

# Your Child at 2 Years

Talk with your child's doctor at every visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## What children do at this age



### Social/Emotional

- Copies others, especially adults and older children
- Gets excited when with other children
- Shows more and more independence
- Shows defiant behavior (doing what he has been told not to)
- Plays mainly beside other children, but is beginning to include other children, such as in chase games

### Language/Communication

- Points to things or pictures when they are named
- Knows names of familiar people and body parts
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions
- Repeats words overheard in conversation
- Points to things in a book

### How you can help your child's development

- Encourage your child to help with simple chores at home, like sweeping and making dinner. Praise your child for being a good helper.
- At this age, children still play next to (not with) each other and don't share well. For play dates, give the children lots of toys to play with. Watch the children closely and step in if they fight or argue.
- Give your child attention and praise when he follows instructions. Limit attention for defiant behavior. Spend a lot more time praising good behaviors than punishing bad ones.
- Teach your child to identify and say body parts, animals, and other common things.
- Do not correct your child when he says words incorrectly. Rather, say it correctly. For example, "That is a *ball*."
- Encourage your child to say a word instead of pointing. If your child can't say the whole word ("milk"), give her the first sound ("m") to help. Over time, you can prompt your child to say the whole sentence — "I want milk."

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers
- Begins to sort shapes and colors
- Completes sentences and rhymes in familiar books
- Plays simple make-believe games
- Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- Might use one hand more than the other
- Follows two-step instructions such as “Pick up your shoes and put them in the closet.”
- Names items in a picture book such as a cat, bird, or dog

### Movement/Physical Development

- Stands on tiptoe
- Kicks a ball
- Begins to run
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Throws ball overhand
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

### Act early by talking to your child’s doctor if your child:

- Doesn’t know what to do with common things, like a brush, phone, fork, spoon
- Doesn’t copy actions and words
- Doesn’t follow simple instructions
- Doesn’t use 2-word phrases (for example, “drink milk”)
- Doesn’t walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

### How you can help your child’s development

- Hide your child’s toys around the room and let him find them.
- Help your child do puzzles with shapes, colors, or farm animals. Name each piece when your child puts it in place.
- Encourage your child to play with blocks. Take turns building towers and knocking them down.
- Do art projects with your child using crayons, paint, and paper. Describe what your child makes and hang it on the wall or refrigerator.
- Ask your child to help you open doors and drawers and turn pages in a book or magazine.
- Once your child walks well, ask her to carry small things for you.
- Kick a ball back and forth with your child. When your child is good at that, encourage him to run and kick.
- Take your child to the park to run and climb on equipment or walk on nature trails. Watch your child closely.

**Tell your child’s doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay for this age**, and talk with someone in your community who is familiar with services for young children in your area, such as your state’s public early intervention program. For more information, go to **[www.cdc.gov/concerned](http://www.cdc.gov/concerned)**.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children be screened for general development and autism at the 24-month visit. Ask your child’s doctor about your child’s developmental screening.