

Ages and Stages: Toddler and 2 Years

Toddlers and 2-year-olds are full of energy and curiosity. They are becoming more independent and aware of themselves as individuals. A great deal of time is spent exploring, pushing, pulling, filling, dumping and touching. Children at this age may seem selfish and self-centered. This is because they don't have the ability yet to think about how others feel or consider what others want. Toddlers and 2-year-olds need adults who are understanding, alert, flexible, and creative.

Look at your child grow!

When your child is a toddler or 2-year-old, he or she may:

- enjoy doing things by him or herself.
- be extremely active and want to explore everything.
- walk, run, climb and jump.
- have very short attention spans.
- sometimes lose control and have a temper tantrum.
- understand some rules, but not very many.
- become easily frustrated.
- show love and affection for the people he or she is close to.
- feed him or herself and help clean up messes.

Your child wants you to know several things. He or she may:

- need you to help him or her use words to express feelings and needs.
- need you to set a few limits, so that he or she will know what to expect.
- understand you better if you talk using short, simple phrases.
- enjoy looking at and turning the pages of books.
- respond better to "do's" than "don'ts." Tell a child what you want him or her to do instead of only saying "No!"
- like routine. Help the child develop a regular schedule for eating and sleeping.
- want to make choices. When you let children make simple choices, they feel like they have more control over their own lives.
- still need lots of hugs, kisses and reassurance from adults, even though he or she may seem independent.
- get frustrated because he or she can't do everything he or she wants to do. It helps a child learn how to control him or herself when you remain calm.
- need your careful attention. Every child is different. If you watch your child closely, you will get clues about how to help him or her grow.

Your child is an active learner who:

- learns through using senses: smelling, seeing, touching, hearing, and tasting..
- learns through physical movement.
- can identify different body parts.
- understands more words than he or she can say.
- likes repetition.

Your child is learning to connect with other people and may:

- usually play alone, but may begin to enjoy having playmates.
- still not share well yet.
- get frustrated when he or she is unable to do things.
- not like changes in routines.
- have favorite words "no," "let me," and "me do it!"
- act shy around strangers.
- like to imitate adults.

Play helps your child learn. He or she may:

- take play very seriously. Play is a child's work, and learning how to play is crucial. Children are very playful by nature. Play includes learning, trying, being, and feeling. Through play, children learn many things about themselves, others, and the world around them.
- enjoy games like chase, hide-and-seek, hand-games, and rhymes.

Your child may enjoy toys and activities such as:

- Large blocks
- Pegboards
- Toy telephone
- Tricycle
- Water and sand toys
- Bubbles
- Tables and chairs
- Dress-up clothes
- Shape sorters
- Small and large balls
- Large balls
- Blunt scissors
- Stuffed animals
- Wooden animals
- Clay or play dough
- Filling and emptying containers

* The information is considered typical for this age. If you have questions about your child's development, contact your pediatrician or health care professional. If we do all we can do to help children develop and grow now, they will have the best chance to succeed in life.

Adapted from Alabama Cooperative Extension System by Traci Johnston. Originally developed by Ellen Abell and H. Wallace Goddard.