

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR CHILD IS TWO

When your child was vaccinated at 18 months, you may have had an opportunity to discuss their development and health with the nurse or doctor. After all, who better than you as a parent to observe your child and track their progress? Turning two is a good time to observe and take note of your child's progress. We suggest discussing anything you have noticed with your doctor or other healthcare professional at your next appointment.

At age two, your child wants to learn how to do things on their own but needs you there to help them and to feel safe. They experience emotions intensely and can go from joy to tears in an instant!

Here are the main skills your child should have acquired at 24 months:

They communicate

They make two-word sentences ("nap done", "want milk").
They can point to at least four body parts when asked (e.g., "Show me your nose, mouth, hair, ears, hands, feet").
They understand short sentences and can respond to two-part commands like "Go get your hat and shoes."
They ask for things using words (with or without gestures).
They understand what the words "more" and "inside" mean.

They move

They run and stop without bumping into things or falling.
They can carry a ball or large object in their hands while walking.
They eat by themselves with a spoon or fork, even if they sometimes need help finishing their meal.
They turn the pages of a book, one at a time.
They begin to undress themselves (for example, taking off their socks or hat).

They play

They scribble in a circle-like motion with a crayon.
They can insert pieces into a toy or shape-matching puzzle.
They mimic the actions or behaviours of the adults they see (for example, wiping the table with a towel, like their dad).
They play make-believe with their toys (e.g., feeding their stuffed animal, putting their doll to bed).

They grow up

They like to play with other children but have a hard time sharing.
They like to learn, play, and explore their surroundings while keeping their parents at a slight distance.
They express many different emotions: joy, sadness, embarrassment, shame, and anger.
They assert themselves by saying "no" or wanting to do things all by themselves.
They ask an adult for help.

Although you should bear in mind that each child grows and changes at their own pace, we recommend that you contact the physician or specialized nurse practitioner monitoring your child's health and development or your CLSC (<https://sante.gouv.qc.ca/repertoire-ressources/clsc/>) if:

- Your child is not yet making two-word sentences at 24 months
- You notice that your child cannot do at least some of the other things listed in the table above
- You have concerns about your child's development, learning, behaviour, understanding of words and phrases, speaking, etc.

Over the next few months, your child will make more great strides. Help them develop and grow.

| Strategy | Examples |
|---|--|
| Play with them, taking an interest in what they're doing and following their lead | Observe them Name what they're doing and seeing Give them time to talk to you |
| Let them explore in a safe environment | Make a fruit salad with them, letting them touch and taste the ingredients |
| Encourage their autonomy by leaving them time to do things on their own | Let them get dressed on their own, providing assistance as needed Praise them for holding the banister when climbing the stairs |
| Take time to understand what they are saying | Get close to them Get down at their level Repeat what you think they have said |
| Give them a chance to make choices | Offer them two weather-appropriate sweaters and let them choose which to wear |

You should contact as soon as possible the physician or specialized nurse practitioner monitoring your child's health and development or your CLSC (<https://sante.gouv.qc.ca/repertoire-ressources/clsc/>) if your Child:

- Moves or uses one side of their body much less than the other (e.g., avoids using one hand or keeps one hand more closed than the other)
- Cannot walk without assistance
- Always walks on tiptoes
- Never looks you in the eye when you speak to them
- Shows no interest in the adults or children around them
- Does not point at things they want or want to show you
- Appears not to be hearing or seeing well
- Stops doing something they were able to do regularly before

We encourage you to visit the Naitreetgrandir.com website. It has ideas for activities you can do with your child, milestones for the next few months, and information on a variety of topics related to young children and their parents. You can also subscribe to the Naitre et grandir monthly newsletter for information specific to your child's age.

The Agir tôt program: Taking early action to better address your child's needs at the right time.

For more information, contact your CLSC or visit Quebec.ca/AgirTot