

12-24 Months

The second year is a big one for both child and parent

See What Your Child Sees

The emotional part of the brain becomes very strong

- Understanding the second year - handling the “terrible two’s”:
 - Your child is trying to talk, walk, climb and tell you what he/she wants. These activities can be challenging and may be very frustrating for you and your child.
 - * Help your child calm down.
 - * Let your child show you want or need.
- Often a child will be afraid of strangers and want to be near you.
- The second year can also be TERRIFIC.
 - They like to show you what they can do—cook and clean with you, get clothes, brush teeth, scribble on paper.
 - Listen when they pretend: a block becomes a cell phone.
- Be Watchful: as your child learns to walk, she can reach and explore many new things. Keep a close eye on her as some things may not be safe.

Back-and-Forth

Talk back-and-forth to them during the day

- Being their own person means that you can expect them:
 - to become more “picky” about food.
 - to say “no” often.
 - to test your limits when you say “no.”
 - to get into everything they can reach.
- Meltdowns are an opportunity to teach them:
 - First, you get calm and help them get calm.
 - Talk quietly and hold them (your touch is powerful).
 - There is no learning when they are screaming.
 - Your understanding of their emotions helps calm them.
 - Ask if they need a hug—it works magic.
 - Offer words that describe what they are feeling (angry, sad, frustrated, tired, hurt).
 - Spend a few moments connecting together.
- Even when they babble, listen and talk back.
- Ask them to do simple tasks and give them praise.
- Read every day: point to pictures, ask questions, act out the story.

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Play! Explore! Learn!

Help your child try new things and practice them safely

- They are learning to climb.
- They run, play with balls, dance and sing.
- Give them crayons, chalk, finger paints, stickers.
- Do games that make them jump, kick, throw.
- Play: songs, finger games, books, puzzles
- Even if they get picky, keep offering them all kinds of foods.

Routines

Make every day the same.

- Start the day with a good breakfast.
- Offer small meals every few hours:
 - Small portion sizes from 5 food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, high protein).
 - Use child-size plates, cups and spoons
- Eat as a family and share food at least once a day.
- Have the same nap time and bedtime every day.
- Before bed: wash, brush teeth, read together, cuddle.

By 24 months, your child will be able to use 25-50 words and put together a few sentences. He will point and ask for things by name, and can follow simple directions. Help your child kick a ball and self feed by offering child utensils, cup and plate. Meltdowns will get less common if you have taught your child to calm down and use words.

Resources:

- Good4Growth.org - practical tools and tips to help create healthier, smarter kids
- HealthyChildren.org - parent resources from the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Zerothreethree.org - resources focused on advancing the healthy development of babies and young children