



Parenting the Second and Third Years

MONTHS

13-14

Dear parents: Congratulations!

You've made it through the first year, and you can look back over the past year with pride. Remember when you thought your baby's crying would never stop? Remember when your infant first giggled, and you felt good just enjoying that happiness? Now you and your baby are ready to move into the exciting second year.

Your toddler will be growing fast and learning a lot. In the next year, your child will:

- ♥ Move from babyhood into childhood.
- ♥ Learn new skills, like feeding herself.
- ♥ Do a lot of things, but she does not always know what might be dangerous.
- ♥ Delight you with curiosity, as well as frustrate and tire you.

Guiding and caring for your child this next year will be challenging and exciting. Toddlers need a lot of attention and encouragement.

You'll need a sense of humor, some time for yourself, and lots of common sense. Knowing that your child's dramatic and changeable behavior is normal and temporary can help you during this time.

Surviving the 12- to 18-month-old

There's a lot of talk about the 2-year-old and the 3-year-old. But sometimes we forget what happens between 12 and 18 months. This period can truly test your flexibility, patience, and sense of humor.

Why? Because there's no simple way to allow a baby this age to explore safely or to make her obey your requests. Your child loves to explore and needs to explore to learn. But it's so easy to get into trouble. You'll need to keep watch constantly. This is not easy, but it's an important responsibility.

Babyproofing is vital.

Babyproof your home by removing anything a child can get hurt with and anything easily broken. This may mean storing the glass coffee table and moving plants up high for a while. It definitely means putting cleaning supplies, medicines, cigarettes, guns, and alcohol out of reach. A locked cabinet is best.

This same advice applies to the homes of grandparents, other relatives, friends, baby-sitters, and any other place your child spends time.

When a child can walk — even if only by hanging onto furniture — many more things can be harmful:

- ♥ **Water** — mop buckets, open toilets, bathtubs, hot tubs, pools
- ♥ **Stairs**
- ♥ **Sharp edges or corners**

Toddlers often grab and pull things down off tables or counters. They often put small objects in their mouths and can easily choke.

To see everything from baby height, you may want to crawl around your home again. Look at everything to see what needs to be moved or changed.

With a child this age, it's impossible to keep a home neat and clean. When accidents happen, understand that your baby is not trying to be mean. He may be a little over-enthusiastic. But he's not naughty on purpose.

Keep playpen time short, and avoid saying "no" too often. Instead, give your child a large, babyproof area to explore and strengthen muscles needed for walking and running.

Consider the changes you make in your home today as a way to help your child grow up happy and safe. Keep in mind that over time, a child will learn to be responsible.

What's it like to be 13 and 14 months old?

How I grow:

- ♥ I poke, bang, turn, and twist everything I can reach.
- ♥ I can probably stand alone and walk pretty well.
- ♥ I can probably stoop and stand up again.
- ♥ I'm very interested in small things like crumbs, bugs, and pebbles.
- ♥ I spend a lot of time just staring at things. This is one way I learn.
- ♥ I don't like any kind of restraint. I want to explore everything.
- ♥ I may be afraid of the dark.

How I talk:

- ♥ I am learning simple words.
- ♥ I can look in the right direction when you ask: "Where's Daddy?" "Where's the ball?" "Where's the kitty?"
- ♥ I wave bye-bye if you ask.
- ♥ I can let you know when I want something like a glass of milk.
- ♥ I really try hard to make you understand me.
- ♥ I like to repeat words you say.
- ♥ I have begun to understand the names of some people, animals, and things that are important to me.
- ♥ Sometimes I like you to tell me the names of things pictured in a book.

What I am learning:

- ♥ I am learning what you will let me do and what you won't.
- ♥ I will empty anything I can get to — dresser drawers, kitchen cabinets, trash cans.
- ♥ I like to put things back in containers — sometimes.
- ♥ I like to imitate your actions.
- ♥ I have learned how to get you and other adults to help me do things.
- ♥ I may scream just to show you how powerful I am.
- ♥ Sometimes — not often — I will respond to a firm "no-no."
- ♥ I have **not** yet learned what is dangerous for me to do.

How I get along with others:

- ♥ I love to have people watch me and clap for me. I'm starting to do cute things just to get your attention.
- ♥ I show I love you with hugs and kisses — sometimes.
- ♥ I still like to keep my mother and father in sight when I'm exploring.
- ♥ Sometimes, I drop things just to get you to pick them up for me.

- ♥ I'm beginning to adjust to baby-sitters, but I'm still shy with strangers.
- ♥ I don't like playing in a room by myself very much.
- ♥ I may have tantrums and throw things when I'm angry.

What I can do for myself:

- ♥ If you help me, I can hold a cup and drink from it.
- ♥ I like to take off my hat, shoes, socks, and pants, but I can't put them back on.
- ♥ I can hold a spoon, but I probably can't eat very well with it.
- ♥ I like to feed myself with my hands and smear food on my face.
- ♥ I can open and close doors.

Play I enjoy:

- ♥ I like to put little things in big things.
- ♥ I can play alone. But mostly, I like to play with you — especially chase-me, find-me games and gentle rough-housing.
- ♥ I like to listen to music and dance to it.
- ♥ I'm beginning to like pretend play, like driving a pretend car.

Remember:

Parenting the Second and Third Years describes a typical child at each age. Each child is special, and each child develops at his or her own pace. Perfectly normal children may do things earlier or later than those described in *Parenting the Second and Third Years*. If you are concerned about your child's development, visit with your doctor.

Sometimes it's hard to give up the bottle or breast.

When to wean a toddler from the breast or bottle is a personal decision; you need to do what's best for you and your child. Some mothers and toddlers enjoy the comfort of nursing even beyond the second year. Others may have already stopped or would like to cut back.

Many pediatricians believe babies should be weaned from bottles at the end of the first year. This may help avoid teeth problems and ear infections. Toddlers can also depend more and more on the bottle if they are given one every time they act fussy.

Toddlers should be drinking 2 to 3 cups of milk each day. Pasteurized whole cow's milk is best for 1-year-olds who are no longer breast-fed. Transition formulas are OK, but fairly expensive.

When you are ready, wean your child from bottle or breast slowly. Most toddlers aren't ready to give up the bottle or nursing one day, and begin drinking from a cup the next day.

Here are some tips to help weaning go smoothly:

- ♥ Start using a cup with one feeding each day. Gradually progress towards just using a cup for liquids at meal time.
- ♥ **Give him juice only in a cup**, not a bottle. Give 100 percent juice, mixed with some water if needed. Fruit-flavored drinks or sodas are mostly water and sugar and are not nutritious.
- ♥ **Don't offer the breast or bottle to a child who is not hungry or thirsty.** Wait for your child to ask for it, and see if he will settle for milk or water from a cup instead.
- ♥ **Limit the time your child spends nursing or taking a bottle.** When he has had enough to drink, it's time to take the bottle or breast away.
- ♥ Some children want a bottle for comfort rather than food at bedtime or nap time. **Holding and cuddling your child will help him settle down for sleep** — with or without a bottle.
- ♥ **Do not let your toddler have a bottle while sleeping.** This practice can cause tooth decay.

Some toddlers nurse or drink from a bottle longer than others. Be patient. Don't force your child to give up the breast or bottle before you're both ready. Remember to offer lots of extra hugs, kisses, and encouragement.

Turn off the TV, or talk about what you watch.

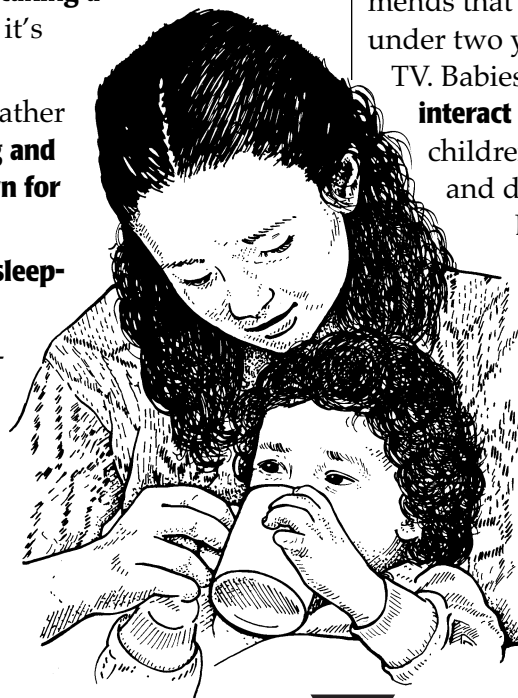
Television is **not** a good babysitter. Most young children would rather be doing other things at this age. Watching TV does not give your child the muscle exercise she needs. It does not give her a chance to explore or to be an active learner. Unless you're watching TV, too, it's also lonely.

Some parents try to have their children watch television to keep them quiet, but this is not a good idea. Toddlers who watch TV may also be less able to focus their attention when they start school. Too much TV watching can keep children from playing and making friends.

When the TV is on, it is also harder for her to talk to you and hear you. So she may be slower to learn important language skills.

In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants and toddlers under two years of age **not** watch TV. Babies and toddlers need to **interact** with adults and other children to learn language and develop social skills.

Do your toddler a favor — **turn off the television.** When she does watch TV, **watch with her, and then talk to her about what she is seeing.** This talking may be the best part of the program for her.





When you feel like screaming

Rearing a toddler can upset anyone sometimes. Your child may be more challenging each month. It's hard to be the one who is always responsible. When your body gets tense and you feel like screaming or hitting something — or you think you can't stand it one more second — **STOP**.

Strategies for calming down

- ♥ **Close your eyes** and take long, deep breaths.
- ♥ **Make sure your child is in a safe place, then give yourself a “time-out”** — close yourself in a room for just a few minutes until you calm down.
- ♥ **Ask a friend or relative to watch your child for a short time.** Every parent needs a break.
- ♥ Look in the front of your phone book for a **parental stress hotline**, and call the number. You don't have to give your name. Post this number near your phone with other emergency numbers.

When you take time out to calm down, you're doing yourself **and** your child a big favor. Besides saving your child from your painful words and actions, you'll be showing a positive way to handle stress.

If you ever feel you are “at the end of your rope,” talk with someone who can help: your doctor, spiritual advisor, counselor, etc. Doing so means you are responsible enough to know when you need help.

Copy play: An all-time favorite

You may have seen how your toddler likes to copy the things you do — eating, washing, cooking, cleaning, and so forth. She will especially like having you play games where you copy her.

When you do this, you are being responsive. She likes this, because it shows her that what she does is important to you. This helps build her self-confidence.

PLAYING COPYCAT

Try copying your child's hand movements, play activities, body movements, or language. She'll giggle, and she'll be learning how her movements look to you.

Mirror play is fun at this age. Your toddler will like to watch you in the mirror while you copy her. She'll also have fun watching herself in the mirror. She'll laugh at her reflection and may pat or kiss it.

Remember: You're being watched, too. You can use imitation to help your toddler learn. For instance, you can teach her how to drink milk from a cup or pick up toys by example.

Here are some simple ideas to help you play:

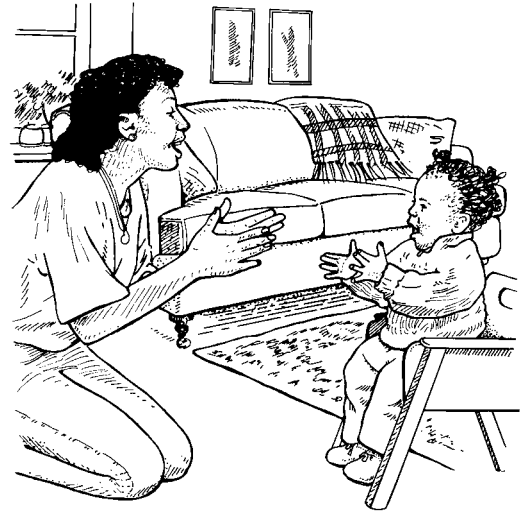
- ♥ **Watch your child play without interrupting.** Notice what interests her and what she knows how to do.
- ♥ **Play at the child's level, letting her lead.** If you teach complicated ideas too quickly, your child might be confused and disappointed.
- ♥ **After playing for a while at your child's pace, try doing something a little more challenging.** If your child can do a two-piece puzzle, try one with three pieces. If she likes building with blocks, you might show her how to combine block play with toy animals.

Remember: Your child's attention span is very short. Let her decide when play is over.

Play and brain development

When your toddler plays, his brain forms new connections and strengthens connections that already exist. Playing, talking, reading, and singing with him help his brain to grow.

Your toddler needs to explore and try new things. But, giving your child too many toys at once or trying to teach him things he isn't yet ready to learn won't make him smarter.



Games for growing

BUILDING A TOWER

Help your child build a tower by himself, so he can understand that things can be **put together to make other things**.

How to play

Sit on the floor or at a table with your child. Put a pile of blocks in front of both of you. Build a tower with two or three blocks.

Don't knock down the tower. Take it down, one block at a time. Ask your child to make another tower. If he doesn't start to make a tower, hand him a block and say, "See, we can put one block on top of the other." When your child puts one block on top of another, say, "You can do it!"

Note: If the tower falls, it's OK. Some children cannot do this until they are older. Don't worry if your child needs more time or more practice. Be patient and encouraging. Stop the game **before** he gets bored or frustrated.



POP, GOES THE WEASEL!

Help your child **listen for a special signal** and **act on it**. Your child will learn to listen for the **POP**, and jump up without help when she hears it.

How to play

Sit facing your child on the floor or on low chairs. Sing:

"All around the carpenter's bench

The monkey chased the weasel.

The monkey thought 'twas all in fun!

POP, goes the weasel!"

As you sing **POP**, take your child's hands and help her stand up. Then sit her back down as you complete "goes the weasel."

Make window coverings safer.

As your child grows and explores your home, window blind or curtain cords become a danger. Long, dangling cords look interesting to children. But if cords have a loop in them, they can strangle a child.

To make windows safer:

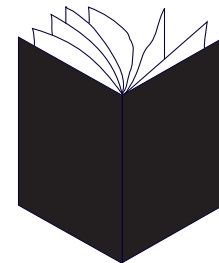
- ♥ **Check each of your window blinds and curtains.**
- ♥ **Cut cords that are circular loops.**
- ♥ **Move cribs, beds, and other furniture away from windows.**
- ♥ **Install tie-downs on draperies or vertical blinds that need looped cords, and keep these out of reach of children.**

Print resources

Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense by Ellyn Satter (Palo Alto, CA: Bull Publishers), 2000.

Touchpoints Birth to 3: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development by T. Berry Brazelton (New York: Perseus Publishing), 1992.

How Weaning Happens by Diane Bergson (La Leche League International), 1999.





Some toddlers have strong reactions.

Does your toddler bounce with excitement, laugh or cry loudly, or throw temper tantrums? All toddlers get upset once in a while, but some children react strongly more often. These dramatic toddlers let you know how they feel!

When your child is happy you may enjoy her intensity. But her strong negative reactions can be hard to handle. Here are some ways to deal with strong reactions:

- ♥ **Stay calm.** This can be hard! But if you react strongly, this fuels your toddler's reactions.
- ♥ **Use soothing activities or distractions.** Swinging or rocking may calm your child. Silliness or humor can help distract and release some tension. Figure out what works best.
- ♥ **Provide a place to “cool down”** for you and your toddler. If she is already too upset, pretend to ignore her while you do a task nearby. Without your attention she may calm sooner.
- ♥ **Prevent problems.** Be sure your toddler gets enough sleep — tired children get upset more easily. Establish a daily routine. This helps your child know what to expect each day, so there may be fewer conflicts. Watch for “early signs” that your toddler is starting to get upset and use soothing activities and distractions.

Learning to talk

Your child may use one sound to mean a certain thing. Toddlers' first words often mean a complete thought. For example, “da” might mean “I want that,” or “Dada” might mean “Where is Daddy?”

Researchers find that children understand many more words than they can say. The average 13-month-old understands more than 50 words, but says only a few.

Children learn to talk at very different rates. At 16 months, some children can say 100 words. Others say only one or two. Researchers find that most children don't start putting two words together — like saying “Mama shoe” — until they are 17 to 22 months old. Possessive endings — “Mama's shoe” — come even later.

Here are some things you can do to help your child learn to talk:

- ♥ **Describe what you or your child are doing.** For example, as you dress your toddler, say: “Hands up high. Now your arm goes into the hole, and we button all the buttons. You're all dressed!” The more words your child hears, the more he will learn to say.
- ♥ **Label things at home and on outings.** For example, when you are grocery shopping you can say, “We are getting four yellow bananas and five red apples.” When you read to your toddler, point to and name pictures in her books.
- ♥ **Expand on what your toddler says,** adding a little more information. If your baby says “shoe,” you might say, “Yes, that's your blue shoe.” Researchers call this elaborating — adding on to your child words — and it helps toddlers learn more words.
- ♥ **Try to be a good model for your toddler to copy.** Instead of using “baby talk” speak clearly and correctly. Use short, simple sentences and repeat words.
- ♥ **Don't expect your child to learn language from TV.** Researchers have found that Dutch toddlers who listen to German TV every day don't learn German from it. They only learn the language that people speak to them in person.

He or she? Him or her?

Parenting the Second and Third Years gives equal time and space to both sexes. That's why we take turns referring to children as “he” or “she.” **Please note:** When we use he or she, we include all children.

Guidance and discipline: Discipline is teaching.

What do you think of when you hear the word **discipline**? To some people, it may mean punishment. But in *Parenting the Second and Third Years*, discipline means **teaching**. Discipline is guiding and teaching your child to be cooperative, considerate, and responsible. Children need consistent, careful, and fair discipline. Parents are a child's first — and best — teachers.

Build cooperation.

Do you know that by the time your baby is a year old, you have already done many things to help him behave well? Children who are loved, protected, and comforted in their first year feel safe and trusting. They have a close, loving bond with their parents.

Until the first birthday, you limited your baby's activities by distracting and holding him, and by putting harmful and breakable things out of reach.

During the second year, children will want to follow their parents' simple requests. They will also come to copy their parents' caring behavior, so they will be more likely to accept limits, guidance, and discipline during the sometimes rocky months ahead.

Remember: Discipline means helping children grow into responsible adults. Discipline may be the hardest and most important part of parenting. It is one way to show love.

Choose your battles.

Within the next couple of months, your toddler will probably begin to understand "no." But don't expect him to respond to it very often yet. You can now start using words to set limits.

Pick a few reasonable rules, and stick to them. If your child disobeys, stop the behavior. Say the rules again in simple words, like "Toys are not for throwing," or "Chairs are for sitting."

Patience pays off.

Do not punish a toddler. Children learn more quickly and easily with teaching and guidance than with criticism and punishment. Be patient now, and it will pay off later.

Take breaks when you need them.

You have an adventuresome little person in your life! Sometimes, you will need to take breaks. When you need some peace of mind and quiet time, ask someone to stay with your child. Or put your toddler in a stroller, and take a walk together. Use your child's nap time to rest and relax.

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