

TIP CARD FOR DADS OF TODDLERS (AGES 1–2)



DID YOU KNOW?

The toddler years are a time of great cognitive, emotional and social development – support from mom and dad is particularly important during these years.



Most children learn to walk, talk, solve problems, and relate to others during toddlerhood:¹

- Toddlers are learning to be independent. They may insist on doing things for themselves, become less cooperative, or say “NO” frequently.
- They learn by playing – on their own, with parents, or with friends.



Toddlers’ experiences can affect how their brains develop:²

- Talking, reading, playing, and singing with a parent has a strong positive impact on development.
- Watching TV and looking at social media can negatively impact development.



Toddlers struggle at times to deal with their changing feelings and emotions:³

- At one moment they may feel independent, then the next minute they feel dependent on a parent; they may feel confident, then doubtful.
- Out-of-control behavior like biting, hitting, whining, and crying may tell you they need help coping with their emotions.

MORE INFORMATION

NRFC Resources

- Webinar (2013)—Working with Dads: Encouraging and Supporting Father Involvement from Birth through Adolescence <https://www.fatherhood.gov/webinars>
- Safety Tips for Dads to Keep Young Kids Safe (ages 1–4) <http://1.usa.gov/1SO8VBP>

Other Resources

- Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby’s and Toddler’s Early Learning – tips from Zero to Three <https://bit.ly/2iGMolg>
- Ages and Stages: Toddlers – tips from the University of Illinois Extension Office <https://bit.ly/1ssXZiw>
- Developmental Guidelines and Positive Parenting Tips – from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://bit.ly/2jNEUYZ>
- Media and Young Minds – an article from the American Academy of Pediatrics <https://bit.ly/2evIMJ8>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Provide emotional security for your toddler – hug them, talk with them, read with them, sing to them, play with them. Just be there.

- **Establish routines for bedtime, baths, naps, and eating to help them feel comfortable and secure.**
 - Work with caregivers so everyone understands the routines.
 - Give your toddler a “heads-up” when it’s time to switch from one activity to another. (“We need to leave soon so you’ll have to stop playing when I say so.”)
- **Read, sing, tell, or act out simple stories.**
 - Toddlers love hearing the same story over and over again! They’ll start recognizing the pictures and learning the story.
 - As you read or talk, ask questions. (“Why did Jack do that?” “What do you think happens next?”)
 - Show them ways to play imaginatively with toys.

- **Encourage them to explore and try new things.**
 - Let them try dressing and feeding themselves.
 - Take them to new places or ride a bus or train together.
 - Let them figure things out for themselves, but be available to help if they ask.
 - Teach clear and simple safety rules. (“Don’t cross the street without me or mom.” “Don’t touch things in the kitchen that are hot.”)
- **Be a good role model.**
 - Children see what you do and hear what you say.
- **Hug and kiss them every day!**



¹ University of Illinois Extension <https://extension.illinois.edu/babysitting/age-toddler.cfm>; Pruett, K. (2000) Fatherneed

² Pruett, K. (2000); First 5 California <https://bit.ly/2sUZ59w>; American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) Media and Young Minds <https://bit.ly/2evIMJ8>

³ Dollahite, D.C. and Hawkins, A.J., FatherWork <http://fatherwork.byu.edu/activitiesToddlers.htm>; Zero to Three (2010) Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby’s and Toddler’s Early Learning <https://bit.ly/2iGMolg>

