

The Growing Child: 2-Year-Olds



How much will my child grow?

After a child's second birthday, the rate of growth slows. Two-year-olds are very active and begin to lose the look of a baby. While all children may grow at a different rate, the following is the average for 2-year-old boys and girls:

- **Weight.** Average gain of about 4 to 6 pounds per year.
- **Height.** Average growth of about 2 to 3 inches each year.

What can my child do at this age?

As your child continues to grow, you will notice new and exciting abilities that develop. Children may progress at different rates. But these are some of the common milestones most children reach in this age group:

- Walks and runs well
- Jumps off the ground with both feet.
- Starts to throw, kick, and catch balls
- Climbs on playground structures
- Turns doorknobs and lids
- Uses a fork
- By 30 months, takes some clothes off by themselves, like a jacket or pants
- By 3 years, puts on some clothes by themselves, like a jacket or pants
- All 20 teeth appear by 3 years old
- Appetite decreases greatly
- Has developed right- or left-handedness by 3 years old
- Turns pages in a book, one at a time
- Has good thumb and finger control
- Can drink through a straw
- Starts to have bladder and bowel control
- May still take an afternoon nap
- May sleep 11 to 14 hours in a 24-hour period (including naps)

What can my child say?

Speech development is very exciting for parents as they watch their children become social beings who can interact with others. Speech at this age is becoming clearer, and the child starts to form sentences. Every child

develops speech at their own rate. But these are some of the common milestones most children reach in this age group:

- Says words like “I,” “me,” or “we”
- Says about 50 words by 30 months
- By 30 months, says 2 or more words, with 1 action word, like “doggie sleep”
- Names things in a book when you point and ask, “What is this?”
- By 3 years, starts to put 3 words together (subject, verb, object), for example, “Me want ball.”
- Says first name, when asked
- Asks “who,” “what,” “where,” or “why” questions like “Where is mommy or daddy?”
- Talks well enough for others to understand, most of the time

What does my child understand?

Children may progress at different rates. But these are some of the common milestones most children reach in this age group:

- Knows at least 1 color
- Stays away from touching hot objects, like a stove, when you warn them
- Uses things to pretend
- Follows two-step instructions
- Shows simple problem-solving skills, like standing on a small stool to reach something

How does my child interact with others?

Every child is unique and will develop different personalities. But these are some of the common behavioral traits that may be present in your child:

- Shows independence from parents
- Continues to play alongside others and sometimes plays with them
- Shows you what they can do by saying, “Look at me!”
- Follows simple tasks when told, like helping clean up toys
- Temper tantrums may continue
- Helps to get themselves dressed and undressed
- By age 3, calms down within 10 minutes after you leave them, like at a childcare drop off

How to help increase your child's learning and emotional security

Here are some ways to foster the emotional security of your 2-year-old:

- Let your child have a choice when possible. For example, say, “Do you want a banana or an orange?”
- Let your child help around the house, such as dusting, sweeping, or sorting laundry.

- Read picture and story books with your child.
- Help your child learn to wash their hands.
- Let your child try to take off their own clothes and put on some simple clothes, such as clothes without buttons or zippers.
- Let your child play with blocks, balls, crayons, or clay. Supervise play so that your child doesn't put objects in their mouth or ears.
- Sing songs, play children's music, and dance with your child.
- Look at family pictures with your child and tell a story.
- Make cut-outs in a large cardboard box to pretend it is a house or car.
- Use toys during bath time, or have fun pouring water from one cup to another.
- Let your child talk on a toy phone, or say a few words while you are talking on a real phone.
- Play "follow the leader" games.
- Teach body parts while dressing and bathing.
- Let your child put stickers on paper to make a design.
- Count things out loud to teach your child about numbers, such as count eggs in the carton, stairs as you go up, or fingers and toes.
- Play with soap bubbles.
- Use toys that sort shapes, such as a circle, square, or triangle.
- Give your child a doll or teddy bear.
- Read your child a book of rhymes.
- Give your child a toy to ride.
- Limit TV and other screen time (tablets, phones) to no more than 1 hour a day.
- Provide social experiences outside the home.

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