

Your Child at 24 Months

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DEVELOPMENT:

All children develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice your child:

- Climbs up and down stairs with help
- Jumps off the floor with both feet
- Throws overhand
- Runs with ease
- Uses a spoon and fork well
- Knows more words
- Uses "I", "you" and two-word phrases
- Asks questions
- Refers to himself or herself by name
- Follows a two-part command
- Copies household activities that you do
- Plays alongside other kids
- Washes and dries his or her hands
- Helps get dressed
- Wants to do things by himself or herself

IMUNIZATIONS: If your child has not already received it, Hepatitis A (two doses six months apart are needed by 24 months)

Possible vaccine side effects include:

- Fever
- Redness or swelling at the site of the shot.

If needed, you can give your baby acetaminophen (Tylenol). Ask your Provider for the correct dose. Contact your Provider if your child's symptoms are severe or last longer than 48 hours.

Next visit: Age three- check with your provider

LABS: Your child may need to be tested for anemia, lead poisoning or tuberculosis. Talk with your Provider.

NUTRITION:

By now your child should no longer be using bottles. Keep offering your child different foods even if he or she is picky. It can still take 10 to 15 tastes of a new food before your child will accept it. It is normal for your child to eat a lot of small meals and be less hungry.

- Let your child feed himself or herself.
- Offer mostly table foods. Do not give your child small, hard and round foods that he or she can choke on such as nuts, popcorn and whole grapes.
- Limit juice to no more than four ounces a day.
- Switch to low-fat milk but do not give your child more than 24 ounces a day. If your child does not drink at least 16 ounces of milk a day, serve other calcium-rich foods such as yogurt and cheese daily.

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SAFETY

- Children at this age need constant attention and guidance. They are explorers and have no sense of fear. This means that they can quickly climb playground equipment, go upstairs and explore electrical outlets and medicine cabinets.
- Use a car seat that is convertible and rear-facing for as long as your child meets the weight and height recommendations or at least until he or she is two years old.
- Keep following safety guidelines when your child is close to water, near stairs or on high surfaces. Kids can climb onto counters and tables at this age; some will climb out of their crib.
- Think about switching your child's crib to a bed.
- Cook on the back burners of your stove to reduce the risk of burns. If your child does get burned, apply cold water (not ice) right away and call your provider.
- Make sure that all chemicals, medications, cleaners and other hazardous materials are out of your child's reach.
- Put a hat on your child and apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30 when he or she is outdoors.
- Have your child wear a helmet when he or she rides a tricycle.
- Keep your child out of the yard while someone is using the lawn mower.
- Make sure that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home are working.
- If you have guns in your home, keep them unloaded, locked and stored away from ammunition.
- If you are worried about violence in your home, speak with your provider or contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233) or ndvh.org.
- Keep the Poison Control Hotline posted on your refrigerator: 1-800-222-1222.

SLEEP

- At this age most children take one nap a day.
- Encourage interest in books by reading a few with your child every night before bed.
- Nightmares or bedtime fears can start at this age, and it is OK to respond quickly and comfort your child. But continue to put your child down while awake and allow him or her to fall asleep in his or her own bed.
- Avoid responding to "curtain call" behavior from your child that keeps him or her from going to sleep—such as asking for water or many good night hugs.
- If you have questions about your child's sleep habits, ask your provider for help.

DISCIPLINE

Children this age are active and have a lot of energy. This is an important time for you to set consistent limits. Because they are curious and want to learn, your child may test limits and repeat actions many times. This means that you need to be patient and repeat reminders to your child many times.

When your child misbehaves, say why the action is not OK and show him or her the right thing to do. Explain what will happen—"We can't go to the park because you won't put on your shoes," for example. Be calm and set consistent limits even when your child throws a tantrum. Let your child have choices and praise his or her good behavior.

Remember that your child learns from the way you act. Try to be a good role model when you are angry or frustrated. Avoid yelling and spanking. If you get angry or frustrated with your child, put him or her in a safe place and take a few moments to calm down. Keep a sense of humor and remind yourself that your child is just growing up.

Time outs can be a good tool at this age. Find a quiet place where your child will not be distracted and use it for time outs. When your child misbehaves, give him or her a warning. If he or she repeats the act tell your child that it is time for a time out and put him or her in the quiet place. Keep your child there for one or two minutes. After the time is up remind your child of why he or she had a time out. Have your child say sorry for the mistake and give him or her a hug. Do not use time outs too often. You should have other ways to teach your child how to act.

TOILET TRAINING

Do not pressure your child. Have a potty-chair ready if your child shows interest. Teach him or her words for urine and bowel movements. Never punish your child for accidents. Children who are trained in the day often still need diapers or pull-ups for naps and sleeping at night.

FOCUS ON FAMILY

- This age can be hard, especially if your child is strong-willed. It is normal to feel frustrated at times. Taking time out for yourself and sharing your feelings with friends or other parents helps.
- Make time for the whole family to be together. This may include mealtimes, bedtimes and family vacations.
- If you let your child watch TV, limit it to less than 1 hour a day and watch it together.

PROMOTING DEVELOPMENT

- Brush your child's teeth twice a day. Use water or toothpaste that does not have fluoride in it until your child can spit out the paste and not swallow it. Take your child to the dentist twice a year.
- Speak to your child slowly, clearly and in adult language. Stuttering is common at this age and often clears up on its own. If you are concerned, speak with your provider.
- Masturbation is common. Let your child know he or she should do this in private. Be matter-of-fact and do not punish your child for this behavior.
- Fears of loud noises, animals and the dark often develop at this age.

Make sure your child knows that he or she is safe.

- Think about enrolling your child in a daycare, preschool or a play group. This can help build his or her social skills with other children.
- Keep reading to your child daily.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics: aap.org; American Academy of Family Physicians: aafp.org; Immunization information: immunize.org, cdc.gov/vaccines, vaccine.chop.edu, familyprovider.org and vaccineinformation.org
- Suggested reading: *1, 2, 3, The Toddler Years* by Irene DeZande, *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense* by Ellyn Satter, and *Positive Discipline A-Z: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems* by Jane Nelsen, et al.
- Other books are available at aap.org/bookstore.