**Your toddler 2-3 years**

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This is an exciting time as your child is able to talk, walk, run and climb to explore the world around them. They have good physical skills but need you to keep them safe. You can help them develop by providing (safe) chances for them to play, while you supervise them.

Your child is learning about feelings. Tantrums are common in children this age. They happen when children are frustrated and stressed and can’t cope with it. They can also be triggered when children are tired and hungry or feel jealous, frightened or unhappy.

The following information provides information about the stages of your child’s development and some tips for what you can do to support your child. Your child may do some things earlier or later than described here.

There is more detailed information about your baby’s development in the [**‘Bump, Baby & Beyond’  book**](http://www.healthchallengewales.org/infantfeeding-publications) (External link). If you are worried about your child’s development – ask your GP or health visitor.

**Between 2 - 3 years your child may:**

* Run, jump, climb and play on ride-on cars and trikes;
* Use longer sentences and ask questions;
* Use the words why, no, me and mine a lot;
* Value their ‘own’ things and use the word ‘mine’;
* Play more complex make believe games, e.g. dressing up;
* Notice how other people feel;
* Get overwhelmed by their strong feelings and have trouble putting them into words;
* Get scared at loud noises, strange animals, and unfamiliar places;
* interact with other children; and
* Be able to do more and more things independently like wash hands, dress, undress

**Tips to encourage and support your toddler's development**

* [**Give your child lots of cuddles, attention and praise**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/parenting-tips/tips-for-guiding-childrens-behaviour/make-time-for-praise)**.** Give them individual attention whenever you can.
* **Keep things the same as much as possible.** It will help your child feel more secure if you have a routine. Feed, bath and put your child to bed at similar times each day. Find the routine that works for your family.
* [**Try to model the social behaviour you want your toddler to adopt.**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/parenting-tips/tips-for-guiding-childrens-behaviour/take-time-to-model-the-behaviour-you-want-to-see)For example saying, ”please” and “thank you” when you talk to them and praising them when they share or help you.
* **Label your toddler’s feelings** when you observe them, for example when you see that they are happy, sad, cross, disappointed or frustrated.  It will help them learn the word for that feeling or emotion so they are able to learn to express how they feel later.
* [**Talk about what you are doing together.**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/parenting-tips/tips-for-guiding-childrens-behaviour/make-time-to-listen)Ask your child for their thoughts and ideas.  “What do you like in the picture?” Which toy do you like playing with best?” Remember to give your child time to choose and use their words.
* **Avoid too much television and other devices like tablets or smart phones.** These can be entertaining for your toddler, but limit their use to no more than half an hour each day. The National Literacy Trust has advice on [**Making the most of TV**](https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/2017_07_06_free_ELY_resource_-_televisionblank_pPD4WKD.pdf) (External link).
* **Encourage your child to feed and dress themselves.** Your child will love helping you too – putting away clothes, sweeping up or wiping the table.
* **Give simple choices.** “Do you want an apple or a banana?”  “Do you want to wear your red or blue top?”.
* [**Try to stay calm during tantrums.**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/tricky-moments-and-behaviours/tantrums)When you are calm, it helps your toddler to recover more quickly. Shouting will make the situation worse. Try to ignore the tantrum unless your child isn’t safe.
* **Plan Ahead!** When you go out and about have a few small toys, a drink and a healthy snack on hand.
* [**Ignore minor irritating behaviour**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/parenting-tips/take-time-to-think-about-how-you-respond-to-unwanted-behaviour)like stomping or whining or distract them with a new activity, toy or game. Give your child lots of praise and attention for positive behaviour.
* [**Share a book**](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/reading-aloud-and-sharing-books-good-talking/)(External link), song or game. Your child will love this special time with you and it will help their development. If your child knows lots of songs and rhymes they will learn to read more easily. There are ideas for songs, books and play activities on [**Words for Life**](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk/baby) (External link) and [**Read on. Get on**](http://readongeton.org.uk/) (External link).
* [**Play!**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/parenting-tips/tips-for-guiding-childrens-behaviour/make-time-to-listen)Give your child toys for stacking, things for pulling apart, blocks, simple jigsaws, toy cars, animals and dolls. Try to get out to the park so your child can have fun on playground equipment. As your child explores keep an eye on safety issues.
* **Teach your child about sharing.** Don’t expect or force your child to share. Help them to learn how it’s done. “It’s Tyler’s turn now.  While you wait your turn you can play with your car”.

**Dads matter too.** Research has shown that Dads have a big impact on their child’s development. Getting involved in daily activities like dressing, playing, bathing and reading create lots of opportunities to encourage your toddler’s development.

**What doesn’t work**

* **Getting angry** – This increases the tension in a situation and may turn things into a major battle.
* [**Never bite or hit your toddler.**](https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/guidance-and-advice/tricky-moments-and-behaviours/biting)Some toddlers bite or hit when they are angry or frustrated. Don’t bite or hit your toddler back. This will hurt them and may make them believe this behaviour is okay.
* **Don’t punish your toddler’s mistakes and accidents or criticise your toddler when they get it wrong.** Your toddler is still learning. Praise them and encourage their efforts.
* **Don’t threaten your child with scary things.** This will make your child anxious and may lead to more unwanted behaviour, not less.
* **NEVER shake your toddler.** Shaking can damage your toddler’s brain and the injuries can last forever.

If you’re feeling frustrated or angry, put your toddler somewhere safe for a short time (for example, a cot). Take some time out until you feel calmer. Or put your toddler in their push chair and go for a walk to let off steam. Or ask someone else to look after your toddler for a while.

**It’s OK to ask for help.** If you are worried about feeling stressed, low or depressed talk to your health visitor or GP.