

Parent Resources for your 18 - 36 month-old child



Finances

The Alford Grant is only a first step. By opening a NextGen account you can make your own contributions to your child's future and may help reduce the cost. Now the next step is to keep adding to it. Every little bit you put away may help reduce the cost of higher education. Whatever you have available when it's time to go to college is money you will no have to borrow.

Tips:

- **Be on a Budget:** Keep track of how much you spend. Write down every penny that leaves your pocket and then review your spending habits after one month.
- **Always be on Time:** Set goals and a time frame for paying bills and stick to it. Late fees are a waste of money!
- **Pay Yourself First:** Every month, set aside a specific amount of money for personal use. Part of this money can go towards your child's NextGen account.

Book Recommendations:

Little Critter: Just Saving My Money, by Mercer Mayer

Max's Money (Max Play Book), by Ken Wilson-Max

26 Letters and 99 Cents, by Tana Hoban

Harry's Coin, by Sally Symes

Resources:

- Maine has other benefits you may be eligible for through tax savings and reimbursements. Visit <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/taxcredits.htm>
- Learn why saving now matters. Also, learn more about 529 savings plans and how saving for college can really "add up." <http://www.collegesavings.org/>
- Your local bank is a great resource to meet with experts who can talk with you about making a savings plan that's right for your family.

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Health

Your child is feeding herself now, and probably enjoys fresh fruits and vegetables. Offer your child a portion of the meal the family is eating. If she does not want to eat it, give her a simple choice, like “do you want carrots or broccoli?” Encourage social relationships – they are good for your health. Your child loves to play with other children, and is learning how to share. She is beginning to understand that other people have feelings. You can help her learn her feelings by naming them.

Tips:

- **Get into Gardening:** Grow a garden with your child. Gardens give us a chance to see where our food comes from, and even little hands love to play in the dirt!
- **Find the Foodie in your Child:** Offer your child a variety of foods. This is a great age to try different colors, textures and tastes. Teach your child about feeling hungry and full, and how to express likes and dislikes.
- **Don't Forget about Family Dinner:** Sitting together during meals helps your child learn about talking and listening.. take turns to teach communication skills.

Book Recommendations:

I Can Eat A Rainbow, by Annabel Karmel

Eating the Alphabet, by Lois Ehlert

What Am I Feeling?, by John Mordechai Gottman

I Like It When...., by Mary Murphy

Resources:

- Eating smart starts young – this web site has lots of ideas about eating together as a family and developing healthy eating patterns. <http://www.ellynsatter.com/how-to-feed-i-24.html>

- Eating as a family can be a challenge sometimes, but this site has lots of great ideas: <http://www.ellynsatter.com/how-to-feed-i-24.html>
- Lots of parenting information is available from the federal government at http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Parents_Young.shtml

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Literacy

Your toddler is talking now; using words like “dogs” “cats” and can probably name some colors. He knows his name and understands when you say “I,” “you,” “he,” and “she.” He is learning more and more words every day. Keep talking, reading, and listening to your child, and you’ll hear him using more words. Encouraging words will help build confidence as he explores his world.

Tips:

- **Play the Name Game:** Talk with your child. Match words to questions and activities and talk about things you both see during everyday life such as dogs walking or kids playing.
- **Color Your Child’s World:** Talk to your child about all of the colors you see around you. Use as many adjectives as you can think of – bright, dark, striped, etc.
- **Be a Bookworm:** Toddlers love to explore, and having lots of books around the house will provide lots of things to read, look at and explore.

Book Recommendations:

Spot Goes to the Farm, by Eric Hill

Max’s New Suit, by Rosemary Wells

Go, Dog, Go, by P.D. Eastman

The Accidental Zucchini, by Max Grover

Resources:

- **Maine Reads** is a non-profit organization that has meaningful programs that celebrate Maine's rich literacy heritage and encourage literacy and collaboration. They host the annual Maine Festival of the Book! Visit: <http://www.facebook.com/MaineReads>
- **Lighthouse passports** are available through the United States Lighthouse Society. You can travel all around visiting lighthouses and get your passport stamped. <http://uslhs.org/fun/passport-club>
- It's not too late to sign up for **The Growing Years**. Free child development information will be mailed to your home until your child turns 5. You'll get monthly mailings that include information about parenting, child development, and nutrition. You can download current issues or sign up for the mailing at <http://umaine.edu/parenting/resources>

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Science & Math

Help your child sort objects that are similar, like making small piles of rocks, sticks, and leaves. Next time you're on a walk, try to find the numbers on the houses, or you can count the cars as they pass. These simple skills today are the math and science skills of tomorrow!

Tips:

- **Get Wet:** Supervised play with water is a fun, safe way to explore the natural world. Help your child learn about science by filling and emptying cups, hearing and feeling splashes, and watching objects float and sink.
- **Master a Maze:** Create a simple obstacle course for your child and provide step-by-step directions to complete it. For example, "Crawl under the coffee table, tiptoe around the big chair, then jump over the three red blocks!"
- **Be a Copy Cat:** Draw a pattern of shapes and colors, like a blue circle, a red square and a green triangle. See if your child can copy the shapes on paper. Then use blocks and repeat the pattern.

Book Recommendations:

Building a House, by Byron Barton

Icky Bug Numbers, by Jerry Pallotta

12 Ways to Get to 11, by Eve Merriam

How Big Is the Lion? My First Book of Measuring, by William Accorsi

Resources:

- Explore the natural world in Maine's state parks. Visit <http://www.maine.gov/doc/parks/programs> for information. Many local libraries have passes you can check out for a few days at a time.
- PBS.org is a wonderful site for parents. The ideas are simple and use materials you can easily find around your house. http://www.pbs.org/parents/earlymath/infant_activities.html
- The Association for Children's Museums has all of Maine's museums listed, plus you can find a museum if you visit another state or country: <http://www.childrensmuseums.org>

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