



This newsletter provides important information about your baby through infancy and early childhood. You will receive 10 issues of this newsletter before your child reaches age 5. Other publications for parents include *Path to Parenthood* and *Growing Up Healthy*. If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter or are interested in a home visit or other assistance, please call one of the Vermont Department Health district offices listed below:

Barre..... 802-479-4200	Newport..... 802-334-6707
888-253-8786	800-952-2945
Bennington..... 802-447-3531	Rutland..... 802-786-5811
800-637-7347	888-253-8802
Brattleboro..... 802-257-2880	St. Albans..... 802-524-7970
888-253-8805	888-253-8801
Burlington..... 802-863-7323	St. Johnsbury..... 802-748-5151
888-253-8803	800-952-2936
Middlebury..... 802-388-4644	Springfield..... 802-885-5778
888-253-8804	888-296-8151
Morrisville..... 802-888-7447	White River Junction 802-295-8820
888-253-8798	888-253-8799

Your health insurance benefits include many preventive services at no charge to you: regular health check-ups and dental visits; immunizations (shots); vision and hearing checks; and child safety and developmental guidance.

Information in these newsletters was adapted from the following sources: *Touchpoints*, T. Berry Brazelton, MD; *Babytalk*; *Link Letters*, Healthy Steps; *Baby Your Baby*, Utah Department of Health; *Cradle Crier*, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension; *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics; and *Path To Parenthood*, Vermont Department for Children and Families.

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DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES




growing up healthy

A newsletter from Healthy Babies, Kids & Families

2 YEARS



Spirited, happy, and full of love and affection—your toddler turns 2.

While her physical growth will slow down during this time, you can expect to see some exciting intellectual, social and

emotional changes in her. She has figured out a lot more about how the world works, which makes life a little easier for you. Her vocabulary will grow and she will begin to develop some self-control.

She will be torn by how much she still needs you and how much she wants to be independent. She might cling to you when you try to leave her and run from you when you ask her to do something. This behavior is normal. Your patience, encouragement, love and support will help her learn to feel capable and secure.

General Development

Your toddler weighs from 22 to 38 lbs., and is anywhere from 32 to 40 inches tall. Her growth rate will slow, but her arms, legs and body will continue to stretch out. She almost has a full set of teeth.

Her language skills will develop rapidly. She will use two to three word sentences, say the names of toys and other objects and repeat words. She will want to talk to you often, so take time to get down on her eye level to listen to her and when you have something important to tell her. This is also a good time to read stories together. Naming and talking about pictures encourages your child's reading and learning skills.

She will play alongside other children more than with them. She will be very possessive. She may offer a toy to another child but will want it back. She may act shy around strangers and will be easily frustrated. But, in general, she will be affectionate and give lots of hugs and kisses.

She can bend over to pick up toys without falling, and can walk up and down stairs by holding onto a railing. She will be good at running, jumping, climbing, and kicking. She will like to push, pull, fill and dump, and will enjoy scribbling with crayons or markers.

Sleeping

Between ages 2 and 3, your child may sleep as many as 12 or 13 hours a day. Most stop their morning nap and take a longer one in the afternoon. Some give up napping all together. Either way, it's still important for them to have quiet time.

Putting your toddler to bed at night may continue to be a challenge. She may say she's not tired even if she clearly is. If she cries after tucking her in, reassure her that everything is alright and that it is time to go to sleep. Let her then try to settle down herself. If she continues to cry, soothe her and let her try again.

If you don't already have one, a nightlight in her room may help.

Give your toddler a feeling of control. Let her make as many choices as possible at bedtime—let her pick out what pajamas to wear, what books you'll read and what special toy and/or blanket she'll take to bed.

Toilet Training

Learning to use the toilet is something your child will do when she is ready. Talk with your health care provider or other parents for help. Try to make it fun for both of you, read a book, get fun underwear and play games. Watch for these signs when it might be a good time to try toilet training:

Muscle control: When your child stays dry for at least two hours at a time or wakes up dry from naps.

Communication: Your toddler lets you know that he is about to have a bowel movement and can follow simple directions.

Toilet training can be slow. Many children are not ready until 2 years of age or older. Your child is so independent at this time that it will work best if you let him set the pace. If you both have given it a good try and it is not working, stop and try again at a later date.

Safety

Your toddler is spending a lot more time outdoors; it's important to think about summer and winter safety.

In the winter, make sure she stays a safe distance away from portable heaters, woodstoves or fireplaces. On cold days, always put a scarf, hat and gloves on your toddler before going outside.

In the summer, sun exposure is a big concern. Too much can lead to serious health problems, including skin cancer. Because the sun's rays are hottest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., try to go out earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. Always have her wear a hat and use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) from 15 to 30. Ask your health care provider (your family doctor, nurse practitioner, or clinic) if you're not sure which one to use.



Feeding

Your 2-year-old should be eating three meals a day, plus one or two healthy snacks. She can use a spoon, drink from a cup, and feed herself a variety of finger foods. Many toddlers resist eating certain foods (or any new food). Some just eat one or two favorite foods for a long time. This is normal. She is learning independence by choosing what she wants to eat and how much. Offer snacks between meals so they won't interfere with her mealtime appetite.

Discipline

Your 2-year-old's struggle for independence will mean quick changes in her moods. She may play happily one minute and start screaming and crying the next. Follow the discipline tips in previous newsletters and remember that she needs to learn to become self-disciplined and stop herself. Always give praise and show appreciation for the positive things she does.

Language

Your child will use simple sentences like "go out" or "more juice." She can understand many more words than she can speak and will continue to use gestures to express a need or want. Whenever she does this, encourage your child to say the actual words and repeat them after you.

Some children develop language skills quickly, some don't; and some children are just more talkative than others. This doesn't mean that those who talk more are smarter. A quieter child probably knows as many words, but just doesn't use them as often. As a general rule, boys start talking later than girls, but this tends to even out when children reach kindergarten.

If you have concerns about your child's speech or hearing, talk to your health care provider. Identifying a language or hearing problem early is very important, so she can get the help she needs before it interferes with learning and language skills.

Child Care or Preschool

Although kindergarten is the "official" start of school, many children begin preschool, nursery school, or group child care programs long before that. These programs—where children learn through play—help get youngsters used to leaving home, give them opportunities to interact with other children and teach them group skills.

They also can be helpful to you, especially if you're going back to work, or have a new baby at home. At this stage of your child's development, the separation can be good for both of you.

Environmental Spotlight: Lead

As described in previous newsletters, lead is a significant hazard to children. Even small amounts can cause serious learning and behavior problems. To reduce this danger:

- Learn how to repair paint safely.
- Wash your child's toys and hands often.
- Let your water run for one minute each morning before using it.
- When cooking, always start with cold water—warm or hot water takes in more lead from the pipes.
- Provide a healthy diet for your child with plenty of vitamin C, calcium and iron enriched foods like meat, beans, green leafy vegetables, milk, cheese, broccoli and orange juice.

Your toddler should be tested for lead again at her 2 year well child visit.

For more information about lead and lead poisoning, talk to your health care provider or call the Vermont Office of Environmental Health at 1-800-439-8550.

In some communities there are preschool co-ops, which means you spend some time with your child at the preschool each month or so. There are also special programs for infants and toddlers who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays or disabilities. These programs take place in a child care or preschool setting.

A nursery or preschool program should offer children a safe and stimulating environment, with attentive caregivers. A local child care resource and referral agency can help you find licensed and registered child care providers in your area. Visit as many as possible, ask questions, watch carefully, and trust your instincts. You may be eligible for financial assistance through the state. For more information, call the Child Development Division at 1-800-649-2642 or visit www.brightfuturesinfo.org.

Siblings: Hero Worship

If your toddler has an older brother or sister, you will probably start seeing some hero worship. In your toddler's eyes, her older siblings can do no wrong.

At times, your older kids will think this is fun—it will make them feel important. Then again, they may not always be happy having your toddler as a constant companion.

You won't be able to avoid pressures and rivalries between siblings. But in general these will be minimal, and the bond between your children will grow and contribute to the self-esteem of both of them.

