

Your Child's Development

This is a delightful stage as children begin to talk and talk and then talk some more. Toddlers are also starting to pretend. This is a big step in their development and makes life really fun and often very funny.

How do you see your child starting to use her imagination?



| What Your Toddler Can Do | What You Can Do |
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| <p>I am learning new words every day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may say as many as 50-100 words by my second birthday. • I may even put 2 words together to make my first sentences! | <p>Turn your child's words and phrases into sentences. When he says, <i>More milk</i>, you can say: <i>You want more milk in your cup.</i></p> <p>Talk as you read. Ask your child questions about the pictures and stories you read together.</p> |
| <p>I need help to begin learning self-control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand <i>no</i> but I still can't control my feelings and actions. • I may get frustrated when I can't do something by myself. Please be patient with me! | <p>Put your child's feelings into words. <i>I know you're really mad that I turned the TV off. It's okay to feel mad. Instead of TV, would you like to read or play with blocks now?</i></p> |
| <p>I am beginning to use my imagination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may feed my doll pretend food. • I might make <i>brrrummm</i> noises when I play with cars. | <p>Play pretend with your toddler. You can be a puppy, barking and running after a ball.</p> <p>Jump-start your child's imagination with dress-up clothes, animal figures, blocks, and plastic food and dishes.</p> |
| <p>I am a little scientist, always testing things out!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love to fill and dump and open and close things to see how they work. • I may start to sort objects. I might put all my trains in one place and all my cars in another. | <p>Help your child practice sorting. Ask your child to help you sort the laundry by putting socks in one pile and shirts in another.</p> <p>Encourage lots of exploration. Fill and dump with water or sand. Make an indoor "sandbox" of dry oatmeal or fall leaves.</p> |
| <p>I am becoming an even better problem-solver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may blow on my food when you tell me dinner is hot or try to get my own jacket on. | <p>Help your child solve a problem but don't do it all for him. The more he does, the more he learns.</p> <p>Play games that use problem-solving skills. Try three- or four-piece puzzles or building with blocks.</p> |



As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: www.zerotothree.org

What's on Your Mind

My 2 year-old definitely understands the word *no* since he uses it all the time. But when I say, *No touching the lamp!* he stops for a minute but then does it anyway.

Toddlers understand a lot of what you tell them. They just don't have much self-control yet. So while your son may stop when he hears you say *No*, he cannot stop himself from doing it again. He can't tell himself: *I really want to play with this lamp, but it's against the rules so I better not.* For now, make your home as child-safe as possible so you can use fewer *Nos*. When you do set a limit (*No touching the lamp*), guide your child away from it and offer a substitute—like a flashlight—to play with. Self-control takes years to develop. Your child will need lots of patience and consistency from you along the way.

Did You Know...

Parents may deal with challenging behavior in their toddlers every 3 to 9 minutes.¹

What It Means for You:

Testing is part of a toddler's healthy development. They do this by trying out different behaviors and seeing what reaction they get. How you respond makes a big difference in what your child learns and how she behaves. When you set limits:

Be clear about rules. Toddlers need lots of reminders about rules because their memory is still developing.

Be specific. Say *Please put the blocks in the box* instead of *Clean up your toys.*

Spotlight on Language Development

Learning to talk is one of the most important milestones of the first few years. How and when young children learn to use spoken words is different for every child. Some children may use words early and often, while others may take longer to speak. (If you have questions about your child's language development, talk with your health care provider or other trusted professional.)

Build your child's vocabulary through repetition. When your child uses the same sound over and over to name an object, it is considered a "word." If your child always says *muh* when he wants milk, it means that he understands this sound stands for a specific object—that yummy white stuff. Correct pronunciation will come over time. You can help him learn how to pronounce words by saying what you know he means: *You want more milk?*

Notice how your child uses his actions to communicate. Non-verbal communication is very important. When a toddler takes your hand and leads you to a toy, she is using her actions to say, *I want to play with this toy.* If your child is communicating through

actions like this, her spoken language skills will likely follow. You can help by repeating the message your child is sending: *You'd like me to play with you. Here I come!*

Talk together with your child. The more you talk with your child, the more words he will learn. He's learning language from you—his first, and best, teacher.

Young children benefit from learning two languages at the same time. This is a wonderful way for children to develop a close bond with their community and culture. As your child's language skills grow, be prepared for some "language mixing." It is common for children to combine words in English and in their home language in the same sentence.

Be consistent. Use the same consequences. For example, every time your child throws a toy off the high chair take the toy away for a few minutes. Then let him try again.

Stay calm. All children test the rules. The more calmly you respond, the more effective you will be at teaching your child self-control.

What is most challenging about limit-setting for you? Why? What might you do differently to feel more successful?



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1 - Lytton, H. & Zwirner, W., 1975; Minton, C., Kagan, J., & Levine, J.A., 1971; Power, T.G., & Chapieski, M.L., 1986.

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