



2 Years *All by Themselves*

Your child at 2–2 1/2 years old

Older toddlers are starting to use words to share how they think and feel.

What your child can do

Your toddler is learning to use their body in new ways:

- They can walk up stairs one step at a time
- They can walk backward
- They can balance on one foot, which helps them climb

Your toddler is also using words to share thoughts and feelings:

- They can say longer sentences like "Mama play truck?"
- Their favorite words right now may be "no," "me," and "mine" — and that is completely normal

What you can do

Go for a walk in your neighborhood. Let your child **stop and explore** whatever interests them.

Ask your child what they think. "What part of the book did you like?"

Help with feelings and sharing at the same time. "I know you love the stroller, but Thomas would like a turn, too."

Every child grows at their own pace. Your child may reach milestones sooner or later than other kids and still be growing just fine.

Your child's imagination is growing

Your toddler is getting really good at pretend play.

- They laugh at silly ideas, like if a toy car said "moo" instead of "beep beep"
- Sometimes they get scared because their imagination is so strong — they cannot always tell what is real and what is pretend

Your toddler wants to make friends, but still needs help with sharing.

- They enjoy watching other children and may copy what they see them do
- They may have one or two close friends, but most toddlers play *next to* other kids rather than *with* them — and that is normal



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



What you can do

Use pretend play to help your child manage new situations. You might act out a story together about meeting a new babysitter.

Take your child's fears seriously and respond with warmth. This builds trust and helps them feel safe.

Give your child regular chances to play with kids their age. Help them work out conflicts and practice taking turns.

Let them know that sharing is hard. Help them find another toy to play with while they wait. A kitchen timer can help them learn to wait their turn.

Other things to know and try

Toddlers are not confused by learning two languages at once. At first, they may know fewer words in each language — but this is not a language delay. When you add up all the words they know in both languages, the number of words they know is similar to children who speak only one language. If your child hears another language at child care, keep speaking your home language regularly to keep those skills growing.

At this visit

The care team will measure your child's length, weight, and head size, and check their heart, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Your healthcare provider will discuss vaccines with you at today's visit. The team will talk with you about your child's growth, sleep, eating, and safety — and there will be time for any questions you have.

What comes next

Between 2 1/2 and 3 years, your child's language will keep growing quickly, and their sentences will get longer. Pretend play will become richer, and they will start to show more interest in playing *with* other children rather than just next to them. Big feelings are still very common. With time and support, children this age begin to find better ways to handle them.

Have more questions?

Talk to your child's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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