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[www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com](http://www.eastlouisvillepediatrics.com)

## **Your Two Year Old**

This is a unique age – full of independence and the magic of play. No doubt you have noticed a surge in communication skills as more and more words and sentences come tumbling out of your active child. This explosion of language parallels his/her developing memory and thinking skills. It seems like a two year olds body and mind are constantly active. Along with all this development comes the expected and normal loss of control known as temper tantrums. One minute you have an adorable, happy toddler and the next moment you have a bundle of anger and tears. Take heart, ALL OF THIS IS NORMAL!

### **Fostering a Two Year Olds Curiosity**

Allow running, kicking, climbing, and push-pull and/or ride on toys to satisfy the daily need for physical activity.

Encourage stacking, building blocks, scribbling, and creative play as well as some messy play including clay play-doh, and finger paint.

Having plenty of books and a daily reading time is excellent for developing the attention span and vocabulary. It also promotes togetherness with your child.

Using a small table and chairs, kitchen sets, tool benches, airplane models, houses, etc. as well as stuffed animals and dolls is excellent for imaginary play.

Be cautious of excess TV and video (this includes play time with phones and computers). Limit this time so as not to prevent active learning and interaction with others.

### **Nutrition**

Small portions of quality and colorful food are advised. Many refuse green foods. Offer substitutes and allow self-feeding with a fork and/or food. Peaceful, pleasant meals with the TV off are advised. Also, try to avoid force or pressure to eat.

For safety, avoid foods that could cause choking – peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs, grapes, hard candy, and the like. Encourage good chewing and time to relax a little and enjoy mealtime.



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## **Dental**

Your child will have a complete set of primary teeth. Regular brushing and a preventative diet that avoids excess candy and sweets are helpful. Children may be more willing to allow your help with brushing if they are allowed to practice on your teeth or on a favorite stuffed animal or doll. Children should see a dentist by age 3.

## **Potty Training**

Allow your child to learn with your help. Encourage trying, offer help and reasonable praise, and try not to criticize for mistakes. Second chances and patience is never more important than with toilet training. The main issue is supporting your child while he/she learns to use the toilet.

Many children learn to use the toilet slowly while some may learn relatively fast. Toilet training can sometimes be tense and exasperating for parents. Do your best to put the issue into perspective. Learning a new skill takes time. Remember, you can always call our office if you have difficulties or concerns.

## **Safety**

Attempt to prevent burns, poisoning, drowning, electrical injuries, and swallowing of small objects, plastic bags, and balloons by childproofing.

Prevent access to high counters, bunk beds, and windows.

Continue to use an approved car seat.

Use a bicycle helmet when your child begins to ride a tricycle or bicycle as well as when your child is a bicycle passenger.

Supervise all outdoor play especially around grills, lawn mowers, swimming pools, hot tubs, and streets.

Children should NEVER be left unattended in a house or car.



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If you have any guns in your home be sure they are locked with the ammunition separate from the gun –  
USE EXTREME CAUTION!

Have a smoke detector on every level in your home and check the batteries regularly.

### **A Few Words on Being a Parent**

No doubt, you have heard about the terrible twos – we prefer to emphasize the positives and joys of the age. The term “terrible twos” refers to the normal struggle all children have in order to separate from you and become more independent. Within the two year old are the “Me do it”, the “I do it”, and the “No!” feelings. This want for power exists along with the need to be dependent, to run to your arms, and to be protected and guided by you. Children may go back and forth between these two strong feelings with little warning and little quiet time in between – and with no ability on your part to predict either!

Strong feelings in our children usually bring equally strong reactions in us. However, if we respond by issuing a great many orders children may be even more provoked to temper tantrums and “No’s”.

Gentle reminders, quiet controlled voices, and phrasing requests in impersonal ways are helpful – as is ignoring inappropriate behavior and using lots of positive comments. It takes patience and perseverance but you will find the results will be worth your efforts to guide and suggest rather than control in a stronger way. Remember to catch your child being good and comment on this behavior.

We are willing to discuss these and other issues such as sibling issues, extremes of behavior, child care, sleep, potty training, and development so please alert us to any concerns you may have.

### **Suggested Reading**

**NEXT CHECKUP: 3 YEARS OF AGE**