

How 2 Year Olds 'Work'

If we could give toddlers their own theme song it would be Frank Sinatra's 'My Way'!

Your toddler has a tremendous desire to develop his own way of doing things, whether it's wearing shorts in February or finishing the tower before anything else. He only thinks in the present and usually only thinks of himself. This is a good thing as it helps your toddler develop a strong sense of self. In time he will be able to take other people's feelings and thoughts into account. Your toddler also likes to do things "right now" and doesn't always understand the need to wait. Encouraging your child to do another activity while waiting is a good way of teaching him the concept of time. It's hard for your two year old to listen to a long explanation or sort out a lot of choices. Give your child two acceptable choices, "Would you like to wear the blue shirt or the red one?" It is important for your toddler to start to do things for himself, such as starting to dress or feed himself. These should be encouraged in a positive way.

Understanding the kind of temperament your toddler has makes it easier for all. Every child is different. If your child is shy, don't force him to interact directly with other people. Praise him for giving a simple wave. This is how he learns polite behaviour. With encouragement and support he will become more comfortable interacting with others. Be patient and understanding. Helping your child to feel good about himself sets the right path for this next stage of growing independence.

Dear Mom and Dad:

You have seen my fingerprints on
windows, wall and door.
And sometimes you are cross at
finding them once more.
But little hands grow very fast,
And years just slip away,
So I'm sending you my fingerprints,
my size, this special day.

Love, Your Child





Oodles of Noodles

I know I'm being very hard to please these days since all I want to eat are noodles. This is called a "food jag". It will last for a while and then go away. I know that you are trying to be very patient with me. Let me eat noodles. Pasta is a healthy food from Canada's Food Guide. Offer me small portions of everything else we are eating.

From age 2, the food guide is suitable to follow and a healthy eating guide for the whole family. It will help us get familiar with the portion sizes and number of servings I need in a day. I don't need much food, but I need choices from all 4 food groups. I may not be able to eat a whole food group serving at one meal, but that's where snacks come in! Let's count down to healthy eating habits!

Here is the number of servings I need from Canada's Food Guide:

- 4 servings of vegetables/fruit
- 3 servings of grains
- 2 servings of milk or milk alternatives
- 1 serving of meat or meat alternatives

To learn more about the food guide, visit

Source: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php

I wasn't very hungry yesterday and I'm not very hungry today either. Understand that I'm not growing as quickly these days. My appetite is smaller so only put a few tablespoons on my plate and let me ask for more if I want. I eat more at meal times when I finish my snack at least two hours before we sit down.

When planning my snacks, here is an easy way to keep them healthy:

Simple

Natural - plain, unprocessed foods

Acceptable - a healthy choice, from a food group

Crunchy foods, not crinkly packages

Kind to the environment

Safe - prepare, store and serve using safe food handling guidelines

A few healthy snacks ideas:

- cheese and a small whole made muffin
- yogurt and fruit
- sliced hardboiled egg and carrot sticks
- oatmeal and milk

"Another important step towards better health and a healthy body weight is to follow Canada's Food Guide by limiting foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar or salt (sodium) such as cakes and pastries, chocolate and candies, cookies and granola bars, doughnuts and muffins, ice cream and frozen desserts, french fries, potato chips, nachos and other salty snacks, alcohol, fruit flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks, and sweetened hot or cold drinks."

Canada's Food Guide

I'm still kind of messy when I eat. I want to use my spoon and feed myself. I look to you to teach me how to eat well. Let's eat together!

Online Resources:

<http://www.getcracking.ca/education/other-resources/meal-planning-made-easy>



Healthy Food for Healthy Teeth

Healthy foods are important for my teeth. Avoid or limit sticky, processed foods like gummies, fruit leathers or suckers. Sugar, sweetened beverages such as pop, hot chocolate, fruit punch and sports drinks are not good for my teeth either. These foods and drinks can cause tooth decay.

Did you lift my lip this month? If not, it's a good time to check my teeth and make sure there are no signs of decay. If you see any white chalky spots or brown spots, please call our dentist or our local public health unit.

I need to brush twice a day, for two minutes each time. (I will need your help for quite a while yet).

Little Tommy Toothbrush

(Sung to "Eensy, Weensy Spider")

Little Tommy Toothbrush
Had a job to do.
He spread himself with toothpaste
and jumped up on a tooth.
He scrubbed and scrubbed the germs away
To stop my tooth decay.
Then Little Tommy Toothbrush
Jumped down and said, "Hooray!"





Keeping Me Safe

Keep Me Safe

My curiosity and excitement can lead me into very dangerous situations.

Keep my development in mind when setting rules. I might be able to turn the taps on for my bath, but please do not let me. Many kids have spent months in the burn unit of hospitals recovering from serious burns that they got in the bathtub. Be sure that I am not in the bathroom alone. Check the water temperature with your elbow or your hand. Swish it around to make sure there are no pockets of hot water before I get into the bathtub. Keep the water temperature in our home set no higher than 120 degrees F. (49 degrees C). To keep me safe, always turn the cold water on before the hot and turn the hot water off before the cold.

I love water but have no idea how dangerous it can be. My head is still big compared to the rest of my body which means I lose my balance easily. My lungs are small and can fill with water quickly. It only takes two inches of water for me to drown. Please empty all buckets, baths, and pools when not in use. Don't forget to keep the lid down on the toilet.

Start to teach me simple traffic rules. I must always hold onto an adult's hand when we walk along the roads, sidewalks, in parking lots and especially when we cross the street. Make sure I always wear a safety approved helmet when riding my tricycle.

Please keep the rules clear and simple, so that I can understand them. I still need you to help me to remember the rules. Keeping me safe is your job. Thanks Dad and Mom!

Safety First!



Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is a special time for you and your child. Relax and enjoy this stage of development. Most children are open to toilet learning between the ages of 2 to 3. Let their behaviour be your guide, not your timetable. Most girls learn the art a little faster than boys. Patience and encouragement will help your child feel good about her successes.

Signs of readiness

1. Your child stays dry for at least 2 hours at a time.
2. Your child has words or gestures for urine and bowel movements.
3. Your child has regular bowel movements about the same time everyday.
4. Your child understands and follows simple directions.
5. Your child understands the concept of wet and dry, and finds a dirty diaper uncomfortable.

Every child is different. If your child is not interested, this is okay. Wait until they show you they are ready.

Under or Over

I am starting to learn about where things are, like “the ball is under the chair”. Play a hide and seek game with me. Hide my toys around the room and ask, “Is it on the table?” “Is it in your toy box?”

I am using 150 to 200 words by the time I reach 2 ½ years old. Remember to share books with me. I especially like books with flaps that I can flip over and see what's underneath.

I like books with heavy pages that I can turn more easily. Point out objects, people and actions when you are reading with me! Reading books and singing songs together are a special time for me to share the world with you!

One Step at a Time

1. Decide on your toilet terminology and encourage all family members and caregivers to be consistent. Teach the correct names for body parts; a penis is a penis. This is less confusing for all.
2. Change your toddler's diapers as soon as they are wet or soiled, this helps them to distinguish wet and dry.
3. Encourage your child to sit on the toilet or potty with her clothes on, several times a day. This will help her get used to the new habit.
4. Once comfortable have her sit with her clothes off. This is practise, so don't expect results.
5. Try leaving her diaper off for a short period of time so she can go by herself if she wishes.
6. Praise all successes or partial successes.
7. After much success with step five, try training pants or regular underpants. Keep helping her. This new habit can take months to learn.

Be supportive. Read a book to her about toilet learning. If she's not ready, try again in a few months.



Look at What I Can Do!

From 2-2.5 years

2 years

- At age 2, I can use 50 or more single words
- I can build a tower of at least six blocks
- I like throwing balls overhand
- I can speak and be understood half the time
- I might be able to jump with both feet off the ground at once
- I can put on some of my clothes like my pants and coat
- I like to wash and dry my hands and brush my teeth (I will still require help)
- I might be able to balance on each foot for 1 second
- I can name family members and a friend
- I can use some descriptive words like “in, on, big, and good”
- The word “no” has power for me and I use it often
- I can display a wide range of emotions such as love, pleasure, joy and anger
- I want to do things for myself and it is frustrating when I can't
- I can use 150-200 single words by the age of 2½

2.5 years

Roll it, Poke it, Pound it

Let's make play dough together. We can shape the dough with our hands. We can squeeze, poke, and pound this funny feeling dough. For added fun let's use a rolling pin, a block, a popsicle stick, or a spoon to cut and shape the dough. Rolling worms of all shapes and sizes is fun. Help me to be creative. Don't do it for me. Talk with me about what we are making. If you buy play dough, be sure it is non-toxic and intended for children less than three years old.

The Best Play Dough Ever

1 cup flour
½ cup salt
1 cup water
2 tsp cream of tartar
1 tbsp oil
food colouring or Kool-Aid

Stir all ingredients together and cook over medium high heat for five minutes or until it thickens to play dough. Store in a plastic bag or airtight container.

PLAY and TOYS

I still like to play with all my old toys, along with some new ones to challenge my physical and intellectual growth. Please encourage my search for knowledge. I need to know why things work the way they do. I am learning to entertain myself, but I still often need someone to play alongside me. I am beginning to learn to be able to take turns in play. Come play with me!

Exploring the Senses

- Texture books, peek-a-boo books, puzzles
- A surprise bag - hide a familiar toy in it for me to feel and guess what it is
- Warm water play/cool water play - washing dolls is a favourite activity
- Play dough to roll, squish and push things into (with supervision only)
- Musical instruments including a toddler tape recorder or homemade shaker
- Play in the mud and in a pile of leaves
- Help me notice smells and sounds around the house and in our neighbourhood

Create Your Own

Collect beautiful junk from your recycling bin. Toilet paper rolls make great binoculars. Start a scrapbook for my amazing pieces of art with the date that I created them. You will be glad you did!



Building My Trust

Showing Love - A Note for Dads

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to show love and respect for his partner.

Kissing and showing affection shows kids what love looks like. We forget that our toddlers watch and imitate us a lot. This is not the only gift a father can give his children. Involvement in your toddler's life is vitally important.

Dads often do things differently than moms, and this is beneficial. Fathers are more likely to engage in rough and tumble play. Your toddler finds the playful, unpredictable interactions that Dads enjoy, highly stimulating. Always remember to keep it safe and fun. Watch for signs when she has had enough, such as whining or asking you to stop. Change to a quieter activity such as reading, building blocks or make believe. Quieter activities are best within the hour before sleep times.



My Mental Health

I Am Happy, You Are Happy -- Daily Routines

I feel happy and secure when we follow our daily routines. I am starting to know when it is time to eat, when it is bedtime, and when it is time to go to the Ontario Early Years Centre. Brushing our teeth together after each meal and at bedtime helps me learn good habits. Bath time is fun. I love it when you blow bubbles and pour water on me. The most important routine is bedtime. Brush my teeth, read me a book, snuggle and kiss me good night. I need my meals, snacks and naps at my usual time or I can get cranky. I rely on you to follow our schedule. Be patient and guide me gently.

Help! Monsters!

Sometimes children start waking in the night at this age. Chronic sleep deprivation can take its toll on your energy and patience levels. Trading the "night shifts" with your partner can help with catching up on your sleep and make both of you feel better in the morning. There are a few reasons why children don't sleep through the night:

- Physical discomfort; teething, ear infections, colds, fevers.
- Environment; becoming too hot or too cold in the night or wetting the bed. Blankets may fall off or the room is too hot.
- Nightmares or bad dreams; these can be related to daytime events such as a new caregiver, starting pre-school, a scary movie or story. Gently reassure and comfort them without confirming their fears. Then continue the normal bedtime routine.
- Night terrors; these are different to nightmares as the child does not wake with these. Your toddler may let out a terrifying yell, sit upright in bed with eyes wide open and cry. He is unaware of his surroundings and may not recognize you. It is impossible to wake the child and you should not try.



Baby #2?

Do I have to share you with the new baby? Maybe this isn't such a good idea after all! These changes can make me feel alone and insecure. Let me know I'm still important. We can look at my baby books and you can tell me stories about when I was a baby. Tell me what it will be like when the baby comes home, not how much fun it will be in 1 or 2 years!

I like to go shopping with you to get some new things for the baby. I can help pick the colours of sleepers or diapers. I can be a real help for other things, especially if you can't reach the sock under the bed. I can also help with the baby, let me pick out today's outfit or choose a toy for her.

Don't be upset if I don't like the new baby right away. It may take time but I'll be happy with my new brother or sister eventually. Don't be surprised if I start acting like a baby too! Please don't punish me; it will pass soon. Try to spend some time just with me.

There are some wonderful storybooks at our local library or resource centre that will help prepare me for becoming a big brother (or sister).

Meeting Friends

I am very curious about the world around me. Be patient with me. I do not always want to share toys with friends, but I like to be with other children. You can take me to visit new places. Resource centres, drop-ins, libraries, and community playgroups are good places for me to practice my social skills. You can have fun talking with all the other parents. While we visit, I can play with paint, build with blocks, and sing songs. My toys are very important to me right now. They help me feel secure. I am becoming more independent. Let me do things. That's how I learn.

? For More Information

Dad Central: www.dadcentral.ca

Caring for Kids: Child health information from the Canadian Paediatric Society www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Mothers in Mind: <http://childdevelop.ca/mothersinmind>

Ontario Early Years Centres: A place for parents and their children: <http://www.oeyc.edu.gov.on.ca/>

Parachute Canada: Preventing Injuries. Saving Lives: <http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics>

Transport Canada: Car Seat Safety: www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety/kids

EatRight Ontario: Call 1-800-510-5102 or www.ontario.ca/eatright

To find your local Public Health Unit:

Visit <http://bit.ly/eMtpaw>

Call the INFOLine at 1-866-532-3161

(Toll-free in Ontario only)

or TTY 1-800-387-5559



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