
YOUR CHILD AT 2 ½ YEARS

I. DIET/SLEEP

- A. **This is truly the age of rituals!** It reaches its height at 2 ½ and may not only include repetition of food preferences (food jags) but also of dishes and even the arrangement of dishes. Preferences are high and may be related to taste, form, consistency, or even color. Small helpings, teaspoon sized, are often best. Introduce new foods under new and pleasant situations so the child has something to fall back on when the food jag wears itself out.
- B. **SLEEP:** Children of this age don't usually like change or variety. The going-to-bed ritual of the typical 2 ½ year old can often involve the entire family (to their dismay)! It is easier for them to get to sleep if allowed the transition from waking to sleep which the ritual provides. The process will become **as long as you allow it to be**. Try to avoid building up too complicated a ritual which the child will then insist on following. Be patient! It may now be time for transition to a bed.

II. DEVELOPMENT

- A. Your child can put on several articles of clothing, can give their first name, and can pedal a tricycle or Big Wheel. Use bike helmets.
- B. Children at this age may verbalize toilet needs in daytime fairly consistently and may be dry all day.
- C. They refer to themselves by name, speak 3-word sentences, separate more easily from parents and may begin to notice sex differences.
- D. Reinforce limits. Use positive reinforcement and ignore temper tantrums.
- E. Continue to supervise twice daily tooth brushing using only a pea sized amount of toothpaste.

III. SAFETY

- A. Your child must continue to stay in a car seat until 40 pounds and then may transfer to a booster seat until 60 pounds.
- B. Maintain a smoke-free environment.
- C. Limit television, videos, and computers to one hour per day.
- D. Always keep weapons unloaded in a locked cabinet.
- E. Keep all poisons and medications out of reach of children.

IV. OTHER

- A. Your child's next visit is at 3 years.
- B. Annual flu shots are the only recommended vaccines at this age.