



Tips for Grandparents of a 2-Year-Old

The third year of a child's life, encompassing the so-called terrible twos, is often a challenging one for parents and therefore for grandparents, as well. A child at this age is showing increased physical activity, greater mood swings, frequent tantrums (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Temper-Tantrums.aspx>) or demanding behavior, and testing the limits of all adults.

As a grandparent, you may have forgotten what two-year-olds are like; after all, it's been many years since you raised your own children through this age.



Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when you spend time with your two-year-old grandchild (*although some of these steps are more easily said than done*):

- Make an effort to "keep your cool." Don't overreact to outbursts. Try to take them in stride, and realize that much of this behavior is designed to get you to react. Maintain a flexible but firm and loving response.
- Be consistent in your approach to discipline (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/How-to-Shape-Manage-Young-Child-Behavior.aspx>), and make sure it's consistent with the disciplinary style of the child's parents. Never use physical punishment (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Where-We-Stand-Spanking.aspx>).
- Reinforce good behaviors with praise (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/When-to-Give-Your-Child-Praise-Video.aspx>) and compliments. Become a role model of the way you would like your grandchild to act.
- Try to encourage self-control.
- Always be affectionate.
- Recognize that children of this age are very egocentric (*i.e., they are thinking mostly of "me," not of the others in their lives*), so don't take their lack of interest in you personally. This is normal for a two-year-old, and it won't last forever.
- Toilet training (<http://www.healthychildren.org/english/ages-stages/toddler/toilet-training/Pages/default.aspx>) will be one of your grandchild's most important accomplishments at this age. Talk to his parents about the stage of training he's in, and how you can reinforce what he has already achieved, particularly when you're caring for him (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/A-Message-for-Grandparents-Who-Provide-Childcare.aspx>)—babysitting on a Saturday afternoon or caring for him for the weekend. If he spends time in your home, purchase some extra training pants and have a potty chair identical to the one he is accustomed to at home.
- Safety in your home remains important, so make sure your home is "childproofed." (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/A-Message-for-Grandparents-Keeping-Your-Grandchild-Safe-in-Your-Home.aspx>) Be especially careful of medications (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/medication-safety/Pages/Medication-Safety-Tips.aspx>). Never leave them sitting out for his curious eyes or fingers; put them out of reach in a safe place that you will remember. Try to leave the medication there even after they leave, so that your home stays safe, even if they should stop by for a quick, unexpected visit. This is even more important if you cannot "unlock" child-resistant caps and have chosen to put your pills in other types of containers. When medications are not childproof containers, they can be easily opened by curious two-year-olds, so be especially vigilant with those.

Finally, always remember to place your grandchild in a car seat (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx>) in the backseat for every trip in the automobile. [Back to Top](#)

Additional Information:

- Childproofing Tips for Grandparents (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/A-Message-for-Grandparents-Keeping-Your-Grandchild-Safe-in-Your-Home.aspx>)
- Tips for Grandparents Who Provide Child Care (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/A-Message-for-Grandparents-Who-Provide-Childcare.aspx>)
- How to Shape & Manage Your Young Child's Behavior (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/How-to-Shape-Manage-Young-Child-Behavior.aspx>)
- Top Tips for Surviving Tantrums (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Temper-Tantrums.aspx>)
- Healthy Children Radio: Toddler Tantrums (Audio) (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/communication-discipline/Pages/Healthy-Children-Radio-Toddler-Tantrums-Audio.aspx>)

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