

## *How Two-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 need to develop his own way of doing things, whether it is wearing shorts in February or finishing building the tower before dinner. He can only think in the present and usually only thinks of himself. This is a normal stage of development and will help your toddler develop a strong sense of self. In time he will be able to take other people's feelings and thoughts into account.

It's hard for your two year old to listen to a long explanation or manage a lot of choices. Give your child two 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. Starting to dress, wash, or feed himself can all be encouraged in a positive way.

Understanding the kind of temperament your toddler has makes it easier for everyone. Every child is different. If your child is shy don't force him to interact directly with other people. A simple wave, with praise, shows him he is learning polite behavior. With encouragement and comfort his interactions with others will grow.

Be patient and understanding. Helping your child feel good about himself sets him on the right path for this next stage of growing independence.



## **To Every Parent**

There are little eyes upon you,  
And they are watching night and day;  
There are little ears that quickly take  
In every word you say;  
There are little hands all eager to do  
Everything you do,  
And a little child who's dreaming of  
The day he'll be like you.

You're the little child's idol,  
You're the wisest of the wise,  
In his little mind about you,  
No suspicions ever rise;  
He believes in you devoutly,  
Holds all you say and do;  
He will say and do in your way when  
He's grown up to be like you.

There's a wide eyed little child who  
Believes you're always right,  
And his ears are always open and he  
Watches day and night;  
You are setting an example  
Everyday in all you do  
For the little child who's waiting  
To grow up to be like you.

-author unknown

## Involved Dads

New research is showing that men who are involved with their children from a very young age have an important impact on their children's lives. Children who grow up with an involved dad are more confident, better able to deal with frustration, better able to gain independence and their own identity, and are more likely to mature into compassionate and empathetic adults.

They are more likely to have high self-esteem, and be more sociable. As they grow older they are less likely to show signs of depression and less likely to commit suicide. Boys have been shown to be less aggressive and adolescent girls are less likely to engage in sex.

Another important thing both parents can do for their children is show love and respect for each other. Showing affection for each other demonstrates to your children what love looks like. We forget that toddlers watch and imitate us a lot. You are helping to shape your toddler's growing understanding of "family".



## Oodles of Noodles – Food Jags in Toddlers

Your toddler is very hard to please these days – all she wants to eat is noodles! When your child only wants to eat one thing for breakfast, lunch and dinner this is called a "food jag". Food jags are not unusual in children and won't last long if you don't make a big issue of them. As long as the food is a healthy choice, you can continue to offer this food to your child. Keep offering a variety of other foods from the different food groups at each meal and snacks. Also offer different versions of her favourite foods to increase variety. For example, if her favourite food is noodles, switch it up by adding chicken or vegetable pieces. In time, your child will branch out and eat other foods.



## Toilet Learning

Each child is different when it comes to toilet learning. Most children are open to starting the process between ages 2 and 4 years. Let your child's behavior be your guide. A strict timetable will not work and you will need to follow your child's cues through each step of the process. Patience is needed, though, as it usually takes 3 to 6 months before your child is out of diapers completely.

### Your child is probably ready for toilet learning when he/she:

- stays dry in diapers for at least 2 hours at a time
- can walk to the toilet
- can follow one or two simple instructions
- recognizes and tells you about wet or soiled diapers
- shows interest in the toilet
- can pull own pants up and down
- wants to please you
- wants to be independent



### One step at a time:

- Decide on toilet words and encourage all family members and caregivers to be consistent. Teach the correct anatomical names.
- Decide whether you will use a potty chair or the actual toilet (with a potty seat). The choice depends on which is more comfortable for your child.
- Help your child sit on the toilet or potty chair with his clothes on, several times a day. This will help him get used to the new habit.
- Once comfortable, have him sit with his clothes off. This is practice so don't expect results.
- Change your toddler's diaper as soon as it is wet or soiled – this helps him tell the difference between wet and dry.
- Try leaving his diaper off for short periods so he can go by himself if he wishes.

• After much success at this point, try training pants or regular underpants. Keep helping him – this new habit takes months to learn. Children typically take longer to stay dry at night. This is normal.

If at first toilet learning doesn't work, it may be that your child is not ready yet. Relax and leave it for 1 to 3 months and try again. You cannot rush your child into using the toilet and it does not do any good to be disappointed or upset.



# Look At What I Can Do!

From 2 to 2 ½ years, these are some of the things I can do:

2 Years

- At age 2, I can use 150 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 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 not
- I can use 450 single words by the age of 2 ½



2 1/2 Years



## The Best Play Dough Ever

- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 2 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 tbsp oil
- Food colouring

Stir all ingredients together and cook over medium high heat for 5 minutes or until the right consistency. Store the play dough in a plastic bag or airtight container. **Remember – keep pot handles turned to the back of the stove.**

## Watch for these Speech and Language Milestones

By age 2 ½ years (30 months) my child:

- Uses at least 450 words
- Begins to use verbs with "ing" endings (e.g. eating)
- Says his first name when asked
- Answers questions like, "Where is Teddy?" and "What is Mommy doing?"
- Uses sentences of up to three words combining nouns and verbs (e.g. **Daddy go car**)
- Puts sounds at the beginning of most words
- Understands concepts such as "big" and "little"
- Begins to point to objects from a group by their function and parts (e.g. **Which one has wheels? Which one can we eat?**)

Parents usually know their child best. If you did not check all of the boxes above, please call **tykeTALK** at 519-663-0273 or toll free at 1-877-818-8255 to find out more that you can do to help your child learn to talk.



## Talk

### Over or Under

Your child is starting to learn about where things are, like **"the ball is under the chair"**. Play hide and seek with her or hide toys around the room. Ask her, **"Is it on the table?"** or **"Is it in the toy box?"** Your child is using about 450 words by the time she reaches 2 ½ years old. Remember to read books to her. She especially likes books with flaps that she can flip over and see what's underneath. She also likes books with heavy pages that she can turn herself. Point out objects, people and actions when you are reading to her. Reading books and singing songs with your child are special ways in which you can share the world with her.



## Grow

### Meeting Friends

Your child is very curious about the world around her. She likes to be around other children but doesn't always like to share toys with friends. Be patient with her. Take your child to new places like resource centres, drop-ins, libraries and community playgroups. These are good places for her to practice her social skills. While you visit, she can play with paint, build with blocks and sing songs. Your child's toys are important to her right now and help her feel secure. She is also starting to become independent. Allow your child to help you and practice skills – that's how she learns.



## Play

### Roll it, Poke it and Pound it

Play dough is a great activity for you and your child. You can show him how to shape the dough with his hands. He can learn how to roll it, squeeze it, poke it and pound it. He'll love the funny feeling on his hands. You can use a rolling pin, blocks, a popsicle stick and spoon and other objects to make fun shapes with the dough. Help your child be creative but don't do it for him. Talk with him about what you are making. If you buy play dough, make sure it is non-toxic.

## Safety Tips for your Curious Toddler

Your toddler's curiosity and excitement can lead him into dangerous situations. Although he is learning new things very quickly, he doesn't understand his limitations and can still get hurt easily. Follow these general safety tips to help keep your toddler safe:

- Teach your child simple traffic rules and always have him hold your hand when walking along roads, sidewalks and parking lots. Don't trust your child to cross the street himself as he doesn't have the ability to remember the safety dangers around him.
- Make sure your child wears a safety approved bicycle helmet when riding his tricycle.
- When travelling, make sure your child is always in a car seat that is appropriate for his height and weight. By law, a child must be in a car seat until he is 40 lbs. but don't be in a rush to switch to a booster seat; it is safer for your child to be in a 5-point harness for as long as possible.
- Keep your toddler's abilities in mind when setting rules. He might be able to turn the taps on for his bath but don't let him. At this age he cannot remember the difference between hot and cold and could easily be burned. Keep the water temperature in your home set no higher than 120 degrees F (49 degrees C).

- Never leave your child alone in the bathroom or around water.
- Keep safety rules clear and simple so that your child can understand. Help your child remember the rules to help keep him safe.



## A New Baby in the House?

If your family is expanding to include a new baby it is important to remember that your toddler may not think it is such a great idea. **Penelope Leach**, author of *Your Baby and Child*, offers some practical tips on helping your older child adjust:

- Assume your child will be jealous and feel put out. Don't expect excited anticipation of the event but, instead, focus on building his ability to cope with it.
- Don't start preparing your child too soon. Use the early months of pregnancy to talk about families and that many have more than one child.
- Make any lifestyle changes well in advance, e.g. switch to a big bed, start nursery school.
- Near your due date you can talk about babies – how they cry a lot, how they are helpless, etc.
- When coming home from the hospital, remember that it is mom the child wants, not the baby.
- Accept offers of help from your toddler but don't make a big deal of the **"big girl/big boy"** line. Your child may be thinking that being **"big"** is the problem – if they had stayed a baby you wouldn't have gotten the new baby.
- Don't ask your child to love the baby – that is asking too much. Acknowledge that the baby may be a nuisance to her right now.
- Work to make your older child feel that the baby likes her.
- Protect the baby from harm. Have clear and consistent rules re: holding the baby, and rough behavior.



## Monsters in the Night

Often children who have finally started falling to sleep easily by themselves will still wake during the night. This can be exhausting for parents and can take a toll on your energy and patience. Trading the **"night shift"** with your partner can help you catch up on your sleep and make both of you feel better in the morning.



**Here are a few of the reasons you might have a night owl on your hands:**

- Physical discomfort – teething, ear infections, colds, fevers.
- Environment – becoming too hot or too cold in the night or wetting the bed.
- Nightmares or bad dreams – these can be related to daytime events, such as a parent returning to work, a new caregiver, starting a nursery school program, or a scary movie or story. Go to your child when she starts crying, reassure her, and leave a nightlight on.
- Night terrors – these are different from nightmares as the child does not wake while experiencing a night terror. Your toddler may let out a terrifying yell, sit upright in bed with her eyes wide open and cry. She is unaware of her surroundings and may not recognize you. It is impossible to wake her and you should not try. Stay with her until she lies back down and returns to a quiet sleep.



## **St. Thomas Site**

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