

30 to 36 Months

# Your Child's Development

Older toddlers are full of personality and energy. They want to know the reason for everything, which is why you may hear your child ask *Why* a lot! *What kinds of questions is your child asking? What is she curious about?*



What Your Toddler Can Do	What You Can Do
<p><b>My body helps me do “big kid” stuff now!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can pedal a tricycle.</li><li>• I can dress myself with your help.</li><li>• I can draw a line.</li><li>• I can turn a knob or unscrew a cap.</li></ul>	<p><b>Let your child scribble with markers and crayons.</b> This builds early writing skills.</p> <p><b>Give your child chances to practice more advanced physical skills</b> like pedaling and climbing.</p> <p><b>Child-proof again</b> so that your child's new ability to open caps and doorknobs doesn't lead to danger.</p>
<p><b>I use language to express my thoughts and feelings.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• By age 3, I may use as many as 900 words.</li><li>• I understand sentences with two or more ideas (<i>You can have a snack when we get home</i>).</li><li>• I ask questions.</li><li>• I know my first and last name.</li></ul>	<p><b>Introduce new words to build your child's vocabulary:</b> <i>Is your snack scrumptious?</i></p> <p><b>Ask questions that require more than a yes-or-no answer:</b> <i>Where do you think the squirrel is taking that nut?</i></p> <p><b>Be patient with your child's Why questions.</b> Ask him what he thinks before you answer.</p>
<p><b>I am using my new thinking skills to solve problems.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can remember what happened yesterday.</li><li>• I act out my own stories.</li><li>• I'm becoming a “logical thinker.” When I am pretending that it is bedtime for Teddy, I put a blanket on him and sing him a lullaby.</li></ul>	<p><b>At dinnertime or before bed, talk with your child about her day.</b> This builds memory and language skills.</p> <p><b>Encourage your child to use logic in everyday situations:</b> <i>It's raining. What do we need in order to stay dry?</i></p>
<p><b>My friends are very important to me.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I like playing with other children. I may have one or two close friends.</li><li>• I notice how people are the same and different—like their skin color and size.</li></ul>	<p><b>Help children deal with conflicts around sharing and turn-taking:</b> <i>There is only one train. I will put the timer on and you will each have 5 minutes to play with it. While you wait for your turn, you can choose to play with cars or another toy.</i></p> <p><b>Help your child be sensitive to differences among people:</b> <i>Yes, people do come in all different sizes.</i></p>



As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org).



## What's on Your Mind

**My 33-month-old son has such an imagination. He wants me to call him "King Diego" and he spends all his time building castles with his blocks. Should I be worried?**

Playing pretend is very common for older toddlers and preschoolers, which is a really good thing. Why? Because using their imaginations helps young children develop their thinking, language, and social skills as they talk about and think through how their story should unfold. By taking on different roles, your son is also learning to see the world from another person's point of view. By acting out stories, he is learning how to solve problems like how to build the block castle so it won't fall down. Long story short, there is no need to worry and actually many reasons to celebrate King Diego. So take a moment to get down on the floor with your son and ask what part you can act out—Queen? Soldier? Horse? You'll be having fun together and helping your son learn at the same time.

## Spotlight on Making Friends

**Between 30 and 36 months, toddlers really enjoy playing with friends—doing things like acting out stories, building together with blocks, or exploring the playground.**

Friendships are great fun. They also help children develop important social skills like taking turns, sharing, and helping others.<sup>1</sup> Through friendships, children learn to communicate with others, resolve disagreements, and understand others' thoughts and feelings.<sup>2</sup> Children who are friendly, confident, and who can cooperate with others are most likely to succeed in a classroom setting.

Keep in mind that brothers and sisters are often a child's first friends, even though it may not seem like it some days! Sibling relationships provide daily practice with sharing and cooperating. They also offer children opportunities to show compassion and loving support.

### What You Can Do

**Make time for play.** Encourage brothers, sisters, and cousins to play together. Organize playdates with friends. Join a parenting group or attend community events like library story hours.

**Give nonverbal feedback.** Give your child an encouraging smile when he is unsure about sharing.

**Notice positive behavior.** *You two figured out how to share the trains. Nice job!*

**Help children understand others' feelings.** *Janelle is covering her face. She doesn't like it when you*

*throw the ball so hard. Let's roll it gently instead.*

**Encourage children to problem-solve.** *You both want the tricycle. What can we do about this?*

**Suggest problem-solving strategies.** *How about while Marco has a turn on the tricycle, you pretend to be the traffic light and say "stop" and "go?" Then you two can switch.*

**What can you do to help your child learn to be a good friend?**

## Did You Know...

**The more television 3-year-olds watch each week, the more they ask for the foods they have seen advertised.<sup>3</sup>**

### What It Means for You:

Young children are influenced by what they see on television. So limit your child's TV time and try to avoid shows with advertisements. Make sure that what she *does* watch is right for

her age. And begin teaching your toddler good eating habits by offering healthy meals and snacks. You can also be a role model by eating healthy yourself. Most importantly, keep the whole family active by making time for active play every day.



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2 - Gurian, A., & Pope, A. in [www.aboutourkids.org](http://www.aboutourkids.org)  
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# Bright Futures Parent Handout

## 2½ Year Visit

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

LANGUAGE PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION

### Learning to Talk and Communicate

- Limit TV and videos to no more than 1–2 hours each day.
- Be aware of what your child is watching on TV.
- Read books together every day. Reading aloud will help your child get ready for preschool. Take your child to the library and story times.
- Give your child extra time to answer questions.
- Listen to your child carefully and repeat what is said using correct grammar.

PRESCHOOL CONSIDERATIONS

### Getting Ready for Preschool

- Make toilet-training easier.
  - Dress your child in clothing that can easily be removed.
  - Place your child on the toilet every 1–2 hours.
  - Praise your child when she is successful.
- Try to develop a potty routine.
- Create a relaxed environment by reading or singing on the potty.
- Think about preschool or Head Start for your child.
- Join a playgroup or make playdates.

FAMILY ROUTINES

### Family Routines

- Get in the habit of reading at least once each day.
- Your child may ask to read the same book again and again.
- Visit zoos, museums, and other places that help your child learn.
- Enjoy meals together as a family.
- Have quiet pre-bedtime and bedtime routines.
- Be active together as a family.
- Your family should agree on how to best prepare for your growing child.
  - All family members should have the same rules.

SAFETY

### Safety

- Be sure that the car safety seat is correctly installed in the back seat of all vehicles.
- Never leave your child alone inside or outside your home, especially near cars
- Limit time in the sun. Put a hat and sunscreen on the child before he goes outside.
- Teach your child to ask if it is OK to pet a dog or other animal before touching it.
- Be sure your child wears an approved safety helmet when riding trikes or in a seat on adult bikes.
- Watch your child around grills or open fires. Place a barrier around open fires, fire pits, or campfires. Put matches well out of sight and reach.
- Install smoke detectors on every level of your home and test monthly. It is best to use smoke detectors that use long-life batteries, but if you do not, change the batteries every year.
- Make an emergency fire escape plan.

SAFETY

### Water Safety

- Watch your child constantly whenever he is near water including buckets, play pools, and the toilet. An adult should be within arm's reach at all times when your child is in or near water.
- Empty buckets, play pools, and tubs right after use.
- Check that pools have 4-sided fences with self-closing latches.

PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Getting Along With Others

- Give your child chances to play with other toddlers.
- Have 2 of her favorite toys or have friends buy the same toys to avoid battles.
- Give your child choices between 2 good things in snacks, books, or toys.
- Follow daily routines for eating, sleeping, and playing.

## What to Expect at Your Child's 3 Year Visit

### We will talk about

- Reading and talking
- Rules and good behavior
- Staying active as a family
- Safety inside and outside
- Playing with other children

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:  
1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org



## American Academy of Pediatrics



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