

The logo for Kids Plus Pediatrics features the letters 'k', 'i', 'd', 's', and a '+' sign, each inside a colored square: 'k' in green, 'i' in red, 'd' in purple, 's' in yellow, and '+' in blue. Below this is the word 'pediatrics' in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

# pediatrics

# 15-Month Handout

## 15-MONTH DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

1. Can your child walk a short distance by herself?
2. Can your child crawl up a few stairs by himself?
3. Does your child feed herself using her fingers, grasping food between her thumb and finger?
4. Has your child started to say a few words?
5. Is your child starting to understand more words when you talk?
6. Will your child follow simple commands?
7. Is your child developing more social interactions?
8. Can your child hold a cup and drink?
9. Can your child stack 2 cubes, or one thing on top of another?
10. Will your child throw a ball and ride on toys?

## FEEDING

Your child should be learning to feed himself. He'll use his fingers and maybe start using a spoon himself. Expect this to be messy at first! model good nutrition and table manners by eating with your child. Teach him the healthy and polite way you want him to eat by showing him how. Children at this age should be eating table foods, often at three meals a day, plus nutritious snacks like cheese, fruit, and vegetables. Though it's awfully tempting, do *not* use food as a reward and do not resort to giving junk food if your child is picky. children at this age don't eat much, and it's normal to have very slow weight gain at this time.

Most children should be using only a cup by now. If your child is still using a bottle, try to wean her off to a cup, to help prevent tooth and ear problems. Limit juice to 4oz a day at most.

## DEVELOPMENT

Toddlers may have temper tantrums at this age. Trying to reason with or punish your child may actually make the tantrum last longer. It's best to make sure your toddler is in a safe place, then ignore the tantrum. The more attention the child gets from throwing a tantrum, the more it encourages the behavior. Once your child learns that temper tantrums don't get attention or whatever it is she wants, she won't throw as many.

Discipline means teaching, so discipline should give clear messages that are appropriate to the child's understanding. Limits and rules should be set and *consistently* enforced. A firm "no" can be followed, if

necessary, by physical reinforcement, such as holding the child, removing an object the child was asked not to touch, or distracting or removing a child from an undesirable situation. Remember to positively reinforce desired behavior. Give more “yes” than “no” messages – praising good behavior helps build a child’s self-esteem.

Children at this age are curious and want to be the boss. This is normal. If he’s safe, you can let your child explore new things. As long as you’re there to protect him and he isn’t doing any harm, you can let him satisfy his curiosity. Stuffed animals, toys for pounding, pots and pans, measuring cups, and empty boxes are some examples of toys children this age enjoy.

Toddlers may want to imitate what you are doing. Sweeping, dusting, or washing toy dishes can be fun activities for children. Children learn by example. What they see you doing, they will try and do too.

Children begin to understand language very quickly at this age. You can encourage language development by reading books, singing, and talking with your child about what she’s doing and seeing. You can name common objects and body parts for your toddler, and encourage her to say words. Respond with pleasure when your child makes word-like sounds.

Read to your child every single day. This is one of the most powerful ways to set them up for success later on. Carry books with you, instead of electronics, to use when your child needs a distraction.

Limit television watching, and encourage physical activity. Try play-chasing, dancing, splashing in water, throwing and kicking a ball, and other supervised physical activities.

## **DENTAL CARE**

As your baby gets new teeth, be sure to clean them once or twice a day. At this age, cleaning them with a clean wet washcloth is all that’s needed. It’s OK if you want to use a toothbrush; just be sure it’s soft-bristled. No toothpaste is necessary. If you don’t have fluoride in your water supply, please inform us so we can give your child supplemental fluoride. This is also a good time to continue weaning off bottles and pacifiers. And, as always, no food or drink in bed!

## **SLEEP**

Your child should be sleeping through the night in her own bed. Having a simple routine can make bedtime easier. If she wakes up during the night, keep your interaction brief. She does not need food or milk during the night. Do not put a TV in your child’s bedroom.

## **SAFETY TIPS**

### **Prevent Fires and Burns**

- Check your smoke detector (replace the batteries if necessary) and practice a fire escape plan.
- Put plastic covers in unused electrical outlets.

- Keep hot appliances and cords out of reach.
- Keep all electrical appliances out of the bathroom.
- Don't cook with your child at your feet.
- Use the back burners on the stove, with pan handles out of reach.
- Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees F.
- Use sunscreen if your child will be outside playing. We recommend an SPF of at least 30.

### **Prevent Drowning**

- Never leave an infant or toddler alone in a bathtub. Continuously watch your child around any water, including toilets and buckets.
- Keep toilet seats down and store buckets upside down.
- Ensure home swimming pools are fully fenced and gated
- Consider a CPR class!

### **Avoid Falls**

- Remove dangling cords and string from your child's environment.
- Do not put climb-able furniture near windows. Even a tight fitting screen may not stop a child from falling out of a window.
- Use gates on stairs. Be sure they fit snugly; babies can use enough force to dislodge a loose-fitting one.
- Be careful with expandable gates- be sure the release mechanism's side is on the outside, away from the baby, so they have a harder time releasing the gate.
- Playpens are excellent islands of safety when you need to put the baby down and turn your attention elsewhere for a few minutes.
- Don't underestimate your child's ability to climb.

### **Prevent Poisonings**

Keep medicines, vitamins, cleaning supplies, and gardening chemicals locked away. Install safety latches on cabinets. Keep the **Poison Control Center** phone number, **412-681-6669**, in your phone.

### **Firearm Safety**

Keep guns locked, unloaded, and ammunition stored separately.

### **Passive Smoke Exposure**

We also caution against passive smoke exposure of any kind, including vapor from e-cigarettes. Our recommendation for the health of your baby is no smoking. The more smoke your child is exposed to, the higher her chance of developing more colds, lung infections, ear infections, allergies, asthma problems, and cancer. The best thing for your child's health is for you not to smoke at all. Even if you don't smoke near your child, chemicals from smoking stay with you on your clothes and on your body. If you must smoke, smoke outside the house, never inside or in the car. Even if your child is in another room or not in the car at the moment, she will still be exposed to lingering, harmful chemicals later.

## WALK-IN HOURS

We now offer no-appointment necessary Walk-In Hours, at all offices:

**Weekday Mornings, 8:15 to 9:30am** at Pleasant Hills and Squirrel Hill/Greenfield

**Weekday Evenings, 6:30pm to 8:00pm**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday at Pleasant Hills

Monday and Thursday at Squirrel Hill/Greenfield.

**All Day, Every Week Day** at Cranberry/Seven Fields

These hours are to address routine health problems such as sore throat, cold symptoms, fever, rash, and ear pain. They are not designed to evaluate chronic problems. If your child is older than 4 months and has had symptoms fewer than 3 days, you can be seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

## QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

If you feel you need additional advice between regular check-ups, you can post questions to our Facebook page or telephone us during office hours. Facebook, where we answer questions sometimes as quickly as in a few minutes, is a great place to ask about general, non-pressing issues. For more detailed and pressing health issues, it's best to call. Either way, we're always happy to provide counseling and guidance. (It's both our job and our pleasure!)

When calling after office hours, your call will be answered by an answering machine. If you have a concern that can't wait for regular office hours, please leave your name, your child's name (with spelling), and your phone number, and we'll return your call usually within an hour or so. If you have an emergency that requires an ambulance or paramedics, call 911 *first*. If you have an emergency that can't wait for a call back and need to have the doctor urgently paged (such as seizures, respiratory illness with labored breathing, suspected dehydration, or similar conditions), the recorded message will give you the answering service's phone number, and they can reach the doctor on call for the emergency.



## AND REMEMBER...

We have a wonderful, 24/7/365 resource for parents at our **Kids Plus Facebook Page**. Like us on Facebook, and follow along with our great Kids Plus Social Media Community!

*We look forward to seeing you at your 18-Month Well Visit!*