

your child @™

highlights of what's happening
at this stage of your child's development...

24 to 36 months

By the time your child reaches 36 months, they will probably have a vocabulary of around 900 words and use three to five word sentences. Your child at this stage is bursting with curiosity. Your praise, encouragement and support as they work to perfect their motor skills and increase their knowledge of the world around them will help them grow up strong, happy and confident.

your child's health

take note...

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, at 24 months, let your doctor know if your child:

- Cannot push a wheeled toy.
- Does not follow simple directions.
- Does not imitate actions or words.
- Cannot walk (by 18 months).
- Fails to develop a heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking or walks exclusively on toes.
- Does not speak at least 15 words by 18 months.
- Does not use two word sentences.

The Well Visit

Most doctors have you bring your child in for a two-year check-up. By age two, your child has received most of their immunizations, including: Hep B, Hib, Polio, DTaP or DTP, MMR, and Chickenpox. Use this visit to catch up on any missed vaccinations. Your doctor may also do a lead test at

this time and should check cholesterol if you have a family history of heart disease and/or high blood pressure.

Nutrition

At this age, children often become picky eaters and lose interest in food. You may find that some days, your child might not be interested in food at all, and other days, they might only want to eat a certain type of food. Be assured, when your child is hungry, they will want to eat — it is your job to ensure you are providing healthy options by offering a variety of nutrient-rich foods.

Sleep

Moving out of the crib. For many, it's time to leave the crib and move on to a bed.

- Make the transition exciting by talking about the big bed and the items that might go in it such as new bedding or favorite stuffed animals.
- Stick to the same bedtime (between 6 and 8 pm) and make sure your child understands that they can't get out of bed once they've been kissed good night and tucked in. If your child gets out of bed, you should quietly and calmly take them back to bed until they learn to stay there. It might be necessary to return them to the crib and try making the transition in a month or so.
- Continue with your normal routines like reading, singing and bathing even after you've moved your child to a big bed.

Toilet Training

Around this time, your child will begin to show signs that they are ready for toilet training. If you have any questions talk to your health care provider. In general, your child is ready if they do any or some of the following:

- Pulls their pants up and down.
- Is interested in the toilet and imitates others' bathroom habits.
- Can and will follow simple instructions.
- Dislikes the feeling of being in a dirty diaper.
- Understands the physical signs that indicate they have to "go" before "going."
- Has long "dry" periods.

Starting the process

- Buy a child-sized potty seat or attachment for the toilet. Let them get comfortable with it and practice sitting on it.
- Teach them to sit and wipe. Teach them to sit first, then stand.
- Take it slow. Some children take a couple of weeks to learn, for others it takes months.

Remember

- Wait to begin until you are both ready.
- Be encouraging and patient.
- Try not to worry about what others say and think.
- Accidents are natural — don't punish your child.

safety tip...

Make sure that the area around your child's bed is safe, in case they fall or gets out of their bed by themselves at night.

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24 to 36 months

your child's growth and development

You can expect your toddler to do most of the following by the time they reach three years old:

Physically

- Throw and kick a ball.
- Zip and unzip.
- Help to put things away.
- Drink from a cup without spilling.
- Pull off and begin to put on her own clothes.
- Jump in place and walk on tiptoes.

Intellectually

- Call themselves by their own name.
- Have a vocabulary of 900 or more words.
- Point and name their own body parts when asked.
- Use phrases and three to five word sentences.

Socially and Emotionally

- Initiate their own play activities.
- Want routines to always be the same.
- Observe other children at play and join in.
- Have a hard time sharing things.

nurturing your child

remember...

Although a temper tantrum is a natural and healthy expression of your child's emotions and frustrations, they must be taught that it is not an acceptable behavior.



The Terrible Twos

Between two and three, your child is beginning to realize that they are a person independent from you. They will want to exercise their free will, largely by opposing much of what you want or expect from them. Their protests will probably include temper tantrums and heavy use of the word "no."

Tips for taming tantrums

- Try to keep your cool. They will lose control even more if you really lose your temper.
- Rather than using physical punishment, create consequences that relate to the behavior. For example, remove a child from the store if they misbehave.
- Stay in control by not giving in to unreasonable demands.
- Discuss the issue. When your child is calm, validate their feelings while letting them know that their behavior is not acceptable.
- Avoid problem-causing situations. If you know your child throws a fit when their hungry, remember to carry snacks with you.

Your child is now learning to incorporate real-life experiences into pretend play. This is their way of figuring out the world around them. For example, you'll see them play "talking" on the phone, driving a car, talking to a friend when they are by themselves. You can encourage this type of play by:

- Helping them create imaginative games and new ways to use toys. Blocks can be flying cars or even zoo animals.
- Giving them time to play by themselves. Playing alone gives them a chance to process and understand what they have been doing and learning all day.

Literacy

Expand your child's language by reading together every day and by:

- Asking questions about the book you're reading to include them in the story and to make sure they understand.
- Offering materials to scribble, draw or pretend to write.
- Encouraging them to identify letters and their sounds.
- Pointing to words when you read. This will help your child understand how the reading process works.

your child's safety

safety tip...

Two-year-olds still must ride in the backseat of a car in a car seat with a harness — preferably in the middle of the backseat. Check with your state laws to see when your child will be ready to switch to a booster (usually around age four). Contact Missouri or Kansas Highway Patrol for laws pertaining to your state.

- Choose toys that do not have small parts.
- Although your child has probably mastered the stairs and corners, you should still block staircases, latch cabinets, toilets and drawers, secure large objects and furniture with "L" brackets, and install window guards to prevent your child from falling out.
- Call Poison Control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous: 1-800-222-1222 (American Assn. of Poison Control Center)

Born LearningSM is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children.

