

Teaching Guide

Toddlers: The Second Year of Life

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Summary

No wonder two-year-olds are called toddlers. They live on the edge, toddling between infancy and personhood, between crawling and walking. They explore the new world opened by mobility and the beginnings of language. Meet a cast of cute toddlers and learn what physical and cognitive development mark the second year of life.

Viewers will learn:

- How holding objects while on the move opens new worlds of potential experiences.
- How the toddler uses sensory experiences to investigate the world.
- Why language begins with labeling and naming.
- Why peek-a-boo is really an experiment in person permanence.
- How the toddler learns not only to move in new ways, but to think in new ways as well.
- Temperament types such as easy-going, slow-to-warm-up and difficult.
- How the toddler's desire for self-reliance and independence conflicts with the desire to cling to a parent's love and protection.
- The positive role of temper tantrums in emotional development.
- Why toddlers often seem selfish.

Script Summary

Walking

Each walker starts his motor by his own inner schedule. First steps may not come until months after his first birthday. The toddler alternates between crawling, walking with a cart, and taking steps on his own. All this alternating allows him to both use and rest different muscle groups.

At about 15 months a toddler can stoop to pick up his toy and carry it across the room, or steer a toy stroller. At eighteen months the toddler can run and pull a toy at the same time. By 21 months he can run and jump, but he still falls down frequently.

To toddlers, all play is learning and development. You could say they develop through play. They seek new sensory experiences to investigate and experiment in order to find out more about the world.

Learning is tied closely to the senses, so toddlers learn much from splashing, mushing, mashing, squishing, smearing, and tasting. The message of adults should be that it's good to be curious, to explore and experiment.

Fine motor skills

Toddlers try to master increasingly precise movements and learn to manipulate ever smaller objects. They pick up almost anything they can to learn about their world. The toddler turns pages of a book on his own, and holds two objects, one in each hand. They love stacking blocks and knocking them down.

Toddlers master utensils by trial and error. It takes a long time to develop the fine motor control necessary to use wrist and arm muscles in the right order.

Toddlers quickly discover the joy and magic of button pushing. They're developing fine motor skills and learning about cause and effect.

Language

Language skills vary widely from toddler to toddler. Exploring through her senses prepares the toddler for speech. She must first understand that a word is a symbol for an object or sensation. Then she can connect a word with that experience.

At 13 months a toddler may understand words she can not yet say. Eighteen-month-olds will name six or more nouns per day. Eighteen-month-olds begin using two-word phrases, for example "Milk now," "Me up," or "Mommy do." But these phrases may not constitute real speech understanding.

She uses a few active words such as “go” and “do” and can combine two words together to describe an action. As she learns more words she begins to put them together into simple sentences. She moves from using words as labels to using words to express thoughts – a major step in learning.

Mental development

The ability to know an object has its own existence apart from oneself begins in the first year and matures in the second.

To a baby, a hidden shoe simply ceases to exist. But a toddler realizes if her shoe disappears from sight, it doesn't cease to exist. It has object permanence. Peek-a-boo is for the toddler who thinks mom might actually be gone! Call it an experiment in “person permanence.”

Toddlers begin to understand how an image can represent real, a process called symbolic representation. The toddler uses symbolic representation when she recognizes that a picture of grandma is not really grandma, but that it symbolizes (or represents) her.

Emotional development

Emotions are a clear sign that the toddler is developing a sense of himself as a person. The toddler learns about emotions directly from his mom and dad. He also learns from new experiences. When he encounters unfamiliar situations he learns to manage feelings of doubt, anxiety and fear.

Separation anxiety and fear of losing a parent's love can occur. The desire to explore can last for weeks, then a period of greater clinginess follow.

To a toddler, frustration is a new emotion. He has to learn to deal with emotions just as he learned to walk. Temper tantrums are normal as he learns to cope with a complex new set of feelings.

Social development

At 12 to 15 months, the toddler is not mature enough to experience empathy or sympathy. She cannot put herself in another's position.

When they first learn to be with others they will play alongside other kids, rather than interacting with them. They play in the same room, perhaps with related toys, but not in cooperation or competition with each other. This is called parallel play, and is the first step in learning social skills.

QUIZ ON TODDLERS

1. Fine motor skills involve:

- (A) The large muscles of the trunk and limbs
- (B) The smaller muscles of the hands and fingers
- (C) Activities such as using a spoon and pushing the buttons of a remote control
- (D) Both B and C

2. When Sophie dances she gains confidence in movement and a kinetic sense which is:

- (A) An awareness of the body in space
- (B) The ability to control small muscle movements
- (C) The ability to walk, jump and run
- (D) The understanding that she can cause things to happen

3. As E.J. pushes the button on his toy to make it play music he is:

- (A) Developing hand control
- (B) Learning about cause and effect
- (C) Having fun
- (D) All of the above

4. Twelve-month-olds understand on average about:

- (A) 100 words
- (B) 12 words
- (C) 200 words
- (D) 30 words

5. Object permanence is:

- (A) The ability to see how things go together
- (B) The ability to know an object has its own existence apart from oneself
- (C) The understanding of cause and effect
- (D) Understanding the correct relationship to sizes

6. When toddlers begin to understand how an image can represent something real, it's called:

- (A) Spatial awareness
- (B) Social referencing
- (C) Symbolic representation
- (D) Developing motor skills

7. The ability to walk can cause:

- (A) Conflicting emotions
- (B) The desire to explore and be independent
- (C) Clinging to a parents side
- (D) All of the above

8. Toddlers sometimes seem selfish because:

- (A) They cannot see the world from another's perspective
- (B) They cannot understand that others have different desires and likes than they do
- (C) They feel scared to share
- (D) A and B

9. Temper tantrums are a sign of:

- (A) Abnormal emotional development
- (B) Normal emotional development
- (C) Testing parental expectations
- (D) Destructive emotions

10. Toddlers develop their senses, learn to use and coordinate their muscles, and learn to use their minds at the same time.

T / F

11. Learning language is the main focus of development during the second year.

T / F

12. Before toddlers can communicate using language they must understand that a word is a symbol for an object or experience.

T / F

13. Language skills will not vary much from toddler to toddler. They develop at similar rates.

T / F

14. The one-year-old will not be able to distinguish between a bowl and a quality which describes it, such as "a blue bowl."

T / F

Questions for Discussion

1. Should a toddler be walking on his first birthday?

The toddler develops according to her own inner schedule. First steps may not come until months after her first birthday. Toddlers usually focus on physical development during the second year of life, but a 12 to 18 month-old who doesn't walk may develop other areas.

2. How does alternating from crawling, walking with a cart, and taking steps on his own help muscles develop?

All this variety in movement allows him to both use and rest different muscle groups. A toy cart becomes a learning tool as the toddler uses it for balance so he can later walk on his own.

3. Name some activities a one-year-old may accomplish using the large muscles of the trunks and limbs.

A toddler may climb stairs, stoop to pick up his toy and carry it across the room, steer a toy stroller, run, jump and step sideways or backwards.

4. Why is it harder for a 12 month-old to pull a toy than push one?

Pulling requires more coordination, balance and muscle control than pushing. Pulling is usually beyond the ability of the average twelve-month-old. It isn't until eighteen to twenty-one months that the toddler may pull a toy forward and look backward at the same time.

5. What is the role of play in the toddler's development?

You could say play is the engine that drives development. A toddler's natural curiosity leads them to explore and investigate. We call these freely chosen investigations "play." So as toddlers play, they develop their minds and bodies and learn about the world.

6. Which activities help a toddler gain a kinetic sense? A "kinetic sense" is an awareness of the body in space.

Dancing, swaying, bouncing, twisting, climbing, and playing on swings and slides all help toddlers gain confidence in movement and body awareness.

7. Why does it take such a long time for a toddler to master using utensils?

Hands and fingers are incredibly complex – they take time to master. Toddlers learn to use utensils by trial and error. It takes a long time to develop the fine motor control to use wrist and arm muscles in the right order.

8. List some activities which develop fine motor skills.

Pushing buttons, scribbling, stacking blocks, turning the pages of a book, emptying and filling containers, playing with ring toys, play dough, paints, puzzles, computers and Legos all encourage fine motor development.

9. Describe ways toddlers learn about cause and effect.

Dropping, spilling or throwing objects on the floor and pushing the buttons on a toy all show toddlers that they can cause events to happen.

10. What can shape sorting teach a toddler?

Sorting teaches spatial awareness, hand control, and the concept of inside and an outside. A shape sorter is a combination of gym class, geometry, and philosophy.

11. Describe how a twelve-month-old is likely to use a marker when drawing.

A twelve-month-old will scribble making heavy strokes, grasping the marker in his fist and moving his whole arm to mark the paper. He does not yet have the eye-hand coordination or muscle control to draw precise lines and circles.

12. What must toddlers understand before they can communicate using language?

Before toddlers can speak their minds they must understand a word is a symbol for an object, sensation or experience. The ability to recognize a word comes before the ability to use it.

13. Discuss some ways toddlers learn speech.

Toddlers learn speech from hearing adults speak. Being spoken to during daily activities and being read to all stimulate their speech development. They learn through imitation and repetition, naming objects and applying labels to things and experiences.

14. Name some language achievements common during the second year of life.

Toddlers may be able to distinguish between an object, such as a cloud, and a quality which describes it such as white. They begin to make word associations by connecting a thing, such as a door, with what it does, open. They may combine two words to describe an action. Toddlers move from using words as labels to using words to express thoughts – a major step in learning.

15. Give examples of mental achievements common during the second year of life.

Toddler begin to understand cause and effect. They also begins to see how things belong together, for example, that keys go into a door, and that crayons go with paper. The toddler also begins to grasp correct relationship to sizes and that objects have functions.

16. Give examples of ways a toddler might use symbolic representation- - hold an image of an object in the mind and understand an object as a symbol for something else.

A toddler might understand that a picture of grandma is not really grandma, but represents her. She may also stay away from a hot stove because she holds in her mind concepts such as "hot" and "hurt." She can represent an idea in her mind before performing an act. If she can hold an image of an object in her mind she can play pretend, for example use a tea cup and saucer as if it were a telephone.

17. Describe some common temperaments which emerge during the second year of life.

Some toddlers seem to have an easy-going, no sweat approach. Others seem to be particularly active. A toddler who is slow-to-warm up holds back from new people and situations. He watches and waits before joining a group activity. Other toddlers are more difficult. They pull back from unknown situations, adapt slowly to change, and readily show aggressive and negative emotions.

18. Why can the ability to walk bring up conflicting emotions for the toddler?

He experiences the urge to become a self-reliant and independent explorer, while still longing to cling to a parent's love and protection.

19. The toddler is ego-centric. What does this mean?

A toddler can grasp just one point of view, his own. The toddler can relate to others, but can't see their perspectives. What often appears as selfish behavior is really the inability to view the world from another's viewpoint. The toddler who looks at a book alone may think others can see it as well.

20. What does the video explain about toddlers engaging in sharing behavior?

She may experiment with sharing a favorite toy with her brother... and then want it back. Sharing and taking turns usually develop later.

21. Does the toddler understand that other people have likes and dislikes?

She may not be able to connect to the idea that others have different likes and dislikes than she does. If she loves a toy, she might share it with her brother even if he makes a sour face and shows no interest in it. It isn't until around 18 months that the toddler begins to see her brother has different likes and dislikes, and will give him a toy she knows he enjoys.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. D
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. D
8. D
9. B
10. T
11. F
12. T
13. F
14. F

