



Supporting your
2 year old
at home





Welcome

The first five years of a child's life are crucial for learning and development.

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. Every conversation, cuddle, story, and play experience helps your child learn about the world around them.

This booklet provides simple, practical ideas to support your two-year-old's learning and development through everyday experiences and interactions, helping you make the most of the moments you share together.



THE GREATEST GIFTS YOU CAN GIVE YOUR CHILD

Every child develops at their own pace.
What helps them learn and thrive the most?



Time

Sharing everyday moments together



Attention

Listening, talking, and showing interest



Encouragement

Building confidence and celebrating effort



Opportunities to Play & Explore

Learning through curiosity, discovery, and fun



Small moments every day make a big difference.

Reading a story, going for a walk, singing a song, having a cuddle, or playing together all help build strong foundations for future learning.



Your love, care, and support
are your child's most powerful
learning tools.





Supporting Communication and Language



Talk Together



- 1 Describe what your child is doing.
- 2 Talk about what you can see on walks.
- 3 Give your child time to respond.
- 4 Use simple, clear sentences.

Sing Songs and Rhymes

Favourite songs help children:

- 1 Learn new words
- 2 Develop memory skills
- 3 Build listening skills



Sharing Books Every Day



Reading for just 10 minutes a day can have a significant impact on language development.

While reading:

- 1 Point to pictures
- 2 Ask "What's that?"
- 3 Let your child turn pages
- 4 Read favourite books again and again



Early Sentence Users: 2 -3 years old

Social Interaction

- Likes to play near other children but not with them.
- Copies familiar routines e.g. pretends to mop the floor.
- Towards 3 years: Wants adults and other children to join in but doesn't like them to take the lead.
- Enjoys sequences of pretend play – kisses doll, puts doll in cot, puts cover on, rocks cot.
- Begins to express feelings with words e.g. "Dylan's sad".

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Provide the words for the child's feelings and experiences e.g. "you're sad because..."

WHAT NEXT?:

Practising taking turns helps with sharing and social skills. You can signal this by saying "My turn" and "your turn".

Listening and Understanding

- Enjoys listening to short stories with pictures.
- Needs adults help to listen e.g. "Toby, look at me".
- Understands simple instructions e.g. "put your hat in the bag" "where's mummy's coat?" (2 and 3 parts)
- Understands simple questions e.g. "who" "where", "what".
- Towards 3 years: understands simple concepts e.g. "under", "big".

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Give children extra time to respond. Support their attention and listening skills by saying their name before you give an instruction.

WHAT NEXT?:

Support understanding of longer instructions by breaking them down into smaller steps.

Talking/Expressive Language

- Learns new words all the time.
- Uses 2-3 word phrases e.g. "man run" "mummy singing".
- Towards 3 years: uses 3 or more word phrases e.g. "the baby's holding the teddy" "me falled over".
- Asks questions - "who", "what's that", "where".
- Uses negatives e.g. "can't", "won't"
- Uses simple action words e.g. run, fall, jump, drink, catch.
- Attempts to join in short conversation - responds to what adults say a few times.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Repeat words and build sentences e.g. child says "mummy gone?", you say "yes, mummy's gone to work".

WHAT NEXT?:

Talk about what you're doing as you're doing it e.g. "I'm washing the dishes. I'm squeezing the soap into the warm water".

Speech Sounds

- Can be understood by people outside of the family 50% of the time.
- Uses sounds m, p, b, t, d, s, f, (k, g, sh are developing) and complex vowels.
- Still misses out sounds and substitutes others e.g. "tup" for cup.
- May have difficulty saying l, s, f, sh, ch, j, cr, pl, sn, r, th, these are still developing.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

If children say a word that isn't quite right, say it back to them the right way e.g. they say "tup", you say "yes, it's a big cup!"

WHAT NEXT?:

Use lots of words when speaking to children so that they can hear the sounds said correctly. Have quiet times when children can hear your voice without background noise. This will really help their speech development

Play and Social Development

- Engages in complex pretend play based on what they have seen e.g. playing shopping games, washing up, cooking, building, driving the bus. Moving towards co-operative play, where they can play together with another child.

HOW CAN I HELP?:

Try pretend role play with children to expand their imagination. Add an idea to the game!

WHAT NEXT?:

Take turns when playing games with children to support their communication skills e.g. say "My turn", "your turn".



Want some more ideas and activities to support your child's communication? Take a look at our resources on Halton's Communication Hub



Supporting Your Child's Physical Skills



Fine Motor Skills (Small Movements)

Try:

- 1 Playdough
- 2 Building blocks
- 3 Posting objects into containers
- 4 Large crayons and mark making



Gross Motor Skills (Big Movements)

Try:

- 1 Dancing
- 2 Running and chasing games
- 3 Climbing at the park
- 4 Throwing and catching balls
- 5 Obstacle courses using cushions



Supporting Early Maths Through Play



Count Together

Try counting:

- 1 Steps as you go upstairs
- 2 Toys as you tidy them away
- 3 How many apples are in the bag
- 4 Cars as they drive past
- 5 Plates and cups at mealtimes



Spot Shapes

Look for:

- 1 Circles, squares, triangles and rectangles around the house
- 2 Shapes on road signs, packaging and toys
- 3 Shapes in books and pictures



Compare Sizes

Use mathematical language during everyday activities. Use words such as:

- 1 Big and small
- 2 Long and short
- 3 Heavy and light
- 4 Tall and short
- 5 Full and empty



★ **Remember:** Maths is everywhere! Simple everyday activities help children develop confidence in mathematics through play. ★





Encouraging Independence



Your child can learn by helping with everyday tasks.

Try:

- 1 Putting toys away



- 2 Choosing clothes



- 3 Helping set the table



- 4 Washing their hands independently



- 5 Carrying small items

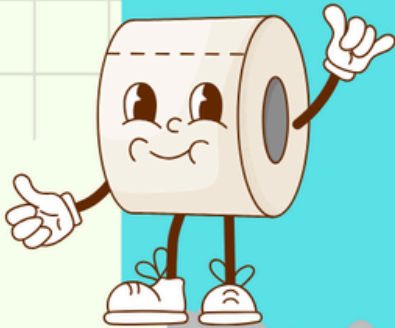


Praise effort rather than perfection.



Top Tips for Toileting Success

Building awareness and positive toilet associations



Use simple, supportive language

"Toilet time... let's see if your wee or poo is ready to come out." or "You've done a wee/poo — time for the toilet!" Celebrate wee and poo with positivity and calm encouragement.

Try a Toileting Song!

A simple toilet-time song can make the routine feel familiar, fun and reassuring — helping little ones relax, feel confident, and understand what comes next



Confident Toileting Begins with Consistent Routine

Sitting babies can use the potty at nappy-change times. Walk toddlers to the bathroom to be changed standing up, and encourage them to sit on the potty. Empty stools into the toilet, let your child flush while you say "Bye poo!", and finish the routine with handwashing.

Lending a Helping Hand

Encourage your child to help with their clothing by pushing trousers down and pulling them back up. Start small — pushing down to the knees and pulling up from the knees — to build confidence and independence



Top Tips for Toileting Success



1

- Use a simple visual schedule to show each toileting step and make the routine predictable.
- Support your child's feet with a step or the floor for balance and confidence.
- A child-sized insert seat can help them feel secure.
- Easy up-easy down clothing makes independent toileting much easier.

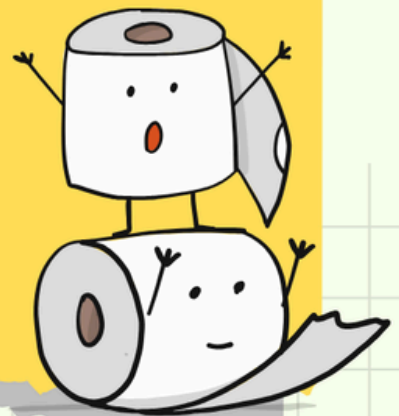


- You may notice your child's nappy stays dry for longer — a sign their bladder is maturing.
- Let them choose motivating underwear with favourite colours or characters to build excitement.
- Encourage toilet sitting every 1.5 to 2 hours — avoid shorter intervals to support bladder awareness.
- If your child squats or hides, gently guide them to the toilet without questioning. You might say "Your poo is ready to come out."

2

3

- Keep a small "toilet-time box" in the bathroom with a few engaging items, including something to blow, to help your child stay relaxed and seated.
- Choose a motivating reward and pair it with gentle encouragement, such as: "Toilet, then bubbles!"



Toileting Together: Building Confidence One Step at a Time

TIPS FOR MOVING FROM BOTTLE TO CUP

As soon as your child is able to hold items, encourage them to play with a cup



Once weaning starts at about 6 months, let your child practise with a cup, even if they don't drink much from it

Always sit your child upright before giving them food or a drink

Mess is completely normal, so be prepared! Keeping food and drinks in one place can help reduce the mess

When offering a drink from a cup, keep the bottle out of sight to avoid confusion

Remember that milk can be given from a cup, but try not to offer too much

Never leave your child alone with a drink at sleep times



As your baby grows, night-time waking doesn't always mean they need a drink — comfort and reassurance can help

Older children may find it easier to give up their bottle if they're offered a special new toy



Switching to a cup can be challenging and may take time, but don't give up — you're doing great



Dummy Advice



What are dummies used for?

When babies are small, dummies can be used to help soothe, settle and support sleeping. Sometimes dummies are used to help babies to learn how to suck, particularly when they are born prematurely. Parents of babies that are born prematurely or who are sick may be advised to use a dummy.

Babies find the suckling reflex relaxing and can help when they are particularly colicky or windy.

Be aware that not all babies like dummies. If your baby shuts their mouth or turns away when presented with one, they don't want it

Why should you wean babies off the dummy?

Dummies can affect growing teeth and stop a young child's tongue from moving freely. Children aren't able to babble or chat as much as possible with a dummy in their mouth. By weaning them off it you're giving them the chance to become more expressive and to practise their growing language skills.

When should babies be weaned off the dummy?

The NHS recommends weaning babies off the dummy when they are between 6 and 12 months old, so they can babble and speak their first words.



Top Tips for dummy use

- Use a dummy with a flat or orthodontic teat.
- Do not dip the dummy in food or drink
- Take the dummy out of your child's mouth when they are babbling or talking
- Don't just give your child their dummy, wait for them to request it.

How can you wean children off the dummy?

As your baby grows they will need their dummy less and less. Try...

- Reducing the amount of time your child uses their dummy.
- Keeping for bed and nap times only.
- Distracting them from wanting their dummy by engaging them in different experiences.
- Rewarding for time spent without their dummy with praise, stickers, activities etc





Supporting Emotional Development



Help your child to understand feelings by naming emotions and talking about how they feel.

For example:

"You look happy."

"You're feeling sad because the toy broke."

"You seem excited."

"I can see you're frustrated because that was difficult."

"You look proud of what you have achieved."

Talking about emotions

Talking about emotions helps children recognise, understand and express their feelings, supporting their emotional wellbeing and relationships with others.



Remember:



Children learn about emotions from the adults around them. Listening, talking and responding calmly helps them feel safe, secure and understood.





Learning Through Everyday Routines

Everyday activities are valuable learning opportunities and help children develop important skills through play and conversation. ★ ★



At Mealtimes



Encourage your child to:

- 1 Help set the table by counting plates and cutlery
- 2 Drink from an open cup and use a knife and fork to eat
- 3 Talk about colours and textures
- 4 Have a back-and-forth conversation about your day so far

On Walks



Point out things of interest and talk about what you can see and hear:

- 1 Animals
- 2 Vehicles
- 3 The weather
- 4 Sounds you can hear
- 5 Environmental print (e.g. road signs)



During Bath Time



Have fun exploring together:

- 1 Floating and sinking
- 2 Pouring and filling
- 3 Naming body parts



Remember: Children learn best through everyday experiences. Talking, playing and exploring together helps to build language, mathematical thinking, independence and confidence in a fun and natural way. ★ ★