

# Your Child at 24 to 36 Months

**TWO-YEAR-OLDS ARE LEARNING SO MUCH ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM.** They begin to ask lots of questions, and they love to imitate adults. They are learning to share and take turns. Sometimes they want to play with others, and sometimes they want to be alone. Toddlers this age like to make choices and do more things on their own.

**Sleep** For many children this age, it's time to leave the crib and move on to a bed.

- › Make the transition exciting by talking about the big bed and the items that might go in it, such as new bedding or a favorite stuffed animal
- › Stick to the same bedtime (between 6 and 8 pm) and continue with your normal bedtime routines like reading, singing and bathing
- › Explain to children that once they have been kissed good night and tucked in, they are not to get out of bed. If your child gets out of bed, quietly and calmly take him or her back to bed until he or she learns to stay there.

**Nutrition** At this age, children often become picky eaters and lose interest in food. You may find that some days, your child might not be interested in food at all, and other days, he might only want to eat a certain type of food. Be assured, when your child is hungry, he will want to eat—it is your job to ensure you are providing healthy options by offering a variety of healthy foods.

- › Avoid the use of food as a reward
- › Avoid withholding food as a punishment

### Physical Development

- › Runs, jumps and climbs
- › Walks on tiptoes
- › Throws and kicks balls
- › Learns to zip and unzip
- › Drinks from a small cup without spilling (in the beginning, a cup with a sippy top)
- › Undresses self
- › Dresses with help
- › Uses a fork and spoon correctly
- › Helps to put things away

### Social and Emotional Development

- › Likes having familiar stories read to them
- › Begins to enjoy playing alone
- › Initiates own play activities

- › Doesn't like changes in routines
- › Watches other children at play and joins in
- › Has a hard time sharing things
- › Shows independence and wants to do things alone
- › Follows simple rules such as taking turns

### **Cognitive Development**

- › Calls self by own name
- › Speaks 900 or more words
- › Points and names own body parts when asked
- › Uses phrases and three- to five-word sentences
- › Repeats simple rhymes and songs
- › Begins to develop a longer attention span
- › Carries out simple one, two or three-step requests

### **ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR CHILD AT 24 TO 36 MONTHS**

A Home Safety Checklist should be completed at each stage of your child's development. A sample checklist is provided for you on page 70.

- › Prevent choking by choosing toys that do not have small parts
- › Prevent burns by keeping hot foods in the middle of the table and testing the temperature of foods before giving them to your child.

### **Positive Parenting Activities that Promote Nurturing and Attachment**

- › Try to remain patient and keep your cool during temper tantrums.
- › Rather than using physical punishment, create consequences that relate to the behavior. For example, if your child colors on the wall, take away all the crayons and explain that he can try again later to play with crayons.
- › Stay in control and do not give in to unreasonable requests. For example, when it is time to eat or go to bed, take away toys.
- › When children are upset about being disciplined, allow time for both you and them to calm down before trying to talk to them about their behavior. Let them know you understand how they feel, but that certain behavior is not acceptable.
- › Avoid problem situations. If your child is likely to become unreasonable when he's hungry, remember to carry snacks with you.



### **When to be Concerned**

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, you should let your doctor know if at 24 months your child:

- › Cannot push a wheeled toy
- › Doesn't follow simple directions
- › Doesn't imitate actions or words
- › Fails to develop a heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking or walks exclusively on toes
- › Doesn't speak at least 15 words
- › Doesn't use two-word sentences

### **HERE'S HELP**

Use the **Family Resources on pages 72–78** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.

