



First Steps

2 Years

Advice to Mom

Toys now come with many multiple parts.

Tame the clutter:

- Provide individual bins for each type of toy.
- Use disposable plastic containers for small pieces for each toy.
- Put out only one or two bins at a time.
- Rotate toys— store some away and change about once a week.

Key Thought

Two year olds become calmer than they were in the months leading up to the second birthday. She moves more steadily, plays with less assistance, tells you what she wants, understands more of what you say, co-operates better with the rules, and wants to please and be good.

What Your Toddler is Learning and How You Can Help

Physical Development:

Large muscles:

- Loves rough and tumble play
- Runs well, but often stops by running into a stable object
- Walks up and down stairs independently, bringing both feet to each step. She usually uses the hand rail for support.
- Jumps off a low step by leading with one foot and landing in a deep squat or on all fours.
- Can jump forward.
- Experiments with going down the slide different ways
- Squats to pick an object up from the floor.

Small muscles:

- Scribbles with a crayon.
- Turns pages of a book or magazine
- Snips paper with kindergarten scissors
- Builds 6-7 block towers and 2-3 block trains

Personal Care:

- Wants to wash and dry own hands, but does it poorly
- Handles a cup well— lifting, drinking and replacing it without spilling.
- Takes off socks and shoes. Learning to put them on.
- Helps pull pants up or down

Body Shape and Size:

Two year olds continue to be a little plump, but grow taller and longer limbed during this year. She will grow about 2 1/2 inches and 5 pounds by her third birthday.

Nutrition:

It is time to reduce her dietary fat intake to about 30 percent of her daily calories. Begin giving her low fat cheese, yogurt, and ice cream. Don't cut out fats entirely, she needs some for proper growth of her brain and body. If you are concerned she is overweight, follow your doctor's orders, don't put her on a diet by yourself.



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Language Development:

She may be using very basic words or stringing sentences together. Both are normal for 2 year olds. However, if your child uses fewer than 20 words or you can only understand less than half of what she says, be sure to talk to her pediatrician about it. She should be tested for hearing problems.

Children whose mothers talk to them frequently know many more words than children whose mothers don't talk to them much. Children whose fathers frequently talk to them develop even larger vocabularies. Moms use more words drawn from the child's surroundings. Dads use more words from outside her immediate world.

She is beginning to understand the relative position of things. Practice words like; there, here, over, under, on top of, and below.

She learns new words by observing facial expression, hand gestures, and body movements as well as the sound of the words. She also learns new words by your interpretation of events around her. Rich use of descriptive words builds her vocabulary. In her self-talk she repeats and repeats new words in a meaningful context and she repeats familiar words by using them in new contexts.

What can you do to help her speech?

Don't correct her grammar. Just repeat the sentence using the correct words or grammar. She will learn by hearing properly spoken language. Don't insist that she use complete sentences. Forcing her to speak in complete sentences is frustrating because it interrupts the flow of conversation. If you don't understand something she said, try guessing at it. If you still don't understand, ask her to point to what she wants. This method is much less frustrating to your child than stating, "I can't understand you."

Since the word "no" is still one of her most commonly used words. Try substituting "stop" when you want immediate response. If she doesn't immediately stop, be ready to make her stop. She must learn that stopping is non-negotiable.

Make a habit of asking questions that cannot be answered with "yes" or "no." Ask questions like, "Which of these (two acceptable choices) do you want?" "Do you want this before or after. . .?"

Emotional Development:

Her feelings are transparent and spectacular. Her responses are all or nothing with no milder reactions in between. She experiences the full range of emotions, but seldom has words to describe them. She may frighten herself by the strength of her own responses.

You help by allowing her to express her emotions. Don't always rescue her from sadness, anger, or frustration. She needs to learn to cope with minor setbacks. Don't try to force her to stifle her tears. Let her know that sadness is part of life and it is ok to feel sad sometimes. Let her learn to work through her feelings. You help when you label her feelings and show her acceptable ways to express her emotions. Avoid overreacting to these emotional storms.



Teaching Methods

Using learning styles to teach math concepts:

By observation you can discover your child's favored learning style. You may notice she learns most quickly when she sees new things. That style of learning is called *visual learning*. Perhaps your child learns best by using her body and handling new things. This style of learning is called *physical or kinesthetic learning*. Finally, some children learn best by listening to someone talk about new things. This style is *auditory learning*. Of course, combining these approaches to teaching will help your child discover other ways of learning.

There are many ways to begin to teach your child math concepts. Here are a variety of different approaches:

For *visual learning*:

- When riding in the car, have your child look for numbers on signs and license plates. Call out the numbers when you see them.
- Dot-to-dot coloring books teach the number sequence.
- Write down the phone number for a friend and allow your child to dial the number. This has the advantage of teaching reading from left to right.

For *physical learning*:

- Ask your child to sort the silverware into their partitions in the drawer. Sorting is important to beginning math. Have her help sort socks by color and size. Have her count the number of t-shirts in the laundry basket.
- Play with shape puzzles and blocks
- Make a counting book. Cut pictures out of old catalogs or magazines and paste them on construction paper. Count all the pictures on each page.
- The Goldfish game. Draw a fishbowl on paper. Put goldfish crackers in the fishbowl and count them. After she eats some have her count them again.
- Look for patterns. Make color patterns from blocks, like two red, one blue, one green. Encourage your child to reproduce the pattern. See the rings in a log or lines in smooth pebbles.

For *auditory learning*:

- Listen and sing rhyming and counting songs.
- Have her help you make cookies. Tell her how much she needs to put in the bowl. This is a delicious way to learn math has value in everyday life.

Using Her Senses:

Touch:

Teach rough and smooth: with carpet and wood floors or sheets and bedspread

Teach sticky with cellophane tape

Sound:

Teach loud and soft: clapping loudly or softly or whisper and yell

Smell:

Let her smell a familiar food without seeing it. Then have her choose which it is from two choices.

Taste:

Give her a bite of something with her eyes closed and see if she can identify what it is. Teach her descriptive taste words: sweet, sour, salty, bitter.



What is the Value of Play?

For Physical Development

Large muscles develop through running, throwing, kicking, and pedaling. Rough and tumble play helps develop balance, a sense of placement in space, and coordination. Muscles and bones grow when children use large muscles in play. Fine motor skills develop hand-eye coordination and concentration.

Physical activity helps children work through stress and irritability. Physical dexterity leads to a sense of independence and self confidence. Set an example of healthy physical activities.

For Practicing Social Skills

Playing together with other children helps develop communication skills necessary for building good relationships. Group play teaches cooperation, sharing, and negotiation. Playing with other children helps children learn the world doesn't revolve around them and that they are part of a community. Learning proper ways to be assertive is also an important skill learned in a play group.

If your child has not been involved in play groups, this is a great time to start. It is best for her to have some experience playing with other children before beginning preschool. Invite a few children about her age, introduce a game or activity, and then let the children take it from there. Only intervene when really necessary. Let them work out their differences.

To Enjoy Imagination

Imaginative play gives your child a sense of control as she practices different roles and social behavior. She will use everyday objects as symbols for other things. She transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary. She will assume different roles and practice behaviors associated with those roles. When she has experienced an event she doesn't understand, through imaginative play she will try to work out the meaning of what she has observed.

Keeping a box of everyday items she can use in imaginative play will encourage this type of play. Kid versions of adult objects stretch her imagination.

What to Expect Next

- Walking with a smooth heel-to-toe motion
- Washing and drying her own hands
- Makes a three block train

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, we see how much our child learns from watching and copying our actions and words. Help us to be aware of the example we are setting. We want to please You by being the dad and mom you want us to be to this child.
In Jesus' name, Amen.