

YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT - 2 TO 3 YEARS

Your child is now starting to test boundaries and can throw temper tantrums so it's important you find ways for them to have a break to recharge their batteries. Their memory is developing fast and they can now talk about people who are not with them at the time. This is a time where your child's imagination is soaring. They enjoy doing things outside the home, so it's a great time to visit parks and playgrounds. Play time becomes a game of make-believe, where they practice skills and mimic situations they see around them. Use this time to talk to your child about respecting others so they learn how to play fair.

The following information has been sourced from the [Early Years Learning Framework](#) Developmental Milestones booklet, developed by Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd NSW (CCCC) for the Department of Education.

How can you encourage your child's learning?

- Give them more experiences by going to different places e.g. park, beach, public swimming pool, shops
- Sing songs, listen to music and dance together
- Describe things they can see and hear in their environment e.g. hot, cold, big, loud, green
- Ask them to solve everyday problems e.g. It's raining, what do we need to take when we go outside?
- Try to start toilet training. Start with 'wees' first
- Give them boxes and blocks for building things e.g. pretend houses and bridges
- Help them develop their motor skills and understand concepts such as 'under' and 'over' by creating obstacle courses in the home e.g. going 'over' pillows, 'through' the tunnel, 'under' the chair
- Encourage your child to use their imagination and develop the muscles in their hands by using crayons, paints or chalk

What are some of the different developmental milestones you can observe?

Physical

- walks, runs, climbs, kicks and jumps easily
- uses steps one at a time
- squats to play and rises without using hands for support
- catches ball rolled to him/her
- walks towards a ball to kick it
- jumps from a low step or over low objects
- attempts to balance on one foot
- avoids obstacles
- able to open doors
- stops readily
- moves to music
- turns pages one at a time
- holds crayon with fingers
- uses a pencil to draw or scribble in circles and lines; may still be held in fist
- gets dressed with help
- self-feeds using utensils and a cup



Social

- plays with other children
- takes part in simple make-believe play
- may prefer same sex playmates and toys
- unlikely to share toys without protest



Emotional

- shows strong attachment to a parent (or main family carer)
- shows distress and protest when a parent or other caregiver leaves and wants that person to do things for them
- begins to show guilt or remorse for misdeeds
- may be less likely to willingly share toys with peers
- may demand adult attention



Cognitive

- builds a tower of five to seven objects
- lines up objects in 'train' fashion
- recognises and identifies common objects and pictures by pointing
- enjoys playing with sand, water, dough; explores what these materials feel like, rather than making things with them
- uses symbolic play, e.g. uses a block as a car
- shows knowledge of gender-role stereotypes
- identifies a child in a picture as a boy or girl
- engages in make-believe and pretend play
- begins to count with numbers
- recognises similarities and differences
- imitates rhythms and animal movements
- is becoming aware of space through physical activity
- can follow two or more directions



Language

- uses two or three words together, e.g. "go potty now"
- 'explosion' of vocabulary and use of some correct grammatical forms of language
- refers to self by name and often says 'mine'
- asks lots of questions
- uses pronouns and prepositions, simple sentences and phrases
- labels own gender
- copies words and actions
- makes music, sings and dances
- likes listening to stories and books



Please seek advice from your local community health worker or doctor if your child:

- **is not interested in playing**
- **is falling a lot**
- **finds it hard to use small objects**
- **does not understand simple instructions**
- **is not using many words**
- **is not joining words in meaningful phrases**
- **is not interested in food**
- **is not interested in others**