
YOUR CHILD AT 2 ½ YEARS

Your PMA provider is available 24/7. After hours, call 610-992-4916 and speak directly to your on-call provider. If Urgent Care services are necessary prior to office hours, we will direct you to a Pediatric Urgent Care in your area.
Remember - #PMA knows you best!

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. Sleep time is usually 10-12 hours/night with usually 1 nap.

II. ELIMINATION

- A. You can expect the average child to be toilet trained (bowel movement and daytime wetting) by 2 ½ -3 years. If you haven't succeeded, don't panic and force the issue. Your child just may not be ready yet.
- B. Signs of toilet readiness include: understanding the words that apply to training (e.g. potty, wet, dry); having bowel movements that are fairly predictable; able to pull their clothes on and off; able to follow directions; and having a dislike for being wet or soiled.
- C. Begin training at a calm period in both the child's life and yours. Tips for success include having your child initially sit on the toilet with a diaper on for increased security. Hold regular "potty sitting" times since your child initially may not always tell you when they have to go.
- D. If your child is resistant to these toileting techniques, don't push the process because you will not succeed. Over time, your child will become toileted. If it becomes a battle of wills, he will win that war.

III. 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 refer to themselves by name, speak 3-word sentences, separate more easily from parents and may begin to notice sex differences.
- C. Remember to keep discipline brief. A firm "no" or removal from the situation is usually effective. Spanking, however, is never effective in the long term. Use positive reinforcement to encourage "good" behavior.
- D. Continue to supervise twice daily tooth brushing using only a rice grain amount of toothpaste.
- E. Stimulation: Play equipment is helpful for large muscle development (climbing gym, swings). Scribbling, simple puzzles, toys with various shapes and sizes will help with fine motor coordination. Language is aided by simple stories and simple instructions (children are "turned off" if expectations are beyond their capacity).

IV. SAFETY

- A. Your child must continue to stay in a car seat until 40 lbs and then may transfer to a booster seat until 80 lbs.
- B. Keep a smoke-free home and routinely check your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- 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. **The Poison Control phone number is 1-800-222-1222.**
- F. Be alert for choking hazards (peanuts, grapes, hot dogs, hard candy, small toys). Food should still be cut into small pieces.

V. OTHER

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

VI. PARENTING RESOURCE

- A. For parenting support and advice check out the Center for Parenting Education at Abington Memorial Hospital:

