

PLAIN TALK

FOR PARENTS

About Your Two- to Three-Year-Old Child

Every Child and Parent is Unique.

This brochure highlights some general patterns of growth and development that apply to most children.

As you watch, listen to, and play with your child, you will discover when she or he is ready for new activities and skills.

You will find your own ways to use old and new ideas, to fit your individual personality, your family life, and your child's needs.

General Traits

- Behavior may change quickly from loving to independent and back again
- Needs little help climbing up or down stairs
- Demands a lot of parental attention
- May hold a glass of milk in one hand
- Knows several hundred words and may now speak in two to three-word sentences
- Loves to be read to, but may not have the patience to go through a book cover to cover
- Begins to help dressing (undressing comes first)
- May achieve toilet training or show interest in using the toilet
- Likes to imitate adult activities
- Enjoys other children but may find sharing difficult
- Uses a spoon in feeding

What a Parent Can Do

- Your 2 year old's rebelliousness may be hard to take, but it is a positive stage in your child's development, an attempt to move away from babyhood. ("No" will often mean "yes," so look for other cues as well.)
- Rules should be few. Ask yourself: What are the minimum rules ("no's") needed for this age?
- Allow your child to express all feelings, negative as well as positive.
- Allow your child to "help" with simple tasks.
- If you begin toilet training and your efforts don't pay off in a week or two, your child is not ready yet. Go back to diapers.
- Present nutritious meals and leave it at that. Don't push your child to eat.
- Your child is too young to learn table manners.
- Routines help ease bedtime, leave-taking, meals, etc. A nighttime routine might be a bath before bedtime, a book, a good-night kiss and hug, and a tuck into bed.
- Pay as little attention as possible to temper tantrums.



Toys for the 2- to 3-year-old

- Old keys
- Cars & trucks
- Blocks
- Baskets
- Hammer & pegboard
- Large crayons & finger paints
- Toys that teach shapes
- Riding toys & wagons
- Play dough
- Pail & shovel
- Large brushes for "painting" with water
- Cloth squares of bright colors
- Dolls - soft & washable
- Balls

This information was adapted from St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center Guide to Health with their permission.

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