

# Diapering

Providing many new learning experiences for infants and toddlers, and one-on-one time with their caregiver.

## From stages 1 through 4 (birth to around 24 months)

### I am learning:

- what a wet or soiled diaper feels like.
- to express that I need my diaper changed when it's wet or soiled. In the beginning I may just cry or fuss, but eventually I might give you more obvious signs like pointing or pulling at my diaper.
- about my body and how it works. I may even stop what I'm doing and touch my diaper or find a quiet place when I go pee or poop.
- that diaper time is "me time!" When I babble, gesture, or talk, you respond and speak back to me. This is a great time for me to interact with one of my first and most important "toys": you!



### My caregivers help me during diapering by:

- responding quickly when my diaper needs to be changed. This will help me trust you, and to understand what comes next.
- letting me know before you pick me up that you will be changing my diaper.
- giving me time to finish what I'm doing before you pick me up.
- respecting me when you speak to me or others about my soiled diaper.
- telling me what you are going to do and describing what you are doing during diaper changes. This not only helps me learn new words, but it includes me in the process and helps me understand what is coming next.
- providing a safe and sanitary place to change diapers where I can't roll off. I am learning new ways to move my body, and I am not able to control many of my movements. I also like to try new motor skills in new places!
- keeping everything you need to change diapers nearby, where you can easily reach it, and clearly labeled.
- talking to my family about my diapering routines. A similar diaper routine at home and at child care helps me understand what to expect.

Remember, it is what is in the diaper that may not smell so good, it is not the child. Children watch adults closely and may feel confused about your message.

- showing me how to wash my hands after diapering. It is never too early to start learning this important skill.



## **Around stage 5 (24 to around 36 months)**

### ***I am learning:***

- the words that will help me with toilet learning, such as “pee” and “poop.”
- when my body needs to go poop and pee.
- to help change my diaper. I can begin helping by holding the diaper for my caregiver, and even assisting with taking my clothes off and putting them back on.
- other important self-care tasks along with diapering, like how and when to wash my hands, and that I can do it by myself. There will probably come a time when I don’t want to stop playing to get my diaper changed, and I will resist doing so.
- to tell you that I need my diaper changed.

### ***My caregivers help me during diapering by:***

- letting me climb up or lay down on my own to change my diaper (when possible and safe). The more I can do by myself, the more willing I am to help.
- providing a low sink or stool where I can reach the sink. Let’s wash our hands together after each diaper change.
- putting me in outfits that allow me to practice taking my clothes on and off.
- being patient yet consistent with me. At times I may decide that I don’t want my diaper changed. Respect my feelings and even label those feelings so I can learn what words go with what feeling.

*To learn more about toilet learning, view “Toilet Learning,” and the Resources and References found at the end of these materials.*