Your Child at 2 Years

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by age 2. Take this with you and talk with your child’s doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

What Most Children Do by 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

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
- Climbs onto and down from furniture without help
- Walks up and down stairs holding on
- Throws ball overhand
- Makes or copies straight lines and circles

You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:
- Is missing milestones
- Doesn’t use 2-word phrases (for example, “drink milk”)
- 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 walk steadily
- Loses skills she once had

Tell your child’s doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs and ask for a developmental screening.

If you or the doctor are still concerned, your child may qualify for free early intervention services:
- Call Birth to Three Connections at 800-305-3064 if your child is under age 3
- Call your local elementary school if your child is age 3 or older
- Call SD Parent Connection at 800-640-4553 for free information, guidance and support.

DON’T WAIT.
Acting early can make a real difference!

It’s time for developmental screening!
At 2 years, your child is due for general developmental screening and an autism screening, as recommended for all children by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Ask the doctor about your child’s developmental screening.

Bright by Text
To sign up TEXT SDKIDS to 274448

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Learn the Signs. Act Early.
Help Your Child Learn and Grow

You can help your child learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 2-year-old child today.

What You Can Do for Your 2-Year-Old:

- Encourage your child to help with simple chores at home, like sweeping and making dinner. Praise your child for being a good helper.
- Hide your child’s toys around the room and let him find them.
- 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.
- Help your child do puzzles with shapes, colors, or farm animals. Name each piece when your child puts it in place.
- 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.
- Encourage your child to play with blocks. Take turns building towers and knocking them down.
- 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.”
- Do art projects with your child using crayons, paint, and paper. Describe what your child makes and hang it on the wall or refrigerator.
- 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.”
- 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.


This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized, validated developmental screening tool.