



# Let's Grow

## Issue #7: 1-5 - 2 Years

Many parents view the toddler years as both joyful and challenging. Your toddler really likes to be with you. At the same time, they are eager to make choices and feel independent. Make sure there are times in your day when your toddler is involved in direct play with you as well as independent play in the same room. For example, this can happen during meal preparation. Allow your child to play with some kitchen utensils and pots on the floor while you work. Playing alongside you encourages your child's increasing sense of self and independence.

Toddlers are just beginning to have an interest in other children. They do not instinctively know how to make friends. Toddlers may push or grab as a way of making contact. Children are not able to understand the concept of sharing until 2½-3 years of age. Your toddler will learn social skills while playing with one child or in a group. It may take time for your child to get used to a new situation. Supporting them in a caring confident manner will help them feel secure.

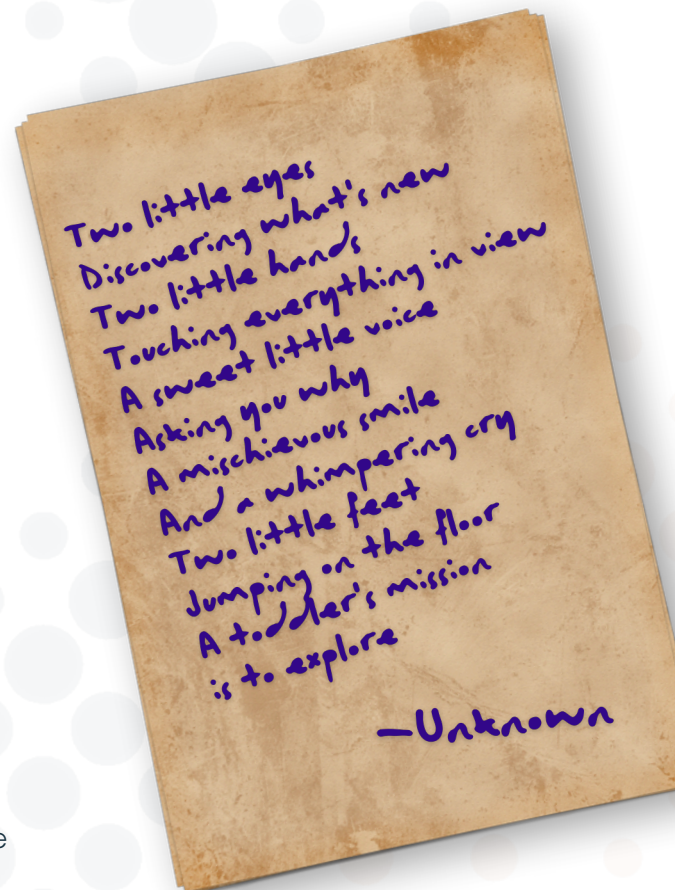
Enjoy this special time with your terrific toddler!

## Feeding & Nutrition

Your toddler probably loves to be independent, making decisions on what to wear, what to do, and what to eat! Let them make as many of these decisions as you can, especially when it comes to food and eating. Everyone will enjoy mealtimes more when you choose which foods to offer and your toddler decides how much they want to eat. Don't force them to eat if they are not hungry. Mealtimes should be a relaxed time for everyone.

Your toddler is not growing as quickly these days. There will be days when they barely eat anything, and days when they are very hungry. This can be frustrating and expensive if food has to be thrown away. Save time, money and the environment by taking these steps to reduce food waste:

- Offer small portions at snacks and meals with an option to have a little more if they are still hungry.
- Only put a small amount of new foods on their plate. Serve new foods with more familiar foods. Your toddler may need to be offered new foods many times over before they decide to try them, but they are more likely to try something new when they see a food they know well.
- Use leftovers for another meal, either serving them again or adding them into something new.
- Save food for later in smaller portions. Freezing leftovers in smaller portions lets us thaw only what we need later. Ice cube trays or silicone bakeware are helpful tools for freezing in smaller portions.
- Teach your toddler that if they throw food, that they are telling you that it's time to put their food away for another time. They will learn that throwing food is not allowed.
- Let them help make food with you. Toddlers are good at dumping and stirring.
- Mealtimes are a wonderful way for everyone to reconnect. Aim to have at least one meal together at the table every day.



# Caring for Your Toddler

## Oral Health Tips

### Thumb Sucking

- Sucking is a natural urge which is comforting and calming.
- Thumb sucking usually stops by 4-5 years of age.
- If this habit continues after the permanent teeth have erupted, it could affect the positioning of your child's teeth or jaw.
- You should seek the advice of a dental professional if you have any concerns.

### Pacifiers

- If you have made an informed decision to use a pacifier:
  - Choose a pacifier that is the right size for your child's mouth
  - Use an approved pacifier that meets safety standards
  - Wash with soap and water before first use and on a regular basis
  - Check often for signs of wear and replace the pacifier if it is sticky, cracked or torn
  - Never clean a pacifier in your own mouth, this could spread bacteria
  - Never attach a string to a pacifier – use an approved clip
  - Never dip a pacifier in sugar, honey or anything sweet. This could cause cavities.



## Toilet Learning: Wait Until They Are Ready!

You can leave a clean potty out, so your toddler gets used to seeing it and playing with it. Your toddler probably won't show "signs of readiness" to use it until at least 2 years of age. There is no hurry to start helping them learn to use the toilet. Starting too early just leads to frustration. You will know they are getting close when they can do the following:

- take off their clothes
- tell you when they are wet
- show interest in sitting on the potty or toilet, when you are sitting on the toilet
- can stay dry for at least two hours.







## Transition to Bed

The safest place for a baby to sleep is alone in a crib that meets current Canadian safety regulations. A crib should not be used if the child is taller than 90 cm or if they are able to climb out of it, whichever comes first. When your baby reaches this milestone, you should put them to sleep in a toddler or standard bed.

You can start with naps. It is easiest to place their mattress on the floor so they don't fall. Once they stay on the mattress, they can either move to a toddler bed or to a bigger bed with a rail to keep them from falling. As with any other big change, try to time it for when the house is calm and in routine, not when they are sick, or you are going back to work, or a new baby is coming home.

## Healthy Sleep

A bedtime routine will help your child get ready for a good night of sleep. Sleeping well is important for them to learn and grow! Here is a sample routine to follow:

- Start the routine at about the same time every evening.
- Some nights they will need a bath.
- Change their diaper.
- Put their pyjamas on
- Brush their teeth
- After you brush their teeth, they shouldn't have any more snacks or beverages except water.
- They will love it when you read a book and have some cuddles.
- Their room should be comfortable, quiet, and dark (a low nightlight is okay)

What if they wake up in the middle of the night? Unless their diaper is wet or poopy, they should stay in their crib so they can easily fall back asleep. Try to leave the light off and check if they are cold or too warm. Rub their back or stroke their arm to let them know you are there, and they should go back to sleep soon.

## Are They Having Trouble Going to Sleep?

- Cut out or cut down any screen time close to bedtime because this can make it hard for them to fall asleep. Having a TV or electronic games in their room isn't recommended, either.
- Make sure you don't feed your child anything with caffeine, such as chocolate or pop.
- They should get lots of play time during the day. Go outdoors to get some fresh air!
- Try doing relaxing activities before bed such as reading or listening to calming music.
- For more information about sleep, visit

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy\\_sleep\\_for\\_your\\_baby\\_and\\_child](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy_sleep_for_your_baby_and_child)

# Healthy Growth & Development

These developmental milestones have been provided to show some of the skills that mark the progress of young children as they learn to communicate. You may use these milestones to help monitor your child's development. For more information, visit [Early Child Development | ontario.ca](https://www.earlychilddevelopment.ca)

By 24 months, most children can:

- follow two-step directions (for example, "go find your teddy bear and show it to Grandma")
- use 100 or more words
- use at least two pronouns (for example, "you", "me", or "mine")
- consistently combine two or more words in short phrases (for example, "daddy hat", "truck go down")
- enjoy being with other children
- begin to offer toys to peers and imitate other children's actions and words
- be understood by people 50% to 60% of the time
- form words and sounds easily and effortlessly
- hold books the right way up and turn pages
- "read" to stuffed animals or toys
- scribble with crayons

## Early Years Check-In

As a parent or caregiver, you play an important role in your child's growth. The Early Years Check-In is a tool that helps you to identify any concerns about your child's development. The results can be used to start a conversation with an early years professional about any concerns you may have.

Use this simple and convenient tool to quickly identify any concerns you may have about how your child is developing. [Early Years Check-In - Welcome | Health HQ](#)

Visit Play & Learn for expert reviewed games and activities to do with your child to help them develop their skills. [Play & Learn - Games and Activities-Early Child Development | Health HQ](#)





# Let's Talk!

Here are four ideas that will help your child continue developing their language skills.

1. Avoid baby talk. Your messages to each other and to your children should be clear and easy to understand. Help them learn to describe what they see, hear, touch, taste, and smell.
2. In the same way that your child points at pictures and says “dog” or “car” or “blue”, use words which allow children to talk about and identify their feelings. For example, point to pictures of people and ask them who looks happy, scared, or sad. Encourage and teach your child to point to and name body parts.
3. Make sure your child knows that you are listening and can help. When your child says “I am hungry” you need to feed them. When they say they’re cold, you need to help them get warm. This is the natural way to reward your child’s efforts to express their needs and their feelings. It also helps them to feel loved.
4. Continue to read to your child. It is incredibly important for speech and brain development. Reading to your toddler encourages their imagination by giving them lots of things to think about. Read with drama and excitement. Use different voices for different characters. Use your child’s name instead of a character’s name. Set aside a special time each day when you can give your child your full attention. Choose a variety of books with lots of pictures, colour, jingles, and rhymes. Reading is a cozy and intimate way to spend time together. It is an excellent bedtime ritual and a wonderful part of any bedtime routine.

## Let's Play!

Your toddler loves to move.

### Move

- At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including energetic play, spread throughout the day—more is better.

### Sleep

- 11 to 14 hours of good-quality sleep, including naps, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.

### Sit

- Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in a stroller or highchair) or sitting for extended periods.
- For those younger than 2 years, sedentary screen time is not recommended. For those aged 2 years, sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour—less is better.
- When sedentary, engaging in pursuits such as reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.

### Developing Hand Skills:

- simple puzzles with knobs
- drawing with non-toxic crayons, and finger paint
- turning pages of books and pointing to pictures
- large beads to string
- finger puppets
- large size pegs and pegboard
- play in water with things that float, sink, squirt and pour
- shape sorters with 2 or 3 shapes

### Pretend Play:

- dress-up clothes especially hats and purses without long straps or strings
- small blankets for dolls or stuffed animals
- plastic tool set, tea set, telephone

### Developing large muscles:

- action songs, games, and rhymes
- a climber with slide
- riding toy with pedals
- a wagon or sleigh to push/pull
- covered sand box with pails and shovels
- practice climbing stairs with help



## Safety

Toddlers often love water but don't sense danger. They are still top-heavy and can lose balance. Always supervise them when they are around the water, it only takes 2 inches, and they can drown. Any containers holding liquid should be emptied or have a lid put on them. Make sure when swimming that you are always within arm's reach.

It may seem like your toddler is old enough to know what is safe, but they really don't know what is dangerous, or they easily forget. They will need you to keep their world safe. Balance and coordination are improving but are not perfect, so they are at high risk for falls.

If your toddler is starting to climb on furniture or out of their crib, they need to be moved into a toddler bed. Make sure the toddler bed is away from windows and blind cords.

Once your toddler starts climbing, they need to be constantly supervised. Playground and backyard play equipment must be safe and on a softer surface.

- Keep highchairs, cribs, and furniture away from windows, appliances, and other hazards.
- Keep curtain and blind cords out of reach.
- Make sure the screens on the windows are secure and the windows and doors can lock.
- Cover electrical outlets with safety covers.
- Putting special toddler-proof latches on drawers and cupboard doors.
- Store medications and cleaners in locked areas or keep them well out of sight and out of reach.
- Fasten furniture to the walls to prevent them from tipping. Make sure to supervise your toddler, and always stop them from climbing on furniture.



## Positive Parenting

The goal of parenting is to guide and teach, not to punish. The foundation of discipline is a warm and trusting relationship.

At this age, children start to push their boundaries and limits. They want to make their own choices, but do not have the maturity to know what is best for them.

- You will have to repeat the same thing many times. Don't just say "No!". Tell them in simple language what they are am doing wrong, why it's wrong, and what a better choice would be: Danger. Hot! Let's play with your truck over here instead.
- Get down on their level and look them in the eye when you are explaining things.
- Be calm and patient.
- Be consistent.
- Give them your attention throughout the day.
- Give them lots of praise when they are doing something well or right.
- If they only get your attention when they are in trouble, they might keep doing something that you do not approve of.
- Do not reward with food or withhold food as punishment.
- Pick your battles. Some behaviour can be ignored.

For more information, visit <https://caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/behavior-and-development/positive-discipline-for-young-children>



# Taming Tantrums

Tantrums are a normal part of being a toddler. They're still learning how to control and express their emotions - that's their job. Your job is to teach them how to express their feelings in acceptable ways. Here are some tips to help:

## Preventing A Tantrum:

- For a week or so, keep a record of the times and reasons for their tantrums. Then try to avoid these situations.
- Daily movement is important for both of you. Run in the yard, go for a walk, or visit a park.
- Toddlers have small stomachs and need nutritious snacks between meals.
- Say “no” less often by child-proofing your home and setting clear and consistent limits.
- When possible, give early warnings of transition times. For example, "In 10 minutes we have to put away our toys and go to the store." Then remind them at 5 minutes.
- Give your toddler options you approve of and limit them to two. For example, "We have to go to the store now. Do you want to wear your blue coat or your red sweater?"

## During A Tantrum:

1. Stay calm and speak softly. This will show your toddler that you are in control and will help them to calm down. Take a deep breath and count to 10.
2. Move your toddler who is out of control to a safe place so they can't get hurt, if necessary.
3. A gentle touch or staying nearby may help calm and dissolve anger in both of you. Remember this may not work for all toddlers.
4. Most toddlers are not able to listen to reason while in the middle of a tantrum. You may need to wait until the storm has passed before you can talk to them.

## After A Tantrum:

1. Offer sincere praise, “You did a good job calming yourself down”. Do not punish. They didn't do anything wrong.
2. Give your toddler a hug and comfort them. Say “I love you” and sit quietly with them until they are ready to move on.
3. Don't encourage future tantrums by giving in to whatever triggered the tantrum in the first place (e.g., candy at the checkout)







## For more information

- The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program provides information and home visits to parents who are eligible and need more support during pregnancy, after their baby is born, and as their child grows. For more information or to self-refer to the program visit Grey Bruce Public Health's website at [Home Visiting Program \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](https://publichealthgreybruce.on.ca) or call Grey Bruce Public Health at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 extension 5.
- 211 quickly and confidentially connects people to social services and community programs across Ontario. 211 is available by phone for those looking to speak to a friendly voice or by text, online search, email, or chat. Service is available in multiple languages.
- Call 811 to find health services or information or get health advice from a registered nurse. Toll free TTY line: 1-866-797-0007. Live chat is also available. Health811 - [Health811 \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.health811.on.ca)
  - Looking for guidance about food and nutrition, including infant and child feeding? Residents of Ontario can connect with a Registered Dietitian to access free nutrition information and advice by calling 811 or starting a chat at Health811.
- Caring for Kids, a website developed by the Canadian Pediatric Society, provides parents with information about their child's health and well-being. [Home | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](https://www.caringforkids.ca)
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old. You can learn and play with your child, meet people and get advice from early childhood professionals.
  - Find an EarlyON child and family centre: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>
  - For more information about Grey County: <https://www.grey.ca/resident-services/community-services/early-learning-and-child-care/earlyon>
  - For more information about Bruce County: <https://www.brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon>
- Discover how to prevent injuries before they happen – Parachute: [www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics](https://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics)