

# AGES & STAGES

2 years



*Two-year-olds like to be independent! Favorite words are “Mine!” and “No.” and “I do it!” Emotions may take on a roller coaster-like quality, changing from excitement to anger to laughter within a few moments. A great deal of time is spent exploring, pushing, pulling, filling, dumping, and touching.*

## 2-YEAR-OLDS

### Growing and Moving

WEIGHT: 22-38 pounds

HEIGHT: 32-40 inches

- feeds self with spoon
- has almost a full set of teeth
- puts on hat, socks, mittens
- opens cabinets and drawers
- holds crayons with fist and scribbles
- walks without help
- stoops or squats
- can bend over to pick up a toy without falling
- tosses or rolls a large ball
- likes to climb onto and off furniture
- walks up and down stairs by holding onto railing
- likes to push, pull, fill, and dump
- many children (but not all) will become interested in using the toilet

### Thinking and Learning

- learns by touching, smelling, and tasting
- knows and can say name
- follows simple 2-step directions
- points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked
- laughs at silly actions
- acts out every day activities — talking on phone
- likes to take things apart
- unable to sit still or play with a toy for more than a few minutes
- stacks 2-4 blocks



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# TOYS



## Toys

large blocks

push toys, shopping cart, lawn mower

cars and trucks (large)

pegboard with large pegs

toy telephone

tricycle, rocking horse

water and sand toys

table and chairs, play dishes

simple dress-up clothes

shape blocks, 3-4 piece puzzles

small and large balls

doll with bottle and blanket

nursery rhyme music and books

large crayons

stuffed animals, wooden animals

## Listening, Talking, and Reading

- says names of toys and other objects
- repeats words heard in conversations
- uses 2-4 word sentences, "Go home!"
- asks for information by pointing and using one word, "Doggie?"
- enjoys simple stories, rhymes, and songs
- hums or tries to sing
- enjoys looking at picture books and turning pages
- points to and says names of objects in books

## Feeling and Relating

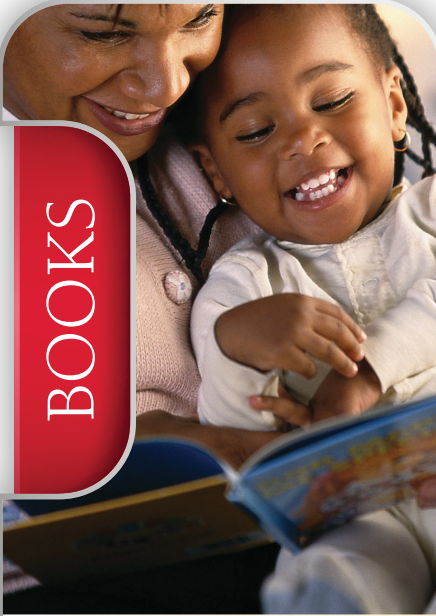
- plays more "alongside" rather than "with" other children
- acts shy around strangers
- likes to imitate parents
- easily frustrated; impatient
- affectionate—many hugs and kisses
- insists on trying to do several tasks without help
- very possessive—offers toys to other children, but then wants them back
- sometimes throws tantrums or bites, usually when unable to say or ask for something in words
- possessive of adult attention; shows feelings of jealousy
- wants to explore, but still needs you as a base of support and trust
- enjoys laughing, beginning to develop a sense of humor

## LET'S TALK!

### *Ideas to help children build communication skills*

**Recognize and encourage children's effort.** Learning new skills takes a lot of practice. A little encouragement helps children feel more confident about trying new things. Two-year-olds don't talk a lot yet, so you will need to pay close attention and talk them through challenges. "Learning how to go down the stairs takes some practice, but I know you can do it. Try holding the rail with both hands."





## Books for Children

*Baby Beluga*  
Raffi

*Freight Train*  
Donald Crews

*From Head to Toe*  
Eric Carle

*Good Night, Gorilla*  
Peggy Rathmann

*Hands Are Not for Hitting*  
Martine Agassi Ph.D. and Marieka  
Heinlen

*Mama, Do You Love Me?*  
Barbara M. Joosse and Barbara  
Lalavée

*Mouse Paint*  
Ellen Stoll Walsh

*Owl Babies*  
Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson

*RRRalph*  
Lois Ehlert

*Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little  
Toes*  
Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury

*Time for Bed*  
Mem Fox and Jane Dyer

## IDEAS FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Baby proof—AGAIN! Two-year-olds are now taller and more skillful at opening doors and getting into mischief.
- Spend some time rolling a ball back and forth to each other. Show children how to drop and toss a ball into a large container.
- Provide toys for pushing and pulling.
- Play “parade” or follow the leader. Sing and act out songs like “Old MacDonald.”
- Help toddlers learn about the science of “what happens when?” Provide many opportunities to fill, dump, collect, gather, give, hide and seek.
- Encourage drawing and painting to support later writing skills. Tape paper to the table and let children practice scribbling with crayons and markers.
- Encourage your child to identify words and noises—vacuum, water dripping, dogs barking, thunder, airplane.
- Read aloud to your child every day. Snuggle up and read books with fewer words and large pictures.
- Encourage language by adding new words and having back-and-forth conversations. “Yes, that’s a car, a shiny, red car. Where do you think it is going?”
- Let your child help with simple chores. Placing fruit in the fridge, picking up toys, or putting clothes in the laundry basket are good choices. Encourage your child to name things you are using.
- Give toddlers clear and simple choices. “Do you want milk or water? Do you want the big ball or the little ball?”
- Know how to handle a temper tantrum—don’t yell, shake, or hit a child; remain calm; and talk in a soothing tone.
- Do not expect toddlers to share or take turns. Right now they are focused on learning how to physically handle themselves and on learning to talk. Learning to share will come later.

### A Word on Development

Every child is unique. Each child’s learning and growth rates may differ slightly from other children the same age. If, however, you notice a child is unable to do many of the skills listed for his or her age group, you may wish to talk with a health professional. In Iowa, you may request a free evaluation and assessment from **Early ACCESS** at 1-888-425-4371. [www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa](http://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org/early-access-iowa)

If your child has special needs, early help can make a difference.

### Resources

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

- Human Sciences [www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences)
- Extension Store [store.extension.iastate.edu](http://store.extension.iastate.edu)

Search “Ages and Stages” for information about specific development milestones.

The developmental information provided in this bulletin has been combined from a variety of professional resources to help you understand your child’s overall growth. It is not a standardized measurement tool.

*Written by Lesia Oesterreich, Human Sciences Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.*

Ages & Stages 2-Year-Olds is available online at: [store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5023](http://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5023).

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PM 1530D April 2018