



Your Child's Development

This is an exciting time as older toddlers are using their growing language skills to tell you what they are thinking and feeling. They are also building friendships with other children. And their growing physical skills—walking, running, and climbing—help them explore the world in more adventurous ways. *What do you find most amazing about your child's development at this stage?*

What Your Toddler Can Do	What You Can Do
<p>I use my body to get me places!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can walk up stairs one foot at a time. • I can walk backward. • I can balance on one foot which helps me climb. 	<p>Go on a neighborhood walk. Let your child stop to check out what's interesting to her.</p> <p>Play "island hop." Line up pieces of paper on the floor and help your child jump from one to the next.</p>
<p>I am using language to tell you what I'm feeling and thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can make longer sentences: <i>Mama play truck?</i> • My favorite words may be <i>no</i>, <i>me</i>, and <i>mine</i>. • I may get overwhelmed by my strong feelings and have trouble putting them into words. I might need your help to calm down. 	<p>Ask about your child's ideas: <i>What part of the book did you like?</i></p> <p>Acknowledge feelings and teach social skills at the same time: <i>I know the doll stroller is your favorite toy, but Thomas would like a turn pushing it.</i></p> <p>Help your child recover from a tantrum. Some children respond to being comforted. Others do better with some alone time in a safe, quiet place.</p>
<p>I am getting really good at playing pretend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can use one object to stand in for another. A shoebox may become a bed for my stuffed hippo. • I laugh at silly things, like the idea that my toy car might go <i>moo</i> instead of <i>beep beep</i>. • Sometimes I get scared. I am getting so good at using my imagination but am not always sure what's real and what's pretend. 	<p>Use pretend play to help your child handle challenging situations. You might act out a story together about meeting a new babysitter.</p> <p>Let your child lead the play. Ask: <i>Who should I be? What will happen next?</i></p> <p>Respond sensitively to your child's fears. Explain what is real and pretend. This builds trust and security.</p>
<p>I want to make friends but still need help with sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like watching other children and may copy what I see them do. • I may have one or two good friends. 	<p>Give your child regular chances to play with children her age. This builds social skills.</p> <p>Help your child with conflicts around sharing and turn-taking. Let her know you understand that sharing is hard. Help her find another toy to play with until it's her turn. Use a kitchen timer to help her learn to wait.</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

Spotlight on Learning to Use the Toilet

What's on Your Mind

My 28-month-old son screams until I give in to his tantrums. What can I do?

Tantrums are common among toddlers. They happen when children have lost their ability to handle a difficult situation, such as having something they want denied. Help your child manage frustration by:

- Acknowledging his feelings: *I know you are mad that you can't have more ice cream. It's okay to feel mad. When you calm down, we can figure out what to do next.*
- Offering choices: *Would you like an apple or a banana?*
- Using humor: *Mr. Apple wants you to eat him. Oh no, now Miss Banana is pushing apple out of the way so you will choose her instead!* Humor cuts the tension and helps children calm down.

How does your child handle frustration? What calms him down?

Did You Know...

That toddlers who are learning more than one language reach their speech milestones at about the same time as children who speak only one language.³

What It Means for You:

Toddlers can learn two languages at once. At first, they may say fewer words in each language, but this doesn't mean they have a language delay! Research shows that when you add together the words toddlers know in both languages, their vocabulary is about the

same as children who speak only one language. Some parents may also worry that children will lose their home language if they hear a different language in their child care setting. Research shows that as long as parents use their home language regularly, children's home language skills continue to grow.⁴

When and how you help your child learn to use the potty depends on how ready your child is. Your culture—your family's beliefs and values about toilet training—also matters. There is not one "right" way to toilet train your child.

- Most children develop control over their bowels and bladder by 18 months. This is necessary for children to physically be able to use the toilet. How emotionally ready a child is to use the potty depends on the individual child.¹
 - Starting to train your child earlier does not necessarily mean she will learn to use the potty sooner. One study showed that children whose parents started training them before 27 months took longer to learn to use the potty compared to children whose parents started after 27 months.²
 - Finding a toilet training method that works for your family is the key. No matter how you do it, remember that potty training takes time, with many accidents along the way.
 - Children with special needs may take longer to learn to use the potty. They may also need special equipment and a lot of help and patience from you. For questions about toilet training, talk with your health care provider or early intervention specialist.
- Parents and children each have their own "jobs" to do when it comes to potty training. Parents are responsible for creating a supportive learning environment.
 - Parents:**
 - ✓ Respect that your child is in control of her body.
 - ✓ Ask your child whether she wants to use the potty or wear a diaper/pull-up each day.
 - ✓ Teach your child words for body parts, urine, and bowel movements.
 - ✓ Offer your child the tools—a small potty, potty seat, stool—necessary to succeed at toileting.
 - ✓ Handle potty accidents without anger.
 - ✓ Avoid punishment as well as too much praise around toilet use.
 - Your child:**
 - ✓ Decides whether to use the toilet or a diaper/pull-up.
 - ✓ Learns her body's signals for urine and bowel movements.
 - ✓ Uses the toilet at his own speed.



Authors: Rebecca Parlakian and Claire Lerner, LCSW, ZERO TO THREE
www.zerotothree.org

Endorsed by:
American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

This handout was made possible by a generous grant from

MetLife Foundation

Copyright 2008 ZERO TO THREE
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.
ISBN 978-1-934019-28-3

- 1 - Community Paediatrics Committee, Canadian Paediatric Society, 2000.
- 2 - Blum, N.J., Taubman, B., & Nemeth, N., 2003.
- 3 - Zurer Pearson, B., Fernandez, S. C., Kimbrough Oller, D., 1993.
- 4 - Pearson, B. Z., Fernandez, S. C., Lewedey, V., & Oller, D. K., 1997

Photo credit: Eyewire/Babies/Getty Images