

General Guidelines for FLDS Children Ages 0-2 Years

This is a general guideline that should always be adapted to the children's needs. Small children ages 0-2 need so much love and tender care, even more than words can say. We strive to be ahead of the children's needs so they do not have to cry before they get their food, or before their diaper is changed. Our lives are centered around our children and our joy is to take care of them.

Wake Up Time: Depending on what kind of night the children have had, they may be awakened around 5:30 am. The time they wake up will also gauge the time they lie down for their naps. Mothers are careful to dress and change babies (and all children) in a private area. We believe in keeping our bodies covered except when we care for them, which we do in private.

Snacks and Foods: Babies and small children do so much better when they are fed before they get too hungry. Cooked, mashed veggies make an excellent meal. Yogurt sweetened with juice concentrate or maple syrup makes a good snack, also. Processed foods and sugar often make young children break out in diaper rash. For babies under one year, they are so much better off when with their own mother. If a young baby is left in the care of a caretaker, that caretaker must be very sensitive to the child's needs.

Suggested Activities: Children who are just learning to walk love to help wash doorknobs, benches, cupboards, etc. Blocks, (too big to swallow), puzzles that have true pictures, alphabet magnets, etc., are used in the child's development. Digging in the dirt with a small shovel, jumping on a re-bouncer, pushing a wagon, planting seeds, folding washcloths, etc., are things the children can do to grow up healthy and strong. Children use simple kindergarten pages to learn to draw lines and write their names. Although the children seem young, they are very bright and understand more than adults realize.

Prayer Times and Religious Training: Children of this age are gently encouraged to kneel up for prayer, fold their arms, close their eyes, etc. If they are noisy or do not respond, mothers just quietly take them out so they do not disturb everyone else. These children are taught at an early age that there is a God in heaven and He sees and knows all things. The children are not required to sit perfectly still through the reading and training times at this young age. When they see the older children doing it, they want to do it, too. Mothers and caretakers tell them short stories about the Savior, Joseph Smith, the Three Hebrews, etc., in language that they understand.

Singing is also important for children of this age. Simple children's songs and short memorizations are as delightful as can be when coming from the lips of little children. The singing times and story times are kept short and sweet.

Naptime and Bedtime: This age of children usually like to be rocked to sleep. Often they will attach themselves to a certain pillow or blanket that they feel they need while they go to sleep. This is natural. We do not give our children dolls, yet if the children act or pretend that they have a baby, that is fine; that is the natural instinct of a child. Often mothers will turn on gentle music to help the children go to sleep. Mothers and caretakers keep a few snacks nearby through the night for the children who wake up and need something to eat. Nothing brings greater joy than taking care of a beautiful, innocent child, and watching them grow up to be beautiful, honest, God-fearing men and women.