



Development

Your child should be using phrases and may do a lot of babbling that only you can understand but other people should be able to understand what they are saying half of the time. Allow plenty of time for your toddler to respond when you say something to them. His language skills will build by being read to daily and by you listening to and repeating what they say. Children at this age like to hear the same story read to them over and over. They enjoy the playful use of words, so try to introduce rhyming games and simple songs. They should be able to point to 6 body parts and know correct animal sounds. Motor coordination is much improved compared to a 2-year-old. At this age your child should be able to jump up and down in place, walk on tiptoes, put on clothes with help, and wash and dry their hands without help. This is a great age to work on their fine motor skills by using puzzles, stringing beads, and playing with snap blocks like Lego's.

Any media exposure should be limited to 30 minutes per day, be of good quality, and ideally watched while sitting on a parent's lap. Watch and discuss programs with your child when possible. Check out www.common sense media.org for recommendations. Do not use TV, phone or an iPad as a substitute for interaction with your child. Turn off devices during meals. Family meals are an excellent way to support language and social development. Use your child's knowledge of how to turn pages of books to involve them in reading with a goal of doing so daily. Engage in guided, interactive play with your child several times a day, but also encourage free time play.

Behavior

Your child is now midway between the "terrible two's" and becoming a "threenager". They will continue to test limits in all areas. This will require patience and constant supervision. Reach an agreement with all family members on how to best support your child's emerging independence while maintaining consistent limits. Try offering limited options between 2 equally acceptable options to help build their independence. One of the more enjoyable aspects of this age is your child's ability to play with other children and to pretend. Seek out group activities where kids can have supervised play together. Expand your child's experiences by visiting museums, zoo's, library, and other educational centers. Most kids do better if they can follow routines for eating, sleeping, and playing.

Reward good behavior with praise, hugs, and small treats like stickers. In the long run, positive reinforcement of desired behaviors is more effective in teaching children than negative consequences for undesired behavior. Use "time-out" as a consequence for inappropriate actions. Time-out is a quiet spot such as the corner of a room, or a boring room, in which your child can cool down. Use one minute for each year of age. Then talk to them about what they did to warrant a stay in time-out. Most kids will continue to test you so remember to be consistent. Research shows physical punishment, such as spanking, has adverse outcomes and shows no long-term benefit. It increases the risk of injury and can lead to increased aggression in your child now and in the future.

Oral health

Use a soft toothbrush twice a day with a smear of fluoridated toothpaste, no larger than a grain of rice. Allow your child to try brushing on occasion to avoid conflict, but children at this age do not have the dexterity to brush effectively. Avoid sharing utensils or cups with them because it introduces your own bacteria into their mouth, which can contribute to tooth decay. Work to find a dentist by 3 years of age.

Toilet Training

The average age for a child to be potty trained is 2 ½ years and nighttime dryness is the last step. Use an approach that encourages your child to make the decision. Wait to start toilet training until they are dry for periods of ~2 hours, know the difference between wet and dry, and can pull their bottoms up and down, wants to learn, and can indicate when a bowel movement is coming. You can bring books to the potty and always praise attempts whether or not successful. Try initially with clothes and diaper or underwear on before undressing. When your child indicates they are ready, place them on the potty every 1–2 hours in a relaxing environment. Many children enjoy a special trip to buy “big kid” underwear when they feel ready to stop using diapers during the day.

Safety

Keep household cleaners, tide pods, and E-Cigarettes out of reach as accidental ingestions and aspirations may occur. Nicotine cartridges from E-Cigarettes are especially dangerous. Keep firearms stored unloaded and locked in a safe with ammunition stored separately. It's important to keep your car, home, and other places where they spend time free of tobacco smoke and E-Cigarette vapor. Move dangerous chemicals such as those found in drain cleaners and dish-washing detergents out of your child's reach. Some house plants are poisonous, so move them up high, too. If your child ingests anything potentially poisonous, **call Poison Control at 800-222-1222**. Kitchen safety includes turning pot handles towards the back of the stove, making sure your child cannot reach the microwave, and not leaving hot liquids or heavy objects on a table with a tablecloth that he may pull down. Keep them away from moving machinery, lawn mowers, driveways, alleys, and streets.

If your child has outgrown the rear-facing height or weight limits for your convertible or 3-in-1 car seat, then you may face your child forward. However, if he has not outgrown these limits continue to keep them rear-facing as it provides the best protection for their neck, spine, and head. It is safe for your child's feet to touch the vehicle seat in front of them and for their legs to bend or hang over the sides as this position does not put them at risk for foot or leg injuries. Your own safe driving behaviors are important as well. Use a seat belt, do not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and do not text or use mobile devices while driving. Never leave your child in the car unattended.

It is extremely important to supervise your child around any body of water. If you have a pool, it should be fully enclosed and equipped with self-closing gates. Buckets of water and kiddie pools should be emptied when not in use. A supervising adult should be within an arm's length, providing “touch supervision” whenever children are in or around water. **REMEMBER, IT ONLY TAKES SECONDS TO DROWN.** When outside, protective clothing should be worn, and sunscreen should be applied. See the sunscreen page in the parent information section of our website for more information.

What to expect at this visit

A developmental screen should be completed prior to this visit. We ask parents to complete a screening for social determinants of health form to provide the best care for your child. Please let us know if your child has any exposure to lead or you are worried about the iron in their diet. We will apply fluoride varnish at this visit unless you have established with a dentist. Flu and COVID vaccines may be given at this visit, if in season. See our Medication Dosing Guide for dosing of acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

Influenza injection



Nasal Influenza



COVID



