

time the car is moving. If you leave a child unbuckled even for a short trip, he'll learn that riding unbuckled is okay. Then you'll really have problems keeping him in his seat.

As your toddler gets taller and heavier, you may want to switch from a car safety seat to a booster seat. With many seats, this is safe when your toddler weighs more than 45 pounds. Booster seats allow more freedom to move and are high enough to let a child see out the window. Booster seats are generally as safe as other car safety seats, if you use them properly. Safety seats that are not used according to the manufacturer's instructions could be more dangerous than no seats at all! And remember, Georgia law requires all children to be buckled up when traveling. While riding in the car, also keep in mind:

- Always lock doors.
- Make certain windows near the child are rolled up.
- Never leave children alone in the car, even for a few minutes.
- Children are almost always safer in the rear seat.

FOUR-LETTER WORDS

It is exciting for you and your toddler to learn new words — usually! Remember, children repeat what they hear, often without knowing what words mean. This is a good time to check your own speech habits. Adults sometimes use four-letter words without even realizing it. Listen as you speak. Your little parrot will also let you know what you say. You may be shocked to hear your toddler using your expressions and words in exactly the same way. If your child does learn unacceptable words from you, others or

television, don't pay much attention. The more notice you take, the more your child will repeat those words and phrases. Suggest more appropriate words by using them in your own speech.

SAFETY IN PUBLIC

Toddlers at this age are increasingly likely to wander away from parents in public places, such as when shopping. Her curiosity leads her to explore interesting places, and she can be gone from your sight in an instant! If this ever happens to you, the panic that you feel will make a lasting impression!

Young toddlers may be happy riding in strollers. Older toddlers prefer walking, however. Your options then are to hold hands or to use a tether strap from your wrist to the child. Some folks compare such a tether to a "dog leash," but it sure beats losing a child! Teach your toddler to say her whole name and her parents' names when asked by an adult, if she becomes separated from you.

Next Issue: Eating, sickness, emotions and more!

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1-2-3 Grow!

31-33 MONTHS

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
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31-33 Months

1-2-3 Grow!

HOW DOES YOUR TODDLER GROW?

Toddlerhood is an exciting and rewarding time because children are learning so much. Each day brings new delights and accomplishments. From 31 to 33 months, toddlers work at expanding the skills they have already learned such as:

- pedaling a tricycle instead of pushing with their feet
- building block towers that stay up
- forming shapes with play dough
- drawing circles with a crayon or pencil

Your toddler is very proud of these skills. You will probably be called to “Watch me,” or “Look at this.” Be sure to encourage her efforts by giving the attention she craves. Comments such as, “What a tall tower you have built,” or “You can ride so fast on your tricycle,” are sure to please. Your child is also becoming interested in some grown-up activities. Reading, listening to music and watching television, especially with you, are probably favorites.

BOOKS AND STORIES

At 2½, your toddler understands more of a story and is familiar with many words. Plan to spend some time each day reading to him.

A love of books and reading will be important for success in school.

Picture books with lots of action are good for toddlers. Choose books with simple stories, rhymes, and bright pictures. As you read, use your imagination to “huff and puff” like a big, bad wolf. Ask questions about the story and let your child participate. Choose stories that are informative or fun fantasies. Scary stories may worry a toddler.

Toddlers also enjoy stories you make up, especially if your child is the main character. Use everyday situations and his special interests to tell stories. “Once there was a little boy named Freddie who had a friend named Teddy. Freddie and Teddy went everywhere together and this is what they saw ...” Each member of the family can add new parts to create crazy make-believe tales! Using puppets can dramatize stories even more.



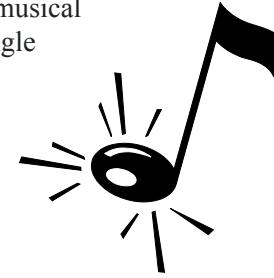
MUSIC

Children love the sound and rhythm of music. You can see a toddler swaying to the sounds on the radio and singing along. Nursery jingles and marches are fun to hear and encourage movement. Try to provide a variety of music. Include classical, popular, folk, country, gospel and dance tunes. Avoid very loud music, especially with headphones, which may frighten a young child or damage her hearing.

Many children’s tapes and CDs are available with tunes your child will learn very quickly.

Wind-up music boxes and musical toys that shake, drum or jingle let your child make her own music.

Many families have favorite songs that they sing together often.



TELEVISION

You have probably already noticed how television can capture children’s attention at a very early age. Commercials are especially musical and rhythmic. There are both positive and negative sides to watching television. Many educational programs help children learn. Watching television can also be a relaxing, quiet activity. You probably appreciate a rest now and then while your toddler is watching a favorite program.

But television should not be used as a babysitter. Studies have shown that many toddlers spend a third of their waking hours watching TV! A child who spends many hours in front of the television is not using large muscles and his endless energy.

TV also keeps a child from interacting with other children and from spending time in active play outdoors. Research also indicates that children who are heavy TV viewers are more likely to be overweight than children who watch less TV are.

Now is the time to teach good television habits. If you spend a great deal of time watching television yourself, your child will follow your example. When a program is on that your child enjoys, watch the program together. You can share experiences and also monitor the content of programs. Avoid violent themes or programs that may frighten your child.

Programs should reinforce the values that you want your child to learn. Consider the subtle messages about violence, sexuality and stereotypes on the programs your child watches. You maintain control over the television set. Avoid leaving the television on all day. Be sure to plan a variety of other activities so that television does not become the focal point of the day. Your child needs many active, creative learning activities — not just the passive viewing that television requires.

TOILET TEACHING

Has your toddler been making progress toward staying clean and dry for long periods? Some toddlers this age still do not have bladder control. That may be frustrating, but don’t rush things.

If your child seems uncomfortable sitting on the toilet, show her how to sit backward (facing the tank). This allows a child to hold on to the seat and offers more security for many. It is also easier to get on and off the “big” toilet.

A child who is still in diapers but beginning to stay dry might be ready for training pants. Training pants are like underpants with thick layers at the crotch. When your child shows signs of trying to hold urine regularly, try training pants during the day. This often acts as a signal to the child not to wet. Continue using diapers or disposable training pants at night until your toddler stays dry.

SAFETY

Getting a toddler in and out of the car can be a frustrating experience, especially if you are in a hurry. Many toddlers who have used a car safety seat from birth are proud to buckle themselves into their seats by now. The key is to expect toddlers to be buckled in every