



2 - 3 years

Children this age are starting to enjoy doing things outside the home, so it's a great time to visit parks and playgrounds. Just walking around the block to look at animals, bugs, trucks and trees can be a wonderful adventure.

This tip sheet uses 'he' and 'she' in turn.

This can also be a time when children start to test boundaries and can have temper tantrums. It is important that parents find ways to reduce stress and have a break to 'recharge their batteries'.

What is special about his age?

- Children are becoming more independent.
- Choice making and problem solving skills are developing at this age, and they are learning to enjoy activities outside of their home environment.
- Children can use short sentences, and hold simple conversations.
- Memory is developing, and they can talk about people who are not with them at the time.
- Play becomes a game of make-believe, where they practise skills and imitate situations they see around them.

Between 2 years and 3 years your child is learning to:

- Follow longer directions e.g. 'get your hat and shoes'.
- Use short sentences of 2 or 3 words e.g. 'mum go car'. Sometimes your child may stumble and repeat

- sounds, or words, especially when excited or anxious.
- Remember recent events and places.
- Stand on tiptoes.
- Jump with two feet together off a low step.
- Run well.
- Catch and kick a large ball.
- Ride a trike using pedals.
- Climb playground frames.
- Walk over rough ground, rocks or sand without losing balance.
- Complete simple puzzles.
- Enjoy playing independently.
- Create things with boxes or blocks.
- Use a potty chair or toilet and may use words such as 'poo' or 'wee'.
- Be independent, but may have tantrums when frustrated.
- Undress.
- Enjoy companionship of other children but does not yet share.
- Play make believe and fantasy games.

You can help your child develop by:

- Going to different places e.g. park, beach, wildlife park, museum, playgroup, public swimming pool,



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library, shops. This will give them more experiences and help them to learn.

- Singing songs, listening to music and dancing together.
- Reading books and talking about what has happened, or is going to happen next.
- Describing things they can see and hear in their environment using a range of words (e.g. 'hot', 'cold', 'big', 'loud', 'green').
- Probing for solutions to everyday or common problems, such as 'It's raining, what do we need to take when we go outside?'
- Trying to start toilet training. Start with 'wees' first.
- Having boxes and blocks available for building houses, bridges etc.
- Developing obstacle courses in the home e.g. going 'over' pillows, 'through' the tunnel, 'under' the chair. This helps them to develop gross motor skills and understand concepts such as 'under' and 'over'.
- Having crayons, paints or chalk readily available to encourage your child to develop the muscles in their hands.

- Crayons.
- Painting with sponges.
- Chalk board.
- Construction toys.
- Large beads for threading.
- Dolls and prams.
- Musical instruments.
- Shape sorting.
- Playdough.
- Lacing.
- Balls.
- Pretend play.
- Scrapbook activities.
- Puppets.
- Singalong CDs.
- Use old catalogues and magazines. Look for objects of specific colours, people, things that go together e.g. clothes.
- Kindergym or playgym.

Play ideas:

- Water and sand play.
- Playground equipment.

for more information

Parentline – support, counselling and parent education from 8am-10pm seven days a week.
T: 1300 30 1300

Raising Children Network – information about parenting and growing up children
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Child and Youth Health – parenting and child health information
www.cyh.com

7 Steps to Safety – a kit to help you give your child the skills and confidence they need to feel and be safe at home.
www.families.nt.gov.au | T: 1800 005 485



See other parent tip sheets
www.families.nt.gov.au

Milestones
Sleep (children 0-6 years)
Safety for children 0-4 years
Living with toddlers
Feeding toddlers
Tantrums
Discipline (0-12 years)

For websites and telephone contacts related to this topic please visit the Parent Tip Sheet Resource Page.

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Disclaimer: This tip sheet aims to promote the wellbeing of children and families. The information it contains is offered as a guide only and should not be treated as a full statement on the subject.

