



What to Expect as Your Child Grows: Well Child Care at 2 Years

Nutrition

- Family meals are important for your child. They teach your child that eating is a time for being together and to talk to one another. Letting your child eat with you makes him feel like part of the family.
- Let your child feed himself. Your toddler will get better at using his spoon, with fewer and fewer spills. It is good to let your child help choose what foods to eat. Be sure to give him only healthy food choices. For many children, this is the time to switch from whole milk to a low-fat milk.
- It is important for your child to be completely off of a bottle. Ask your doctor for help if your child is still using one.

Development

- Spend time teaching your child how to play. Encourage imaginative play and the sharing of toys with others, but do not be surprised that two-year-olds usually do not want to share their toys with anyone else.
- Mild stuttering is common at this age. It usually goes away on its own by the age of four years. Do not hurry your child's speech. Ask your doctor about your child's speech if you are worried.

Toilet Training

Some children at this age are showing signs that they are ready for toilet training. When your child starts reporting wet or soiled diapers to you, this is a sign that your child prefers to be dry. Praise your child for telling you. Toddlers are naturally curious about other people using the bathroom. If your child seems curious, let him go to the bathroom with you. Buy a potty chair and leave it in a room in which your child normally plays. It is important not to put too many demands on the child or shame the child about toilet training. When your child does use the toilet, let him know how proud you are.

Behavior Control

At this age, children often say "no" or refuse to do what you want them to do. This normal phase of development involves testing the rules that parents make. Parents need to be consistent in following through with reasonable rules. Your rules should not be too strict or too lenient. Enforce the rules fairly every time. Be gentle but firm with your child even when the child wants to break a rule. Many parents find this age difficult, so ask your doctor for advice on managing behavior.

Here are some good methods for helping children learn about rules:

- Divert and substitute. If a child is playing with something you don't want him to have, replace it with another object or toy that he enjoys. This approach avoids a fight and does not place children in a situation where they'll say "no."

- Teach and lead. Have as few rules as necessary and enforce them. These rules should be the rules important for the child's safety. If a rule is broken, after a short, clear, and gentle explanation, immediately find a place for your child to sit alone for two minutes. It is very important that a "time-out" comes immediately after a rule is broken.
- Make consequences as logical as possible. Remember that encouragement and praise are more likely to motivate a young child than threats and fear. Do not threaten a consequence that you do not carry out. If you say there is a consequence for misbehavior and the child misbehaves, carry through with the consequence gently but firmly.
- Be consistent with discipline. Don't make threats that you cannot carry out. If you say you're going to do it, do it.
- Be warm and positive. Children like to please their parents. Give plenty of praise and be enthusiastic. When children misbehave, stay calm and say, "We can't do that. The rule is _____." Then repeat the rule.

Reading and Electronic Media

- Children learn about reading skills while watching you read. They start to figure out that printed symbols have certain meanings. Young children love to participate directly with you and the book. They like to open flaps, ask questions, and make comments.
- It is important to set rules about television viewing. Limit the total TV time to no more than an hour per day.

Dental Care

- Brushing teeth regularly after meals is important. Think up a game and make brushing fun.
- Make an appointment for your child to visit the dentist.

Safety Tips

- Child-proof the home. Go through every room in your house and remove anything that is either valuable, dangerous, or messy. Preventive child-proofing will stop many possible discipline problems. Don't expect a child not to get into things just because you said not to.
- **Fires and Burns**
 - Practice a fire escape plan.
 - Check smoke detectors. Replace the batteries every six months. Check food temperatures carefully. They should not be too hot.
 - Keep hot appliances and cords out of reach.
 - Keep electrical appliances out of the bathroom.
 - Keep matches and lighters out of reach.
 - Do not allow your child to use the stove, microwave, hot curlers, or iron.
 - Turn your water heater down to 120° Fahrenheit.
- **Falls**
 - Teach your child not to climb on furniture or cabinets. Do not place furniture (on which the child may climb) near windows or on balconies.
 - Install window guards on windows above the first floor (unless it is against your local fire codes).
 - Lock doors to dangerous areas like the basement.
- **Car Safety**
 - Use an approved toddler car seat correctly.

- Sometimes toddlers may not want to be placed in car seats. Gently put your child into the car seat every time you ride in the car.
- Give the child a toy to play with once in the seat.
- Parents should wear seat belts at all times.
- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- **Pedestrian Safety**
 - Hold on to your child when you are near traffic.
 - Provide a play area where balls and riding toys cannot roll into the street.
- **Water Safety**
 - Continuously watch your child around any water.
- **Poisoning**
 - Keep all medicines, vitamins, cleaning fluids, and other chemicals locked away.
 - Put a poison center number on all phones.
 - Buy medicines in containers with safety caps.
 - Do not store poisons in any drink bottles, glasses, or jars.

Smoking

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child.

Immunizations

Routine infant vaccinations are usually completed before this age. However some children may need to catch up on recommended shots at this visit. Children over six months of age should receive an annual flu shot. Ask your doctor if you have any questions about whether your child needs any vaccines.

Next Visit

A once-a-year check-up is recommended. Before starting school your child will need more vaccinations.