

Six Big Changes for Toddlers



Your Toddler's Growth Slows Down

Your toddler is growing bigger and stronger every day, but you may have noticed that he isn't growing as fast as he did when he was younger. Younger babies seem to eat more food each week. Your toddler won't keep eating more and more food because he is not growing as fast. He might eat more food one day and less the next day. Try not to worry when he doesn't seem hungry. Talk to your doctor if you are worried about your toddler's appetite.



Your Toddler Must Practice New Skills like Standing and Walking

Your toddler will learn many new motor skills before she is 2 years old. She may want to practice pulling up and walking as she holds your fingers. Because learning new skills is so important, she will need a lot of practice. Sometimes she would rather practice than eat. Also, as she works on new skills like crawling, standing, and walking, she may wake up more often. As she gets better at her skills, she will sleep more at night.



Your Toddler Needs to Practice Using His Fingers

Your toddler must use his hands to touch, hold, pick up, even throw things! That means that your toddler will have a strong need to practice using his hands. Sometimes he won't eat unless you let him feed himself. Your toddler will make a mess when he is learning to eat with his fingers, but it is very important that you give him a chance. Have a towel nearby for quick clean up.



Your Toddler Needs You to Help Him Learn

Even before he starts to talk, your toddler is already learning a lot about words. Pointing is his way of telling you that he is ready to listen and learn! He wants you to tell him more about what he sees. Try talking to him. You might find that you repeat the words, like “that is a cat, a big cat” when you see a cat. Telling him what you see can help him learn the right words. Sometimes he may want to hold and even taste things around him. It is important to make sure he can’t touch or grab anything unsafe. Sometimes he will be happy to just hear you talk to him about new things. Talking to your toddler before he is using words is important, fun, and educational!

Your Toddler is Remembering More Every Day

Your toddler is able to remember many things now. She can remember people she sees every day and she knows when someone is new to her. She may be shy around people she sees only once in a while. She may not want new people to pick her up or get too close. You can help her by asking friends and family to wait until your toddler gets used to them before they try to hold her. She can remember what foods she likes, what foods she doesn’t like, and what foods are new to her. It might help her to try new foods if you keep the foods she likes best out of sight.



Your Toddler Will Use “Scripts” to Understand and Predict Daily Activities

Your toddler needs to learn everything about the world around her. She will try to learn what things are, what things change, and what things stay the same. She notices when things happen in the same way every day or every week. She makes up “scripts” or stories in her mind that will help her remember what will happen next, who does what, and how things work. She may have scripts for what happens when she takes a bath, when she gets into the car, or when she goes to child care. If you don’t follow your toddler’s script, like choosing the “wrong” clothes, she may get upset. The good news is that you are in charge of your toddler’s scripts! You can change her scripts by making up and sticking to new routines.