

Guidelines for Development: *Two to Four Years*



24 – 30 Months

Children like to:

- kick a ball
- jump off the floor using both feet at the same time
- string large beads
- copy your drawings of horizontal and vertical lines, and circles
- explore how zippers and large buttons come undone
- start telling you when they need to go to the washroom—toilet learning may begin
- name and match pictures of objects
- recognize themselves in the mirror
- imitate everyday activities with toys (e.g., sweeping, feeding dolls, vacuuming)
- count to 3
- complete wooden puzzles
- use pronouns such as “I”, “you”, “me”, “mine”
- speak in 2 or 3 word sentences, “Daddy car”, “Me do it”
- eat with a spoon / fork; drink from open cup
- help with undressing (remove socks, pants)

Activities and / or Toys

- dress up clothes (hats, jewelry, shoes) - pretend play materials, e.g. small broom, dishes, food, dolls, stuffed animals, doctors kit
- large beads, string
- picture books
- simple wooden / foam puzzles with simple shapes
- paint (finger / brush), crayons, markers, chalk
- simple craft activities using glue, scraps of material, stamps, cookie cutters, stickers, Playdoh
- stacking toys (e.g. blocks, DUPLO blocks)
- sing songs and rhymes such as “Five Little Monkeys”
- introduce and encourage exploration of clothing

- fasteners – snaps, button, zippers
- musical instruments (e.g. drums, cymbals, shakers)
- sand toys (e.g. bucket, shovel)
- cars, trucks, trains
- tents
- basketball net & ball
- pretend characters / animals



30 – 36 Months

Children like to:

- walk up / down stairs putting one foot on each step
- figure out how to get into things – twist lids and turn knobs on doors, use a chair to climb
- throw a ball overhand
- be active – pedal a tricycle, jump forward, and stand briefly on one foot
- begin to understand prepositions (e.g., “up”, “down”, “in”, “on”, or “under”)
- play beside others and start to share toys
- identify 6 or more body parts
- tell you their age, full name, and whether they are a boy or a girl
- pour liquid from a small container
- eat with a spoon and fork; drink from cup
- use word endings such as, “running” instead of “run”, “jumped” instead of “jump”
- sort familiar shapes and colours
- hold a pencil or crayon between their index finger and thumb (adult-like grasp)
- listen to and answer simple questions about a story
- be more independent – turn water faucets on and off and wash hands independently

Activities and / or Toys

- play cooperative games with other children such as “Simon Says”
- match and sort pictures or toys of similar colours, shapes, and sizes
- start talking about feelings, identify feelings and discuss facial expressions
- play outdoors and inside - trampoline, riding tractor, tricycle (helmet), sandbox, balls, water-play
- go to the park or for short adventure walks to

- explore and talk about the cars, birds, water, leaves, etc.
- encourage child to help put toys away, use this as an opportunity to introduce words such as “up” or “under”
- remote control car
- easel, crayons, paints, markers, pencils, sidewalk chalk
- encourage more independence with feeding, washing and toileting
- ask questions during and following a story – talk about the pictures and encourage to think about what may happen
- bath toys
- DUPLO, puzzles, Playdoh, beads, blocks, pegboards
- pretend play (stuffed animals)
- music
- t-ball & bat
- child size furniture (table / chairs)



Guidelines for Development: *Two to Four Years*



36 – 48 months OVERVIEW

Children like to:

- stand on one foot for approximately 5 seconds
- try to hop on one foot and jump off a small step or curb with both feet
- seek adult approval (e.g., “Watch me”)
- talk about things they have done or tell you about how they are feeling (“I’m hungry”; “I’m tired”)
- identify colours and count to 5
- say rhymes and sing children’s songs
- string small beads, cubes, cylinders following a simple pattern
- build a tower of 9 blocks
- colour inside the lines most of the time
- use children’s scissors to cut paper in half
- draw people with more than 3 body parts
- speak complete 4 to 6 word sentences
- ask a lot of questions (e.g., “How?”; “Why?”)
- try to put toothpaste on the toothbrush and brush teeth independently
- try dressing and undressing independently, still requires assistance with zippers, buttons and snaps



36 – 42 months

Children like to:

- climb ladders and slides
- start standing on tiptoes
- bounce and catch a large ball
- move their body, clap and march to the music
- follow 2 directions that are unrelated (e.g. pick up the book and get your shoes)
- sort objects according to their purpose and size (e.g., toys, food, clothes, bigger, smaller)
- begin to serve themselves using utensils, with supervision
- explore and use adult-like materials, a fork, brush, and / or comb
- build structures such as a bridge with 3 or more blocks, cans, etc.
- begin to piece together small interlocking puzzles
- help with washing and drying at bath-time
- tell you the action in a picture (e.g., running, drinking, crying)
- play with a friend, take turns, sit quietly during a story, and transition from one activity to another with little upset
- respond to and greet others when they enter a room
- use the toilet independently, may need help removing front opening or pull-over clothing
- play simple board games (e.g. CandyLand)

42 – 48 Months

Children like to:

- put shoes on the correct feet
- take pull-over clothing off independently
- begin to recognize the front and back of clothing and do up snaps and try buttons and zippers
- march and clap to the beat of the music
- show you how they remember – point out when a section of a familiar book is missed
- work / play near other children for 5 to 10 minutes
- follow directions and listen to teachers, parents, etc.
- go to the washroom independently, toileting accidents are rare
- say “hello” and “good-bye” when appropriate
- use negatives in speech, (e.g., “The car is not broken”)
- interact and play with 3 or more children
- serve themselves food at the table without assistance
- quiet down after being active
- help adults with simple tasks (e.g., wiping the table, scraping their dishes)
- tell others the city in which they live, when asked for address
- brush teeth using a back and forth, up and down motion

Activities and / or Toys

- felt board
- microphone
- counting songs, such as “Alice the Camel” and simple group games, including: “Duck, Duck, Goose”
- play on playground equipment or opportunities to hop, crawl, roll, run, jump
- blocks, LEGO, balls of all shapes and sizes
- musical instruments, shakers, bells, horns, keyboard, etc.
- dress up clothing and puppets to encourage pretend play
- doll house
- cutting, gluing, painting, drawing, simple connect the dot puzzles, simple interlocking puzzles and mazes
- opportunities to talk and listen to stories
- dressing dolls, stuffed animals, or practice using different zippers, buttons, snaps on their own clothes
- string, pipe cleaners and lacing material to string beads, papers with holes, a shoe
- children’s music and opportunities to sing and hear rhymes
- bath toys, foam letters and numbers
- markers, crayons, pencils, sidewalk chalk
- cars, trucks, ambulance, police car



Durham Health Connection Line
1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6241
durham.ca
Infant Development - DRHD-ID-320 (03/16)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

