

2-3 Years



Live
Love
Grow
Learn

Toddlers look to parents to understand emotions – theirs and their parents. **Be patient and calm as your toddler learns new skills and good behavior.**

- **Make simple rules. For example, say *please* and *thank you*. No hitting, no calling names.**
- **Be consistent as you help your child learn to follow rules.**
- **Praise good behavior and use of new found skills.**
- **Teach skills needed for school and group play: sharing, taking turns.**
- **Say, “*I love you*” and give hugs often.**

Parents help their toddlers develop and reach full potential. Every day, your toddler learns from what you do and say.

Learning

Early learning experiences lay the groundwork for a child's ability to learn at school. Play, daily activities and exploring in a safe area provide essential daily lessons.

- Play *with* your toddler – daily.
- Practice sharing and taking turns.
- Provide time for active play – indoors and outdoors in nature.
- Make time for quiet play.
- Read to your toddler – *daily*. Talk about the pictures. Let her turn the pages. Ask questions.
- Talk and explore as you take walks and wagon rides.
- Praise good behavior.
- Show your toddler positive behavior skills as you discourage negative behavior.
- Applaud new skills – smile, clap hands, show excitement.
- *Be a good role model. Your toddler watches you.*



Playtime

Parents boost a child's learning through play. During play, toddlers learn how to interact with others. Playtime should include both structured and free play.

- Encourage pretend play. Do not be surprised if your toddler copies what you do – mow the lawn, clean, feed a baby.
- Play *I Spy*. “*I spy something blue*”. Help your child find the item.
- Organize a *create* box. Include plain and colored paper, crayons, water color paints, stickers, and empty paper towel rolls.
- Make and play with homemade playdough: Add food coloring to 1 cup of water. Mix 4 cups of flour and 1 ½ cups of salt. Add flour mixture to the water and mix well. Add 4 tablespoons of vegetable or canola oil. Knead until soft. Store the dough in a plastic bag or container in the refrigerator. Do not let your child eat playdough. Wash hands after playing.
- Use large cardboard boxes to make a pretend house, boat or car.
- Play outside where your toddler can run and jump – kick and throw balls. Visit local parks.
- Let your toddler help you with chores - weed the garden, wash the car, sweep the sidewalk.
- Play with puzzles.
- Provide hand puppets.
- Have a “dance party.” Dance to her favorite music.



Speech and Language

Toddlers' language skills develop rapidly. By 4 years of age, toddlers know around 200 words. They can answer simple questions. Parents teach these skills through daily conversations and activities.

- Stop using *baby talk*. Help your toddler pronounce words correctly, even though he may not be able to correctly pronounce them yet.
- Expand your toddler's vocabulary. Teach her new names. Point to and name - body parts, tools, utensils, animals, items in your home.
- Read books – over and over. Help your child learn to recognize letters and small words.
- Ask your child questions. *“Where are your shoes?” “Where can you find your toy monkey?”*
- Offer your child choices. *“Do you want yogurt or cheese for lunch?” “Which book do you want to read.”*
- Tell him stories. This is a fun activity for bedtime or in the car.
- Tune in to your toddler. Pay attention to what she is saying or trying to say.
- Sing with your toddler.

Child-Friendly Home

Toddlers run, climb and crawl. A safe and kid-friendly home allows them to explore and learn.

- Anchor furniture that may easily tip over, to walls or replace with something more stable.
- Keep the dishwasher **closed and locked** at all times.
- Install edge and corner guards on all furniture with sharp edges.
- Store toys and books within your toddler's reach. Place baskets on shelves in a family room as well as the child's bedroom.
- Put some clothes in a drawer that your child can open and close.
- Place a small stool in the bathroom for brushing teeth and washing hands.
- Provide child sized objects – broom, gardening and kitchen tools, eating utensils.
- Consider buying a small table and chairs for drawing, eating and art projects.



Support • New Ideas • Referrals

Call Parent Help Line at 217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.

Visit our website at www.parenthelpline.org and our

Facebook page:

Parent Help Line at St. John's Children's Hospital



More Ideas for Teaching Toddlers

Watch for Signs That Your Toddler Is Ready for Toilet Training

While there is no magic age, most 2 to 3-year-old children are ready to begin potty training. Watch for signs that your child is ready. Your child may:

- Squat and grunt when she needs to have a bowel movement.
- Hold his diaper when he needs to urinate.
- Dislike the feeling of a dirty diaper.
- Go for longer periods of time without wetting or soiling her diaper.
- Express an interest in how other people use the toilet.
- Want to use her new child-sized potty seat or chair.

Be patient as your child slowly begins to use the potty. It may take months for her to complete the transition. As you begin:

- Buy a special potty chair that he can easily use.
- Let her train at her own speed. Do not push.
- Praise him for successes. Use a sticker chart.
- Never punish her for accidents. Accidents are common and will happen.

If your child refuses to use the potty, take a break. Setbacks happen. Put the potty away and start again in a few days. Tell well-meaning friends and family that you have a plan, and potty training is under control.

Prepare Your Toddler to Move from the Crib to a Bed

Moving from a crib to a big-kid bed is exciting. It is also a transition that requires new skills.

- Make the move when your toddler is not making any other major transitions.
- Talk about big-kid beds before making the transition.
- Read books about moving to a big bed.
- Put the bed in the same place as the crib, if possible.
- *Keep your same bedtime routine.*
- Let her pick out new sheets and blankets.
- Allow him to choose special items for his bed- stuffed animal, special blanket.
- Choose a toddler bed that is safe – low to the ground with a snug mattress and removable guard rails.

Visit Parent Help Line at www.parenthelpline.org.

Find new ideas that help you keep your family safe, healthy and happy.

- Search for tips on parenting babies, toddlers, school age children and teens.
- Find tips on early learning and school readiness. Read the *Live Love Grow Learn* booklets and *Ready In Stages* checklists. Promote your baby's healthy growth and development.
- Learn how to teach your child skills that help with school and life success.
- Discover helpful Internet sites.