Caring for Your 12-24 Month Old

1. Make family meals part of every day, as often as you can. At the table with you, your child will learn to eat, and to enjoy healthy foods.

2. How much your child eats will change by meal and by day, and that is okay. Never force them to eat. Let them eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full.

3. Give your child active play time every day, both inside and outside.

4. 12-24 month olds need 11-14 hours of sleep a day. Sleep is an important time for healthy growth and brain development.

5. No screen time for children until at least 18 months. At 18 months, if you want TV or other screen time for your child, choose programs they can learn from. Watch with your child to help them understand what they are seeing.
Your Child’s Sleep

- Most 12-24 month olds need to sleep 11 to 14 hours a day. This includes sleep at night, and for most kids 1 or 2 daytime naps as well.

- Give your toddler a chance to learn to fall asleep on her own. Sleeping is a skill that children need to learn.

- It is normal at this age to sleep all night, but there can also be short times of waking up. Teething or not wanting to be apart from you can make it harder for your child to sleep.

- Have a bedtime routine that you do every night with your child. Try the 3 Bs: Bath, book, and bed! This will let your child know it is time for sleep.

- Toddlers should not feed during the night. Ask your doctor for help if your child does feed at night.
Meal Time and Your 1-2 Year Old

Healthy Feeding

- At this age, your child should start to eat at regular meal times: 3 meals a day and 2 or 3 healthy snacks. Make family meals part of every day, as often as you can. Eating together at the table with you, your baby will learn to eat, and to enjoy new and healthy foods.

- Keep TV and other screens off during meals. Talk to each other.

- Give children healthy foods for their growing bodies. Your child’s stomach is small, so you don’t want to fill it with sweets or junk food.

- Let your child try many kinds of vegetables and fruits. If she does not like one, offer it again and again at other meals. It can take trying a food many times before starting to like it.

- Let your baby see you eat lots of vegetables and fruits and other healthy foods. Your baby will learn from you and want to eat what you eat.

- To avoid choking, only offer foods that are small and easy to chew.
Healthy feeding now will help your child learn good eating habits for life.

Don’t make your child finish food.

Eating when not hungry teaches children to eat more than their bodies need. This is not healthy and can make them gain too much weight as they get older.

- 1-2 year olds grow more slowly than when they were younger, so your child may eat less than they did before.

- Some toddlers also get more picky about the foods they eat. Learning to like a food can take time, so be patient and offer the food many times.

- If your child eats only a little at one meal and then more another day, that is normal and ok.
Toddlers need time every day to move and explore.

Being active will make your child stronger and more coordinated.

Make time for him to be active every day, both in your home and outside.

Be active with your child. If he sees you having fun being active, he will want to do it too!

Screen Time and Your Toddler

Children under 18 months should not have any screen time. At 18 months, if you do want TV or other screen time for your child, choose programs they can learn from, and watch together to help them understand what they are seeing.

- No screen time means not being in a place to see TVs, computers, tablets, or phones that are being watched.

- Screen time at this age can slow children’s learning to talk and read as they get older. It can also add to sleep and attention problems. Your child learns best from hearing you talk. TV does not help with this. If you like background noise in the house, turn on the radio or a music player.

- If you do video calls (like Skype or FaceTime) with family or friends, it is ok to have your child do that with you.
For great parenting information and videos, check out: www.BostonBasics.org

The Boston Basics are 5 fun, simple, and powerful ways that every family can give every child a great start in life.

MAXIMIZE LOVE, MANAGE STRESS

- Toddlers want to do more and more for themselves. They say “no” a lot because they want to control what they do.
- At all times your child needs to feel safe and loved.
- If you have a lot of stress, talk to friends, family, or your doctor about what you can do to help yourself.

TALK, SING, AND POINT

- Toddlers are curious! They want to learn. Describe what you are doing and point to and talk about what you see around you.

COUNT, GROUP, AND COMPARE

- Count with your child. Say the names of shapes, sort things, compare sizes. It may seem early, but toddlers start to learn math this way!

EXPLORE THROUGH MOVEMENT AND PLAY

- Toddlers need time to be active every day, both inside and outside.
- Play with your child. Make things, roll a ball, run around together.
- Find a playgroup! Your child will learn from being with other kids.

READ AND DISCUSS STORIES

- Read with your child every day. Reading teaches children to love books and stories. It also helps them be ready for school when they are older. And it offers a good time to be together!
- Point to the words and pictures so your child can follow along.
Plan time for your child to be with other kids. Toddlers learn from each other. They learn how to talk, how to play, how to share.

- **Outdoors Rx**
  Free Saturday morning programs for families in Chelsea, Revere, and more. Be active and outdoors and have fun! Visit OutdoorsRx.org for more information.

- **Libraries**
  Many libraries have programs and playgroups for toddlers. Find out what is going on at your local library.

  **Chelsea Public Library**
  569 Broadway
  Chelsea MA 02150
  (617) 466-4350

  **Revere Public Library**
  179 Beach Street
  Revere, MA 02151
  (781) 286-8380

  **Did you know you can get free and low-cost museum and other activity passes at the library?**
  Ask what they have at your library. Passes include:
  - The Aquarium
  - The Boston Children’s Museum
  - The Museum of Science
  - And many more!

- **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)**
  WIC offers nutrition support to families of pregnant women and young children. They also have play groups! Stop by our office at the health center, or call to learn more.

  **WIC at MGH Chelsea & Revere**
  (617) 887-4340