

December, 2011



Dear Esteemed Letter Recipient,

*We hope this letter finds you happy, healthy, and enjoying a restful and restorative holiday season with **loved ones**. This year's letter will be written in **Max's own words**! Well, that may be a bit ambitious, but **he talks a lot** and probably used **most of these words** at some point. When our records indicate that Max put these words together in **the same order** that I'm using them here, you'll be able to **identify** them by their toddler-esque **turn of phrase**—plus the change in **font, style, color, and size of type**. This letter will be **not be subtle**! Most of what follows will be **organized needlessly into tables**. Just go with it.*

Asking Deep Questions, Thinking Deep Thoughts: The Budding Philosopher



Mom—what's up?

I like cheese and crackers. It's a good combination.

That's not right. What have I done wrong?

I watched a movie yesterday and I keep thinking about it.

Do you have teeth, mommy? Open wide.

I don't have a tail, I have a tushie.

Janet, did you ever wish you were a dog?



Art + Music: When Words ~~Fail~~ Simply Aren't Enough



Play + Pretend Play: Living In His Own Little World



*Max + Janet found a ladybug on the playground slide...
Be brave, little ladybug.
Max then throws the bug under the slide.*

While you get my clothes ready, I will get my puppets.

*Max walked into a shady patch in the yard + quoted Dr. Seuss...
Say! In the dark! Here in the dark.
Would you, could you, in the dark?
I would not, could not, in the dark.*



*At aquarium...
Can we take the hippos home?
Daddy: Where will we keep them?
In my tent.
Daddy: What will we feed them?
Tomatoes.*

Pretend Work: One Day Soon He's Going To Help Pay The Bills



*We have to clean up this mess.
I need to help—I have to practice.
I'm going to make myself a hamburger.
After I finish cleaning, somebody's gonna get a haircut.*



*About giving a haircut...
I'm going to comb, then snip, then say "Wow!",
then use the blowdrier, then spray.*

*Put animals on bus to...
take a little trip
...to the store to buy...
some sausage—not too spicy.*

Manners + Attachment: Becoming A Little Member Of Society



Going up to nap...

See you later, Cookie and Elmo. See you later, Rabbit. See you later, daddy.

Mommy: Max, may I have a kiss and a hug?

Max: Sure—you asked so nicely.

I call him dad. For some reason, mommy calls him daddy.

Stay here, mommy.

Max left and returned.

You stayed! Very good, mommy, very good.

I miss the moon. I miss the stars. I miss Janet (see left).



Not Everything In Life Fits Neatly Into Little Boxes: Miscellaneous Stuff—Actual News!



In August, Max completed potty training!

My body's telling me I have to make pee-pee.

John was promoted to **Professor**. If you thought he'd been a professor for the past 13 years, well, **yes and no**. A **job** is not always the same as a **title**, at least not for the first 13 years.

Ayelet's brother Shachar + his wife Amy had their 2nd child, **Emmie**. John's brother Nick + his wife Jenn had their 2nd child, **Vinnie**. Other perfectly good, but **less popular**, names include Vimmie and Ennie.

John's parents, **John and Janis** (left), retired. Ayelet's parents, **Tova and Mati** (right), still contribute both **payroll and income taxes**.

Max has filled us with a **sufficient quantity of joy** that we decided to **have another child!** We're expecting one in **May**. We don't know whether it's a boy or a girl, but we're **almost certain that it will be**.



We hope that you have a wonderful holiday season and new year. To improve your odds, we offer these resources:

1. Our holiday letter archives – <http://www.tcnj.edu/~ruscio/holidays.html>
2. One-a-week pics of Max – <http://www.tcnj.edu/~ruscio/max.html>

These are "live" links—go ahead, try 'em! The second one is a "must-see" site if you have any doubts that we've counted Max's life in weeks for nearly three years!

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