

Sharing is a concept that every child must eventually learn. By treating your child with respect and speaking to him or her in a reasonable fashion, you will be able to explain to your child why sharing is important.

## Sharing Toys with Other Children



Neither eighteen month olds nor two year olds are very good at sharing toys. This, too, is part of the normal development and should be accepted as such. From your baby's perspective her toys are an extension of herself. For someone to take a toy from her is a direct affront to her integrity. It's as if part of her has been taken away. Parents are probably unrealistic to request a child of this age to share with other children. You can start to work toward that goal, but it may be too soon to reasonably expect to achieve it.

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One helpful hint is to have a special set of toys designated for the play group. This way the toys don't seem to belong to any one person. Aggression and fighting over toys can also be reduced with planned activities. The activities should be ones that are creative, messy, and fun, such as painting, or playing with blocks, sand, and molding material.

## Difficulties with Changes in the Routine

Eighteen month olds are very ritualistic. Often routines must be carried out in exactly the same way or the toddler is upset. Recognizing this, you can help your toddler by trying to maintain as consistent a routine as possible. By doing this, your toddler doesn't have to try to figure out what's going to happen next. Transitions are also eased by letting children know what to expect.

Toddler's typical ritualistic behavior may be due to their limited understanding of language. Sometimes we are

## BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

There are lots of tips on helping children get along. Here is one helpful tip for sharing toys. Your child is not playing with the toy, but doesn't want another child to play with it, calmly explain to your child that it is okay for the other child to play with the toy.

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fooled into thinking that eighteen month olds know more than they do. On occasion, parents should stand back and evaluate why the child acted the way he did. Perhaps he did not understand what was said or asked. While toddlers understand a great deal, not all ideas hold the same meaning for eighteen month olds as they do for adults.

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Because of this, your child's reactions to disruptions in his routine are likely to be more intense than they were earlier in his life. The toddler's distress and obstinacy are said to be, in part, related to the beginning development of his sense of self. To the toddler, parent and child are becoming two separate people, which may be a stressful adjustment.

The emotions of fear and worry may seem more apparent with toddlers than with young babies. Some two year olds seem quite wary when confronted with new situations. In particular, such things as firecrackers, loud noises and vacuum cleaners can be pretty frightening. Toddlers don't understand the relationship between cause and effect yet and may attribute magical or lifelike properties to noises and machines. The toddler may even think that these strange occurrences happened because of something he did.

Some children hold onto their parents until they are comfortable and secure in a new setting. Yet at home, if all is going well, your child should be able to leave your side to play by himself in another room. Your child's caution and his checking in on you represent a beginning sense of reality. It is part of the normal developmental process, without which your child would not develop into a

healthy, independent person.

Although at times your toddler will be difficult to manage, this is the age when it is even more important to be firm in setting limits, consistent in your demands, nurturing during the bad as well as the good moments. Your role is to balance the toddler's desired independence with his continued need for reassurance, love and affection.