

# Positive Parenting Tips for Healthy Child Development

## Toddlers (2-3 years of age)

### Developmental Milestones

Skills such as taking turns, playing make believe, and kicking a ball, are called developmental milestones. Developmental milestones are things most children can do by a certain age. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move (like jumping, running, or balancing).

Because of children's growing desire to be independent, this stage is often called the "terrible twos." However, this can be an exciting time for parents and toddlers. Toddlers will experience huge thinking, learning, social, and emotional changes that will help them to explore their new world, and make sense of it. During this stage, toddlers should be able to follow two- or three-step directions, sort objects by shape and color, imitate the actions of adults and playmates, and express a wide range of emotions.

*For more details on developmental milestones, warning signs of possible developmental delays, and information on how to help your child's development, visit the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign website.*

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>

### Positive Parenting Tips

**Following are some things you, as a parent, can do to help your toddler during this time:**

- Set up a special time to read books with your toddler.
- Encourage your child to take part in pretend play.
- Play parade or follow the leader with your toddler.
- Help your child to explore things around her by taking her on a walk or wagon ride.
- Encourage your child to tell you his name and age.
- Teach your child simple songs like Itsy Bitsy Spider, or other cultural childhood rhymes.
- Give your child attention and praise when she follows instructions and shows positive behavior and limit attention for defiant behavior like tantrums. Teach your child acceptable ways to show that she's upset.



**HEALTH  
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[www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org)

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities  
Division of Human Development and Disability

