

6 Big Changes for Toddlers: Guide for Training Child Care Providers

Overview:

Between 6 months and 2 years-of-age, children go through a lot of changes in their physical and cognitive abilities. We've broken these developmental changes out into *6 Big Changes for Toddlers*. Keeping these changes in mind can help to alleviate some of the frustrations that come with caring for a toddler.

Materials:

- ◇ Video – 6 Big Changes for Toddlers
- ◇ Provider Handout (single-sided) 
- ◇ Parent Handout (double-sided, see page 2 of this guide)

To access the materials, visit

Website: <http://lactation.ucdavis.edu/baby-behavior-in-child-care/>

Password: BBCC2017



Tips for sharing with childcare providers

- ◇ Ask provider to name some of the challenges that caregivers face when caring for a toddler. Identify which of the *Big 6* may explain the child's behavior and how the challenge can be addressed.
- ◇ Share video and Provider Handout with the provider. Draw attention to the information provided about what the parents might be seeing and feeling as these changes occur.
- ◇ Offer copies of the Parent Handout for the provider to share with parents. Point out the tips that are given to make caring for toddlers easier.
- ◇ Help provider identify specific opportunities that they have to share messages with the parents of the children that they care for, such as pick up and drop off times when updating parents on the activities of the day, in newsletters or calendars, or when parents ask questions.

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Six Big Changes for Toddlers

Your Toddler's Growth Slows Down
 Your toddler is growing bigger and stronger every day, but you may have noticed that he isn't growing as fast as he did when he was younger. Younger babies seem to eat more food each week. Your toddler won't keep eating more and more food because he is not growing as fast. He might eat more food one day and less the next day. Try not to worry when he doesn't seem hungry. Talk to your doctor if you are worried about your toddler's appetite.

Your Toddler Must Practice New Skills like Standing and Walking
 Your toddler will learn many new motor skills before she is 2 years old. She may want to practice pulling up and walking as she holds your fingers. Because learning new skills is so important, she will need a lot of practice. Sometimes she would rather practice than eat. Also, as she works on new skills like crawling, standing, and walking, she may wake up more often. As she gets better at her skills, she will sleep more at night.

Your Toddler Needs to Practice Using His Fingers
 Your toddler must use his hands to pick things up, hold things, and even throw things! That means that your toddler will have a strong need to practice using his hands. Sometimes he won't eat unless you let him feed himself. Your toddler will make a mess when he is learning to eat with his fingers, but it is very important that you give him a chance. Have a towel nearby for quick clean up.

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Your Toddler Needs You to Help Him Learn
 Even before he starts to talk, your toddler is already learning a lot about words. Pointing is his way of telling you that he is ready to listen and learn! He wants you to tell him more about what he sees. Try talking to him. You might find that you repeat the words, like "that is a cat, a big cat" when you see a cat. Telling him what you see can help him learn the right words. Sometimes he may want to hold and even taste things around him. It is important to make sure he can't touch or grab anything unsafe. Sometimes he will be happy to just hear you talk to him about new things. Talking to your toddler before he is using words is important, fun, and educational!

Your Toddler is Remembering More Every Day
 Your toddler is able to remember many things now. She can remember people she sees every day and she knows when someone is new to her. She may be shy around people she sees only once in a while. She may not want new people to pick her up or get too close. You can help her by asking friends and family to wait until your toddler gets used to them before they try to hold her. She can remember what foods she likes, what foods she doesn't like, and what foods are new to her. It might help her to try new foods if you keep the foods she likes best out of sight.

Your Toddler Will Use "Scripts" to Understand and Predict Daily Activities
 Your toddler needs to learn everything about the world around her. She will try to learn what things are, what things change, and what things stay the same. She notices when things happen in the same way every day or every week. She makes up "scripts" or stories in her mind that will help her remember what will happen next, who does what, and how things work. She may have scripts for what happens when she takes a bath, when she gets into the car, or when she goes to child care. If you don't follow your toddler's script, like choosing the "wrong" clothes, she may get upset. The good news is that you are in charge of your toddler's scripts! You can change her scripts by making up and sticking to new routines.

Highlights

- All toddlers go through these 6 big changes:
 - Growth slows down
 - Must practice new skills like standing and walking
 - Need to practice using their fingers
 - Need you to help them learn
 - Remember more and more every day
 - Use "scripts" to learn about their world
- Toddlers appetites can be very different from day to day
- Eating and sleeping can be affected when toddlers don't get enough practice with their new skills
- Though messy, it's important for toddlers to practice using their fingers, and practice feeding themselves
- Talk to toddlers to help them learn
- Routines are useful for helping toddlers learn about their daily activities and to know what to expect

Ideas for Sharing Opportunities

- Messages can be shared individually, over time, as toddlers move through the 6 Big Changes
- Talk about messages as parents notice changes or bring up behaviors that are changing
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____