

**Ages 2 to 3 years old****The Facts**

Understanding the stages and behaviors in your child's development is an important step in parenting. Due to children maturing at their own rates (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally) they need all the support, love and encouragement you can provide. As a parent you can help!

**Developmental Stages & Behaviors****2 year olds**

- Combine two words to make a simple sentence
- Refer to their own name when talking about themselves
- Run and jump easily
- Walk without falling
- Play longer with toys
- Create imaginary friends and fantasies
- Play "pretend" games
- Indicate toilet needs
- Like to help
- Say "NO" often
- Like doing things their way
- Strive for independence
- Enjoy playing with other children
- Need rigid routines
- Are easily frustrated

**3 year olds**

- Throw objects and kick ball
- May ride tricycle
- Memorize short rhymes and songs
- Begin to count
- Show knowledge of concepts as front/back; up/down; in front of/behind
- Recognize some letters and numbers
- Tell pretend stories
- Talk about feelings
- Know the difference between 'boy' and 'girl'
- Use the bathroom during the day (may still have accidents)
- Make friends of similar age
- Begin to share toys with other children, still not very cooperative
- Can be stubborn
- Are concerned with pleasing people

\*Not every child develops the same, that's what makes us all unique. The previous listing contained general behaviors that most children obtain at a certain age, but not all.

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# Helping Your Child's Development

Helping your child learn right from the start makes a big difference. Here's what you can do:

- Give your child the courage to try new things. For example, while at the park allow him/her to walk and climb on things while you hold his/her hand.
- Let your child know you are listening, though you may not be able to do what he/she wants.
- Let your child help you with daily activities such as washing the car and/or folding clothes. Letting your child help makes him/her feel important.
- Give your child the opportunity to make some of his/her own choices. For example, let your child choose how he/she is going spend his/her time. Allowing your child to make decisions helps him/her to feel good about his/herself, as well as gain self-confidence.

## How To Handle Discipline Problems

Even good children have bad behaviors. The following is an example of how to handle a discipline problem that occurs within the ages of 2 to 3 years :

*Scenario:* Your child throws a tantrum because you wont buy him/her a toy.

*Goal:* To teach your child to behave properly.

**Don't** lose your temper. Doing so will scare your child, as well as set a bad example. Don't negotiate or give in. Don't bribe your child with candy or treats, this leads to future demands. Rewarding your child for bad behavior encourages tantrums. Don't try and reason with him/her. During a tantrum children cannot and don't listen.

**Do** stay calm, ignore the fuss, leave the store and/or hold your child. When he/she has settled down, try and explain that you will leave the store whenever a tantrum is thrown. As soon as possible after the tantrum reward him/her for good behavior.

**Prevention** begins by you explaining the proper behavior you expect before you enter into a store. In turn, explain the consequences of misbehavior.

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