

# Wellness Guide at 2 Years Old

Helpful tips to support your child's development at this stage of life.



## Development

- **Growth:** Your 2 year old is running, climbing, walking up stairs, walking backward, learning to balance on one foot, and throwing/kicking balls. Your toddler is starting to link words together to speak in phrases and sentences, yet favorite words are often “no” and “mine”.
- **Independence:** Your child wants to have control and independence, but often needs just enough support from you to avoid frustration. Model the words and behaviors you want your child to say and do.
- **Activities:** Consider toys and activities that “grow” with your child (books, blocks, pretend food/pots/pans, dolls/blankets, toy animals, cars/trains, balls, crayons). Remember that your child loves to play with you. They enjoy when you follow their lead and help build on their ideas. Pretend play helps develop thinking/problem solving, language, and social skills.
- **Reading:** Continue to read together and consider a visit to your library.
- **Inclusion:** Being a “helper” with simple tasks (sweeping/making dinner) lets your toddler feel grown up and included.
- **Interaction:** Toddlers are also interested in other children and may simply watch, play nearby, or join in play with them. Toddlers still need help with sharing, turn-taking and following rules.
- **Screen Time:** Limit screen time to 1 hour a day of high-quality programs. Face-to-face interaction with caregivers will enhance your child’s social and verbal development. Bedtime and mealtime should be electronic-free zones.
- **Concerns:** Reach out to your child’s provider if you have concerns regarding your child’s development or speech.

### DEVELOPMENTAL RESOURCES

#### THE 5 Cs OF MEDIA USE

#### WA STATE EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

## Safety

- **Drowning** is a leading cause of accidental death in this age group. Continue constant supervision around water.
- Introduce helmets for bikes/tricycles/scooters.
- Toddlers need protection from moving cars, machines, and garage doors.
- Hot foods/liquids, dangling cords, tablecloths, appliances, electrical outlets and stairs can all be dangers to a curious toddler that likes to explore.
- Secure heavy furniture to the wall.
- Toddlers are safest in a car seat, in the back seat of a car and should ride rear-facing as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat.
- Be cautious about open windows and furniture near windows that can lead to falls.
- Keep household cleaners, vitamins, and medicines out of reach or locked away.
- Never leave your child alone in the car or at home.
- Keep sharp objects, small objects/magnets/batteries, balloons, and plastic bags out of reach.
- Verify that smoke alarms are working properly and avoid smoke exposure.
- Remove/lock up guns. Lock away cigarettes, lighters, alcohol, marijuana, and vaping devices.

## Family Well-being

- Toddlers are more physically independent, and can be more emotionally demanding. They are developing more complex feelings but still cannot control their emotions.
- New transitions such as a new baby or the start of preschool can cause stress on the whole family.
- Try to keep yourself healthy, both emotionally and

physically. When you are able to find support and help, you can provide support for your child and family.

### IMPORTANT RESOURCES

POISON CONTROL:  
(800) 222-1222

SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE: 988

## Nutrition

- Toddlers can be picky and erratic eaters. Providing social support and calm, repeated exposures can help with acceptance of new foods.
- Try to eat family meals together and offer a variety of healthy foods the family eats, including one they like.
- Give Vitamin D (400 to 600 IU/day).
- Avoid screens during meals. Never force food in your child's mouth.
- Offer 3 predictable meals and 2-3 snacks per day, then your child can confidently decide how much to eat. Continue to avoid foods that can cause choking.
- Be patient as your toddler feeds themselves.
- Offer milk (with meals) or water. Limit juice. Avoid soda.
- Your toddler should no longer be using a bottle.
- Prevent lead exposure by only using spices from the US and avoiding contaminated soil, dust, paint, and water. [Learn more](#) about lead toxicity and testing.

### NUTRITION RESOURCES

#### FEEDING A TODDLER

#### CONSTIPATION

## Tantrums

- Helping to regulate your toddler's strong emotions can feel overwhelming. Anticipating breakdowns can help to prevent them. For example, perhaps they need a warning before transitions or a check-in time to cuddle. Offer limited and acceptable choices.
- When your toddler is upset, try to remain calm. They may need to reconnect (hear your caring voice/feel a gentle hug or touch).
- Try putting your child's feelings into words. Can you help them problem solve? Maybe it is a time for distraction or humor. Just being there lets your child know he can count on you when he is feeling distressed.
- If none of this works and you feel overwhelmed, both of you might need to take a break in a safe, quiet space. After this break, you have another opportunity to try to reconnect.

#### TODDLER EMOTIONS

## Sleep

- Continue simple, calming, bedtime routines when your toddler is getting tired and ready for sleep.
- Consider a toddler or big bed.
- You can help your toddler learn how to fall asleep on their own by putting them down when they are drowsy, but not fully asleep. Expect a protest if this is a new change for your child.
- Toddlers still benefit from an afternoon nap or quiet time. If your child has given up daytime naps, consider adjusting to an earlier bedtime.

### LEARNING TO SLEEP

## Toddler Care

- Brush teeth with fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice on a soft toothbrush 2 times per day.
- Make a dentist appointment.
- Use sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher).

## Overseas Travel

If you will be traveling with your family overseas, if your family will be traveling internationally, schedule a virtual [eTravel](#) consultation at least 4–6 weeks before departure.

## Toilet Training

- There is not one "right" way to toilet train. Your child may be physically ready, but may not be emotionally ready.
- A toddler can be more successful if they have a potty seat and can communicate when they need to go potty.
- Punishment, feeling forced, and too much praise can overwhelm a toddler learning to train.
- Let your toddler choose underwear when they're ready.
- Find the right method that works for your family.
- Be patient and calm (avoid battles) - it takes time and accidents are expected.
- Most children daytime train first, followed by nighttime training at 3-4 years old.

### TOILET TRAINING RESOURCES

#### TOILET TRAINING

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[DOSING TABLES](#) 

[COMMON ILLNESS SUPPORT](#) 

[PATIENT EDUCATION](#) 