

## Toddlers and "Runabouts"

We call them toddlers. The British call youngsters of 24 to 36 months "runabouts." Notice that the accent is on action! Look for these new developments. Always remember that your child is unique and develops at a pace that is right for him or her.

### PHYSICAL SKILLS

Typically the two-year-old can:

- ♥ Go up and down stairs alone.
- ♥ Walk several steps on tiptoe.
- ♥ Go easily from sitting to standing.
- ♥ Use two hands alternately to work a toy.

Your toddler now:

- ♥ Climbs over, peeks into, and searches everything.
- ♥ Explores by touching, with pokes, pinches, twists and tosses.

### LANGUAGE SKILLS

Soon, your toddler may:

- ♥ Understand and use pronouns: I, you, me, we.
- ♥ Use three-word sentences.
- ♥ Realize that everything has a name.
- ♥ Use swear words and unpleasant expressions picked

up from other children.

- ♥ Understand quantity, shown by asking for "two" crackers or "more" milk.

### MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Your two-year-old makes:

- ♥ A big show of being independent, but still wants you to read, sing, hug, kiss, and play.

He or she also:

- ♥ Asks a lot of questions.
- ♥ Is less negative and uses "no!" less frequently.
- ♥ Shows a short attention span by losing interest or dropping a favorite toy when something new comes along.

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Your child is beginning to:

- ♥ Understand what it means to feel good, feel bad, be angry, or be sad, and tries to tell you about it.

He or she is:

- ♥ Less demanding, more trusting toward parents.
- ♥ More willing to wait a minute or two for some desired thing.



### SELF-HELP TRAITS

Your child may now demonstrate readiness to:

- ♥ Start toilet training, help put toys away and handle some parts of dressing or undressing.

### NUTRITION

- ♥ To help ensure good eating habits your child should not run around with food. All meals and snacks should be eaten at the table.
- ♥ Your toddler only needs about 4 ounces of juice each day. Excess juice can lead to weight problems and a poor appetite at mealtime.
- ♥ It is recommended to switch toddlers to lowfat milk starting at age 2. Check with your pediatrician or family doctor to determine the best time for your child.

## Check These Out!

At age two, your child cannot get enough of stories, songs and energetic activities. For a fresh supply, visit your nearby Public Library. That's where you'll find these and other resources to check out free on your library card.

**Goodnight moon** / Margaret Wise Brown (CB)

**Shy Charles** / Rosemary Wells (CB)

**Victor Vito [sound recording]** / Laurie Berkner. (CD)

**Healthy snacks for kids** / Penny Warner. (B)

**All by myself. Vol. 1, Getting dressed** (V)

**Potty training** (V)

(B) book, (CD) music, (V) video.

(CB) children's book to read to your child

Non-Profit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Hampton, Va  
Permit #847

Healthy Stages is a program of Hampton's Healthy Families Partnership.  
100 Old Hampton Lane, Hampton, Virginia 23669 [www.hampton.gov/healthyfamilies](http://www.hampton.gov/healthyfamilies)  
Copyright ©1997 City of Hampton Virginia. All rights reserved. Revised 2005.

# Healthy Stages

## 2-2½ YEARS

**H**appy Second Birthday! Last year, the birthday festivities were a mystery to your child. This year, he or she may join in the excitement and enjoy being "the birthday child." What's most exciting is that your toddler is now beginning to seek friendships. He or she may have a pal from day care, a young cousin, or a little neighbor who's coming to the party. It's great to share the fun with a friend - even if you're not the least bit ready to share your presents and toys!

Your toddler is becoming a social creature.

He'll soon notice who's a boy, who's a girl, and what's different about them. She'll form ideas about roles and relationships by watching her mommy and daddy at work and play. As you see your child becoming more social, look for opportunities to help her learn to like herself. It's also important to set limits that help him to understand that we all have rights - mothers, dads, other playmates - even the family pet!

Happy birthday, dear parent. Enjoy the cake, the laughter and the kisses. You've earned them all!



# Should You Join A Play Group?

Play groups have become popular in recent years. Here's how they work. Five or six mothers with toddlers get together for several hours at a certain time each week. It is not a baby-sitting arrangement. The mothers stay and chat, while the children "play". Actually, the toddlers don't play cooperatively at this age. It's more a matter of playing side-by-side with others. The parent in charge plans activities and provides play materials. Psychologists say that such play groups benefit new mothers as much as their toddlers – perhaps even more! The play group helps a mother learn about toddlers by watching the behavior of several at once. If you think you and your toddler would like to try a play group, see if there's one in your neighborhood. Or start one yourself!



## Notes on Nurturing

### The Gentle Art of Toilet Training

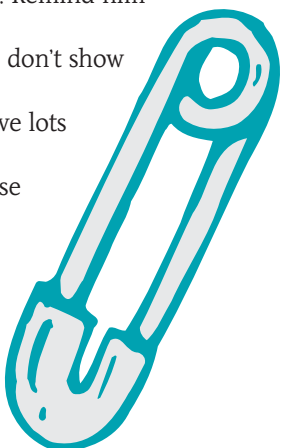
Around age two, your toddler may give you signs that it's okay to start toilet training. Is she really ready? Does he understand? This checklist could help you decide.

- ♥ Bowel movements are predictable. Example: They occur at a certain time, such as every morning after breakfast.
- ♥ Your toddler's diaper stays dry for several hours at a time. This demonstrates a bladder strong enough to hold urine for longer periods.
- ♥ There's interest from your toddler in other family members' use of the bathroom.
- ♥ By word, by facial expression, or by a certain action, your toddler shows you he knows his bladder is full or his bowels are about to move.

You have taught your toddler the "family words" for urinating and for bowel movements, and she understands what they mean in terms of her own body.

#### Ready? Here's a simple strategy:

- ♥ Get a potty chair. Tell your toddler what it is used for. Let him sit on it, fully dressed at first, to get used to it.
- ♥ Later, show her how to sit on it with the diaper removed. Do this once a day, timed to when the bowel movement usually occurs.
- ♥ Encourage your child to play, diaper removed, near where the potty is when it gets close to the usual time for bowel movement. Remind him that it may soon happen.
- ♥ When your child "misses", don't show disappointment.
- ♥ When there's a success, give lots of praise!
- ♥ Encourage your child to use the potty on waking up, before naps, and before bedtime.
- ♥ Stay friendly, casual and positive. It'll go better if neither of you gets overstressed!



## Toys For Now

**BLOCKS, BLOCKS AND MORE BLOCKS!** Now is the time to get as many as you can of the big plastic or wooden building blocks you often see at child care centers or nursery schools. They'll keep your toddler happy for hours on end building houses, forts and boats. Big, big blocks are easier for small hands to stack than small blocks.

### TOYS FOR "LET'S PRETEND!"

Your child is starting to observe all of life's little dramas. He or she will enjoy pretending to be grown up. Try some of these toys:

- ♥ Tea sets with metal or plastic cups and dishes. Have a tea party for dolls and stuffed animals!
- ♥ A play house. Whether it's a wooden one for the backyard, a plastic one for the play room, or simply a sheet draped between chairs, your toddler will love having "my own house".
- ♥ Tool kits or work benches. Sets with wooden or plastic tools, hammers and pegs are real favorites at this age.

## For Safety's Sake

### Hot & Cold Running Safety

The two extremes of seasonal weather present health risks to us all, but especially to young children. Here are brief tips on ways to protect your two-year-old, winter and summer.

#### Winter Safety

Indoors, keep children a safe distance away from portable heaters or fireplaces. When going outdoors, dress your toddler at the same level of warmth as yourself, but add one more layer for him or her – an extra sweater under the jacket or snowsuit, for example. Keep a scarf, hat and gloves on your toddler on cold winter days. Children lose the largest percentage of their body heat from the head and neck.

#### Summer Safety

Summer's main risk boils down to one word: sun. Protect your toddler from the immediate danger of sunburn and the long-term health hazards of too much sun. Because the sun's rays are hottest between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. (daylight saving time), plan most outings for the morning or later afternoon. At the beach, remember that water and sand reflect the sun's rays, increasing the need for protection. Choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) from 15 to 30. Ask your child's doctor if you're unsure which to use. About 30 minutes before exposure to the sun, apply the sunscreen to all parts of your child's body which are not covered by clothing. Don't wait till your child's skin looks pink to worry about sunburn. It takes four hours for the full damage to appear. On vacation or at the beach, don't expose your child to full sun for more than a few minutes the first day. Add a few minutes each day, up to a maximum of about 20 minutes.



## PROTECT YOUR CHILD AGAINST DISEASES

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a "well child visit" to the doctor at age 24 months. Ask your doctor if your child is up-to-date on his or her early childhood immunizations. Also check with your doctor about any questions or concerns you may have regarding your toddler's health, diet, growth, or behavior.

## Improving Your Family Life

Sociologists say the American family is in trouble. Marriages break up at the rate of one in two. Our core values are changing from "spiritual" to "marketplace." Even children want "the right brand" of jeans and sneakers! An uncertain economy means more working parents and less shared family time. What can your family do?

### Put the family first.

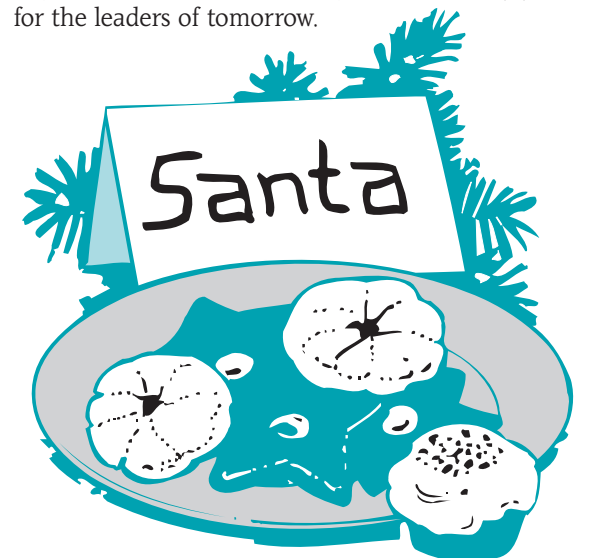
Talk to your family members about making sure you have regular time together. Family mealtimes, family weekend outings, and family vacations are important. Encourage every member to think of the family as a pathway, not a barrier, to happiness.

### Develop family rituals.

Rituals are "the way we do things in this family." Do you always leave cookies on a plate for Santa Claus? Always make a paper crown for the birthday child? Always kiss goodnight and say, "I love you"? Look at your family's daily, weekend and holiday rituals. Make a big deal of them! They set you apart from every other family in the world.

### Visit your extended family.

Your child needs to know his or her grandparents. Uncles, aunts and cousins are important, too. Your extended family gives your child a sense of "who we are." If your family lives far away, try to find neighbors, church members and friends who can be "like family" to you and your children. Having a rich family life has nothing to do with money. It has everything to do with sharing love, trust and responsibility with those closest to you. Here's to families! They're the training grounds for the leaders of tomorrow.



## Nurturing Your Child

A notable quote: "The two-year-old needs to be told that he is "good"; that his parents are proud of him. He needs to be held when hurt or frightened; to have help when angered; and to be told simply but firmly what he can and cannot do."

From *The Early Childhood Years: The 2 to 6 Year Old* by Theresa and Frank Caplan, Bantam Books, New York, 1984.

## Playtime

### Play With A Purpose – "What Shall We Do Today"

#### Counting activities.

Count as you put groceries away – one apple, two apples. Count stairs as you go up and down. Count the people in your family. Count how many blocks your toddler can stack into a tower.

#### Learning gender.

What is Daddy? Daddy is a boy. Mommy? She's a girl. What is Grandma? Grandpa? Sister? Brother?

#### Learning a second name.

Once your child knows her first name, teach her your last name. Practice it together in a singsong way. Make it a game, not work. Encourage her to say her full name and give her lots of praise when she does.

#### Time concepts.

Talk about time in terms of activities. Understanding when it's lunch time, nap time, bed time, and time for going to the park can help your toddler learn to be more patient and wait for things to happen.