

# Two to Two and a Half Year Olds

## Emotional and Social

- \* Reaches peak of temper-tantrum behavior during these 6 months. Is often demanding, yet indecisive when presented with a choice. May resist parents with both words and actions.
- \* Begins to develop a sense of right and wrong; may stop self from reaching for a forbidden object.
- \* Wants to be both securely attached to parent and independent; will whine and cling but then be assertive.
- \* May be shy with strangers, yet aggressive toward siblings and peers - - grabbing toys, refusing to share.
- \* May suddenly develop fears of harmless objects, such as the vacuum cleaner or the bathtub drain.
- \* Also notes real dangers: glass, steep stairs, big animals.
- \* Undresses and dresses self with assistance; pulls pants down, unbuttons large buttons. Brushes teeth with help. Uses toilet with assistance in daytime.

## Language

- \* Uses real words more often, less gibberish.
- \* Speaks longer sentences, up to four words or so.
- \* Develops beginnings of grammar, including plurals, past tense, and prepositions
- \* Talks to self when playing.
- \* Listens attentively to stories and conversation.
- \* Likes watching television.

## Mental and Creative

- \* Is less a creature of impulse - - usually thinks before acting. Considers ideas, comes up with alternatives.
- \* Understands simple cause-and-effect actions: Turning a key makes the door open.
- \* Is more aware of times sequences. Begins using phrases like "right now," or "all done." Understands that some events happen simultaneously - - for example, that mother can cook dinner while the child plays elsewhere.
- \* Asks many questions.
- \* Loves hearing familiar stories and nursery rhymes, and can occasionally join in with the words.
- \* Can match up shapes or basic colors. Recognizes size differences.
- \* Understands concepts such as "one," "many" and "another"; will ask for "another cookie."

## Muscle Control

- \* Wants to do what adults do, such as carry large objects about. Prefers walking to being carried.
- \* Walks on tiptoe a few steps.
- \* Seats self smoothly in a chair, like an adult.
- \* At about 26 months, can catch a large ball, holding arms straight in front of body, with the elbows stiff.
- \* Is typically in a hurry instead of walking.
- \* While drawing, begins to imitate curved, vertical and horizontal lines.
- \* Snips around edge of paper with scissors, but not yet able to cut along a line.
- \* Stands on one foot momentarily before losing balance.

- \* Begins to jump backward and sideways while retracting arms, instead of swinging them forward.
- \* Turns pages of a book one at a time.

## Two and a Half to Three Years

### Emotional and Social

- \* Shows independence. Parts easily from mother in familiar surroundings and may refuse to hold her hand.
- \* Begins to obey simple rules, such as "no eating while watching television."
- \* Enjoys doing things for others. Gets satisfaction from helping with simple chores.
- \* Can be inflexible, insisting on familiar routines.
- \* Participates in group games like ring-around-a-rosy under adult supervision.
- \* May verbally scold another child instead of being physically aggressive.
- \* Expands areas of self-help. Dresses with supervision. By three years, should be able to undress without help. Pours liquid from pitcher into glass. Uses napkin and fork. Announces need to use the toilet; may use it without help.

### Language

- \* Gives full name if asked.
- \* Uses intelligible words 80 percent of the time.
- \* Asks "what," "where" and "when" questions.
- \* Enjoys being read to. May ask for a favorite book.
- \* Increasingly contributes to storytelling.
- \* Can recite simple nursery rhymes and commercial jingles with adult's help.
- \* May have vocabulary of 900 words by end of third year.

### Mental and Creative

- \* Shows increased concentration, although attention span is still short.
- \* Expands upon pretend play, using stuffed toys, dolls.
- \* By about 33 months, can remember two simple directions given at once - - for instance, "Get a book, then go sit where we can read a story."

### Muscle Control

- \* By 2 1/2 years, climbs stairs as adults do, without putting both feet on one step.
- \* Holds pencil with thumb and forefinger.
- \* Draws crude circle shape with crayon.
- \* Jumps from chair to floor.
- \* Uses scissors with greater control. Can cut paper in two, though not along a straight line.
- \* Kicks a ball with vigorous forward swing of the foot.