelling
- **Breathing problems**
- Sneezing
- Wheezing
- Throat tightness
- **Stomach symptoms**
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- **Circulation symptoms**
- Pale skin
- Light-headedness
- Loss of consciousness

If several areas of the body are affected, the reaction may be severe or even life-threatening. This type of allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis and requires immediate medical attention.

**Not a food allergy**

Food can cause many illnesses that are sometimes confused with food allergies. The following are not food allergies:

- **Food poisoning**—Can cause diarrhea or vomiting, but is usually caused by bacteria in spoiled food or undercooked food.
- **Drug effects**—Certain ingredients, such as caffeine in soda or candy, can make your child shaky or restless.
- **Skin irritation**—Can often be caused by acids found in such foods as orange juice or tomato products.
- **Diarrhea**—Can occur in small children from too much sugar, such as from fruit juices.

Some food-related illnesses are called intolerance, or a food sensitivity, rather than an allergy because the immune system is not causing the problem. Lactose intolerance is an example of a food intolerance that is often confused with a food allergy. Lactose intolerance is when a person has trouble digesting milk sugar, called lactose, leading to stomachaches, bloating, and loose stools.

Sometimes reactions to the chemicals added to foods, such as dyes or preservatives, are mistaken for a food allergy. However, while some people may be sensitive to certain food additives, it is rare to be allergic to them.
Foods that can cause food allergies

Any food could cause a food allergy, but most food allergies are caused by the following:

- Cow milk
- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Soy
- Wheat
- Nuts from trees (such as walnuts, pistachios, pecans, cashews)
- Fish (such as tuna, salmon, cod)
- Shellfish (such as shrimp, lobster)

Peanuts, nuts, and seafood are the most common causes of severe reactions. Allergies also occur to other foods such as meats, fruits, vegetables, grains, and seeds such as sesame.

The good news is that food allergies are often outgrown during early childhood. It is estimated that 80% to 90% of egg, milk, wheat, and soy allergies go away by age 5 years. Some allergies are more persistent. For example, 1 in 5 young children will outgrow a peanut allergy and fewer will outgrow allergies to nuts or seafood. Your pediatrician or allergist can perform tests to track your child’s food allergies and watch to see if they are going away.

The information contained on this website should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Source: Food Allergies and Your Child Copyrighted 2007 American Academy of Pediatrics
As your Parent Partner for RAU 5 and RAU 6, we would like to start sending out current activities and other relevant information via e-mail to you, our parents.

If you are interested in receiving these e-mails please provide your e-mail address to me at Barbara.A.Cross@wv.gov (RAU 5) or Amy.L.Knapp@wv.gov (RAU 6).

If you have, and would like to share, a personal story or experience, short article, craft or other information that would help and support other WV BTT families- please send them also. We would love to hear from you!

Barb & Amy

Did you know..... that Block Parties are reported as a World War I innovation origination from the East Side of NYC., where an entire block was roped off and patriotic songs sung and a parade held to honor the members of that block who had gone off to war? Block parties usually occur on holidays such as the 4th of July and Memorial Day. Some towns may also have an annual block party. They may involve barbecues and lawn games, karaoke, and group dancing. Local bands playing music, activities like pony rides, inflatables and don’t forget the pop corn! Your local fire department may also participate in the party, bringing out trucks that they display for show.

Whatever, your special occasion may be, Summer is the time to get out and meet new neighbors and enjoy one another, and some awesome cooking!