



THE TWO YEAR OLD

DEVELOPMENT

- Kicks a ball and can throw it overhand
- Walks up stairs and backwards
- Stacks 2-3 blocks
- Removes some clothing
- Independently feeds himself or herself
- Combines 2-3 words and names objects
- Tells first name

EATING

Your child may eat any food he or she wants except small, hard foods that could cause choking. Remember, most children will rarely choke when sitting in a high chair, only when eating and moving at the same time (walking or running). Many children prefer the same foods every day. This is fine, as long as the foods are healthy and include milk products, grains (cereal, oatmeal, bread), protein (meat, beans, nut butters), fruits, and vegetables.

PLAY

- Picture books and simple stories, poetry, and rhymes — remember your public library has children's books
- Crayons and lots of paper; puzzles and wooden blocks
- Parks and playgrounds — climbing and swinging provide wonderful entertainment
 - Two year olds love short hikes!

BEHAVIOR

Encourage developing independence and give choices whenever possible. More choices leads to less frustration and anger. Communication is still limited, so expect some frustration and temper tantrums. Sit down, talk, and listen to your child face to face at their eye level. A recommended book for parents: 1-2-3 Magic: 3-Step Discipline for Calm, Effective and Happy Parenting. Security objects are still very important (blankets, dolls, teddy bears, thumbs). Do not be surprised if you child wants to carry his or her blanket everywhere. These security objects will help comfort your child through real and imaginary fears, bumps, and scrapes.... and bedtime.

SLEEP

Children can change from the crib to a bed this year. A bedtime routine is important (bath, brush teeth, story). Routines add security and help your child accept bedtime limits. Nightmares are common and a few minutes of parental comforting usually works.

SAFETY – POISON CONTROL 1-800-222-1222

A two-year old's increasing physical abilities of running and climbing along with their wonderful curiosity can place them in dangerous situations. Close supervision is the best prevention. Never leave a child alone near water or in the back yard. At this age, you can turn your child front-facing. He or she should remain in this car seat until he or she reaches the weight limit.

NEXT CHECK UP IS AT TWO AND A HALF YEARS OLD.

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TOILET TRAINING

WHEN TO TOILET TRAIN

Before your child can be successfully toilet trained, there are certain physical things he or she must be able to do and certain ideas he or she must understand. Children are able to do these things at different ages but the typical age range is 2-3 years old. Do not try to introduce toilet training at the same time other major changes are happening in your household, such as a new baby, moving, or a parent going back to work.

PHYSICAL SKILLS REQUIRED

- Be able to walk well
- Be able to sit down and get up alone
- Can pull clothing up and down
- Can control sphincter muscles — is able to stay dry for several hours

IDEAS UNDERSTOOD

- Can understand simple questions and directions
- Can let you know he or she has soiled his or her pants
- Has trust in his or her mother/father and wants to please
- Has a sense of independence and wants to try to do things for himself or herself
- Feels proud of being able to do a task

SUGGESTIONS

- Put a potty chair in the bathroom and introduce it as your child's own. Let him or her sit on it with his or her clothes on. Sit with your child awhile and read a book, etc. Make the association for your child between the regular toilet and his or her potty chair.
- It may be helpful to obtain a book at your library or bookstore about a small child using a potty. Read the book often so your child will identify with the child in the story.
- After he or she has become familiar with the potty chair, ask him or her to sit on it without his or her diaper at the time a regular bowel movement is expected (often after meals). Do not expect him or her to sit more than 5-10 minutes.
- If the previous step is accepted, you may increase to 2-3 times a day. If successful, introduce underwear that your child can manage to get up and down alone.
- Ask your child every hour to urinate in the potty, gradually lengthening the time as your child gains more control. After a few months, your child should go to the potty without being asked.
- This should not become a battleground between you and your child. If the above does not work, forget it for a few weeks and try again. Most parents try to potty train too early. I think the best age is 2 years 4 months for the average child. If you do no training, most children will potty train themselves at age 3-3.5 years through imitation.
- If your child begins "stool holding behavior" (creating large, hard stool with painful defecation), call for additional advice.