

Nutrition. Your child will experience slower growth during this stage. Between 1 and 5 years of age most children gain about 3 to 5 pounds a year. As parents, you continue to be **the most important role model** and have the greatest influence on the development of your child, including their eating. **Do not let expected aspects of toddlerhood such as food refusals and picky eating worry you.** This is often the norm for toddlers. As their food preference develop, parents need to continue to foster and support healthy nutritional habits by providing a variety of healthy, nutritious foods at mealtime and snack-time to avoid developing an unhealthy eating pattern for your child. A recent study found that 25% of children at this age do not eat any vegetables daily. Of those that do eat vegetables daily, French fries and other fried potatoes were the most commonly consumed vegetable.

1. **Structure and predictability foster a sense of security for your child and help your child thrive.** A set schedule of 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks per day, with limited snacking in between, should be part of your child's diet. **Having a set time for meals and snacks is an important part of your child's routine.** With set times for meals and snacks you can avoid your child eating, or grazing, throughout the day. Grazing can lead to an unhealthy eating pattern.
2. **"Parents provide and the child decides."** This is an important, easy-to-remember expression for us as parents. **As a parent, our job is to provide optimal nutrition for our child.** Parents are responsible for what the family eats, when the family eats, and where the family eats. **Your child's job is to decide how much of the correct portion to eat.** Children are responsible for whether they eat what is offered or wait until the next meal/snack. Do not force your child to eat more. Picky eating and food refusal (or food jags—liking something one day and not the next) are normal parts of your child's development, but as parents we need to avoid falling into a pattern of offering only what the child "likes" or offering less nutritious alternative foods because your child refuses what is offered to them.
3. **Utilize the MyPlate visual diagram to include all 5 food groups in meals and snacks. For the 3 meals of the day try to make half their plate fruits and vegetables.** Never force a child to eat a vegetable—this will just create a battle and control issue-- and try not to reward a child eating their vegetables with dessert. Remember: **THE CHILD DECIDES how much to eat. PARENTS DECIDE to keep offering it to them.** For more information and tips please visit **ChooseMyPlate.gov**.
4. **Snacks: Today, the most popular snack choices among toddlers and preschoolers are crackers, cookies, and candy.** Children's stomachs are small, and they will not eat very much at each meal. Snacks should, therefore, be thought of as "minimeals." **Fruits, vegetables, and protein are better choices for snack times to keep your child's diet healthy.** Sweets can be part of a healthy diet, but they should be thought of as an occasional treat and not a daily part of their diets.
5. **"Good nutrition is a family affair."** Parents are the most important role model for their children. **Look down at your own plate and see what types of food you're modeling for your child to eat.** Try to have your own plate resemble the MyPlate diagram so that your child can see you eat and enjoy the foods that you are encouraging them to eat. Eating together promotes healthy nutritious habits, so sit down for family meals daily.
6. **5-2-1-0: Use this easy to remember message, DAILY, to help promote a healthy lifestyle for your child:**
 - **5: Serve your child at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day**
 - **2: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends less than 2 hours of screen time (TV, video games, recreational computer time, iPad, iPhones) per day for children 2 years of age and older.** Ways to encourage this are to turn the TV off during meals and keep the TV and computer in a central location of the house and out of a child's bedroom.
 - **1: Provide at least 1 hour of physical activity for your child per day.** At this age, the most enjoyable way to encourage this is to just let your child have supervised outdoor play. Limit your use of objects like a stroller that keeps your toddler inactive.
 - **0: Water and milk are the best drinks for your child. At 2 years you should transition your child to 1% or skim milk from whole or 2% milk.** Soda, sports drinks, fruit drinks, and even 100% fruit juice all contain a large amount of sugar, so try to provide almost no sugared beverages for your child. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting the amount of 100% juice in your child's diet to no more than 4-6 ounces per day for children 1 to 6 years of age.
7. **For more information on how to encourage healthy habits for children 0-5 years of age, please visit:**
www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy

Is My Child Overweight/Obese?

- Obesity, even in children, is increasing at alarming rates in the United States. Obesity is associated not only with significant health problems during childhood, but places your child at risk for medical problems as an adult. Medical problems that can be seen in obese children include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, depression and low self esteem. Obesity also increases the incidence of some cancers in adults.
- Body mass index (BMI) is widely used to help categorize weight. BMI compares height and weight, and norms vary by age and sex. In general **a BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile is considered overweight, and a BMI above the 95th percentile is usually considered obese.** BMI will be calculated at your child's well visit. If your child's BMI is in the overweight or obese zone, talk to your child's doctor about developing a healthy weight plan.

Feeding Guide for Children 2 to 3 Years of Age			
Food	Portion Size	Servings	Comments
Milk and dairy	½ cup (4 oz)	4-5 (16-20 oz total)	The following may be substituted for ½ cup fluid milk: ½ -3/4 oz. cheese, ½ cup yogurt, 2 ½ tbsp. nonfat dry milk
Meat, fish, poultry, or equivalent	1-2 oz (3 oz is about the size of a deck of cards)	2 (2-4 oz total)	The following may be substituted for 1 oz. meat, fish, or poultry: 1 egg, 2 tbsp. peanut butter, 4-5 tbsp. cooked legumes
Vegetables and fruit <i>Vegatables</i>		4-5	Include one green leafy or yellow vegetable for vitamin A, such as carrots, spinach, broccoli, winter squash or greens
Cooked	2-3 tbsp		
Raw	Few pieces		
<i>Fruit</i>			Include one vitamin C-rich fruit, vegetable, or juice, such as citrus juices, orange, grapefruit, strawberries, melon, tomato, or broccoli
Raw	½ - 1 small		
Canned (own juice)	2-4 tbsp		
Juice	3-4 oz		
Grain Products		3-4 ** Aim to make ½ eaten grains, whole grains (example: brown rice, whole grain pasta, whole wheat bread)	The following may be substituted for 1 slice of bread: ½ cup of spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, or rice, 5 saltines, ½ English muffin or bagel, 1 tortilla, corn grits or posole
Whole grain or enriched bread	½ - 1 slice		
Cooked cereal	¼ - ½ cup		
Dry cereal	½ - 1 cup		

Sample Daily Menu for a 2-year-old	
This menu shows a typical day of healthy eating for a 2-year-old who weighs 27 lbs.	
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal (1/2 cup, iron-fortified) or 1 egg • Citrus or tomato juice (1/2 cup) or cantaloupe or strawberries (1/3 cup) • Toast (1/2 slice) • Jelly (1 teaspoon) • Margarine or butter (1/2 teaspoon) • Two or one-percent milk (3/4 cup)
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crackers-whole grain (4) • Cream cheese (1 oz) (1 oz = 2 tablespoons) • Strawberries (1/3 cup) • Water
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandwich (1/2):Whole wheat bread (1 slice),meat (1 oz or 1 slice) • Margarine or butter (1 teaspoon) or salad dressing (2 teaspoons) • 2 tablespoons dark-yellow or dark-green vegetables • Low-fat oatmeal cookie (1 small) • Two or one-percent milk (1/2 cup)
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple (1/2, sliced), grapes (1/3 cup, sliced), or orange (1/2) • Two or one-percent milk (1/2 cup)
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat (2 oz) (2 oz is about the size of your child's palm.) • Vegetable (2 tablespoons) • Pasta, rice, or potato (1/3 cup) • Margarine or butter (1 teaspoon) or salad dressing (2 teaspoons) • Two or one-percent milk (1/2 cup)

Dental Care Dental Caries (tooth decay) can be prevented by:

- **Brushing your child's teeth with a soft nylon toothbrush twice a day** using a small amount (smear) of a fluorid-free toothpaste.
- **Making healthy food, snack, and drink choices** on a daily basis. Fruit juice should be only given at meals. Avoid carbonated drinks completely until three years of age. Frequent exposure to sweets increases tooth decay.
- **Reducing exposure to bacteria from your mouth that cause tooth decay. Do this by not sharing eating utensils (spoon and fork) or drinks with your baby**
- Drinking fluoride-supplemented water.
- For more information about dental care look at the pediatric dentistry website, www.aapd.org.

Development

- **Social**
 - **Your baby's physical and motor development will slow down but tremendous intellectual, social, and emotional changes will occur.**
 - **She will try to increase her independence from you and the other members of her family** and will discover and challenge the rules that her family and society have set for her. The "terrible twos" can be a challenge for her and the entire family. She will flip-flop in her needs and demands. At times she will cling to you and at others she will run in the opposite direction and defy you. Acknowledge and accept these changes. **Largely through your responses to her – the encouragement and respect you show her, your appreciation for her accomplishments, the warmth and security you offer her - she'll learn to feel comfortable, capable, and special.**
- **Behavior Management Tips:**
 - **Recognize that children at this age are selfish and self-centered.** Expecting a two-year-old to share is not realistic; however, you will need to intervene if she snatches toys from her playmates or is aggressive.
 - It won't be until about 3 years of age that most children will understand the concept of "mine" and "his/hers". **When you finally notice sharing, reward your child.** "I'm so happy when you share your doll with Kayla".
 - When you see your child starting to get angry or "worked up", **try to turn her attention and energy to a new activity** that is more acceptable.
 - **Concentrate your discipline efforts on major problems.** Top priority should be safety issues, such as not running into the street, and behavior that can harm others, such as biting and hitting. Of next importance is behavior that can damage property.
 - **Ignore harmless misbehavior** such as whining and tantrums.
 - If a tantrum involves harmful behavior, such as hitting or biting, then calmly place her in time-out. **Time-out is the most effective discipline technique available to parents of young children.** It is used to interrupt unacceptable behavior by removing the child from the scene to a boring place, such as a playpen, chair, corner of a room. Time-out should last about a minute for each year of age. Time-out of objects such as toys should only be for a day or two.
 - Change your child's surroundings to **eliminate access to objects or situations that could cause problems.** Take fragile or dangerous objects out of reach, block stairways and other off limit areas with gates, fence in the yard, etc.
 - **Be clear about what the unacceptable behavior is and restate the preferred behavior.** "We don't hurt the dog, we pet the dog."
 - **Don't use physical punishment** (spanking). If you do, you are teaching your child that it is ok to hit or hurt another person to solve problems.
 - If you are in a public place and her behavior is out of control, **simply remove her without discussion or fuss.**
 - **Monitor television and video viewing.** Preschool children who watch a lot of television are more aggressive. Even cartoons can be violent. Restrict total TV and video time to an hour a day or less.
 - **After discipline, make your child welcome back into the family circle,** do not comment upon the previous misbehavior or ask for an apology.
 - **Reward desired behaviors.** Don't take good behavior for granted. Watch for behavior you like, then praise your child. At these times, move close to your child, look at her, smile and express affection. **A parent's attention is your child's favorite reward.**
 - **Make sure that your child is getting enough sleep.** The average 2 year old sleeps close to 14 hours a day. Overnight sleep is generally 10-12 hours and the afternoon nap usually lasts about 2 hours.
- **Language**
 - **By 2 years of age your child should have a vocabulary of at least 50 words and should be able to put 2-3 words together.** In regards to articulation or pronunciation, **a stranger should be able to understand at least half of what your 2 year old says.** If your 2 year old has not mastered these skills discuss your concerns with his provider. Also note the section in this handout on **Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) programs.**
 - Over this next year language development will explode. By 3 years of age your child will have a vocabulary of several hundred words, be able to use sentences with 4 to 6 words, and a stranger should be able to understand 75-80% of what a 3 year old says. **Reading to your youngster as a part of your daily routine will help enrich his vocabulary and language skills.** To keep his attention, choose activity-oriented books that encourage him to point, touch, name objects or repeat certain phrases. As he gets

closer to 3 years of age and his language skills improve, he'll have fun with poems, puns or jokes that play with language by repeating funny sounds or using nonsense phrases.

- Normal Developmental Nonfluency/ Stuttering
 - **Children between ages 2 and 5 often have periods of nonfluency or stuttering** . Nonfluency refers to difficulty in speaking that involves repeating syllables, (li-li-like this), words, or using fillers such as "uh-uh-uh". Nonfluent speech tends to last a month or two and then may come and go. Try not to correct your child's nonfluencies; they will fade in time. If the syllable repetition is severe (li-li-li-li-like this), your child's facial muscles look tense or your child experiences a "block" (no voice or airflow for several seconds), then she may be having a significant problem with stuttering. Truly significant stuttering is not common at this age but can occur. Discuss your concerns and observations with your child's provider.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Programs

The State of Texas has a network of local community programs (Early Childhood Intervention or ECI) that provide services to Texas families and their children, birth to age three, with developmental delays. The cost of services provided are based on family income. Children are eligible for ECI services if they are under age three and have developmental delays or conditions (such as Down's, prematurity, vision or hearing impairments) that have a high possibility of resulting in a developmental delay. Anyone may refer a child for ECI services. If you believe that your child is delayed or has a condition that could lead to delays, **please ask your doctor to refer you**. You may also call 1-800-628-5115 or visit the ECI website at www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis for the ECI program closest to you.

- **Cognitive/Learning**
 - Your 2 year old will gradually gain the ability to mentally engage objects, people, and activities that are not visibly present. This is the beginning of abstract thought. **You will notice abstract thought developing as your child's play changes from being purely imitation to a more advanced play called imaginary play.** An 18 month old will follow you around with a rag, wiping the car, imitating you as you wash your car. A year later, a 2½ year old may dip a t-shirt from the clothes rack into the dog water bowl and clean his tricycle. He is no longer imitating his parent. He is inventing a cloth, a water bucket, a car, and is imagining himself as a grown-up. He is entering the wonderful and magical world of imaginary play.
 - **Your two year old is also starting to understand the relationship between objects and is starting to figure out cause and effect.** He'll be able to match objects of similar shapes, start to recognize the purpose of numbers in counting objects and become more interested in winding up toys and turning lights and on and off.
 - **You'll also notice his play growing more complex.** At times he'll string together activities that follow a logical sequence rather than drifting from one toy to another. For example, he may feed his stuffed toys and then put them in bed one by one.
- **Learning Milestones Between 2 and 3 Years of age**
 - Makes mechanical toys work
 - Matches an object in his hand or room to a picture in a book
 - Plays make believe with dolls, animals, and people
 - Sorts objects by shape and color
 - Completes puzzles with 3 or 4 pieces
 - Understands concept of "two", can count 2 objects and understand.
- **Gross Motor (Movement) Skills**
 - **Two year olds have a tremendous amount of energy and seem to be continually on the go.** Coordination and muscle skills are developing rapidly at this age. Running, jumping, kicking, and climbing activities will consume much of your 2 year old's day. During active play, attention span may seem even shorter than before. **Be patient, the constant activity is needed to develop coordination and strength.**
 - **Try to set aside times that your child can go outside to run, play and explore.** Join in the fun. Children this age love piggyback rides, rolling, going down small slides and climbing. The more running and climbing games the better. Be aware that since his self-control and judgement lags behind his activity to move, you must supervise your 2 year old carefully and do your best to prevent injuries.
- **Gross Motor (Movement) Milestones Between 2 & 3 Years of age**
 - Climbs well
 - Walks up and down stairs alternating feet
 - Kicks ball
 - Runs easily and smoothly
 - Pedals tricycle
 - Bends over easily without falling

Toilet Training Preparation

- **Your child is considered toilet-trained when, without reminders, she walks to the potty, pulls down her pants, urinates or passes a bowel movement, and pulls up her pants.** Accomplishing this complex behavior can be difficult for some children, so don't begin toilet training until your child is clearly ready. Most children are ready to toilet-train between 2 and 3 years of age. Some learn bladder control first and others start with bowel control. Almost all children are ready for toilet training by 3 years of age or soon after. Waiting until your child is ready and willing to toilet train will make the task easier for everyone.
- **Tips to help your child become ready to toilet-train:**
 - **Make sure that your child understands the toileting vocabulary (pee, poop, potty, etc...).** Make sure that she knows that everyone goes pee and poop. You can even point out animals going pee or poop. Teach her that people go pee and poop in toilets or potties. Let your child watch you use the toilet. Same sex modeling is helpful. Start reading toilet-training books to your child.
 - **Change your child frequently so she will become accustomed to and prefer clean diapers.** Teach your child to come to you when she is wet or soiled. Your child must want to be clean before you can think seriously about toilet training.
 - **Buy a floor-level potty chair.** Having her feet touch the ground will help provide a sense of security and control. Take your child to buy the potty chair. Make it clear that this is her special chair. You might even let her help you put her name on the chair or decorate it.
 - **Help your child develop a sense of ownership of the chair.** At first keep the chair in the room where she plays. Let her sit on the chair fully clothed.

Reading aloud to your child is the best way to help your child love books and learning.

- **Reading Milestones for a 2 year old:**
 - Your child should:
 - Learn to handle paper pages
 - Go back and forth in books to find favorite pictures
 - Recite whole phrases, sometimes whole stories
 - Coordinate text with picture
 - Protest when adult gets a word wrong in a familiar story
 - "Read" familiar books to self
 - The parent should:
 - Keep using books in routines, bedtimes
 - Be willing to read the same story over and over
 - Provide crayons and paper
 - Reading Tips:
 - Two year-olds like to fill in the words in a story they know
 - Two-year-olds like to point and name pictures
 - Two-year-olds like books that are silly.
 - Two-year-olds like to hear the same book over and over
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Safety Injuries are the leading cause of death in children younger than 4 years of age. Most of these injuries can be prevented. Often, injuries happen because parents are not aware of what their children can do. Children learn fast, and before you know it your child will be jumping, running, riding a tricycle and using tools. **Your child is at special risk for injuries from falls, drowning, poisons, burns and car accidents.** Your child doesn't understand dangers or remember "no" while playing.

- **Falls**
 - **Because your child's physical abilities are so great now, she will find an endless variety of dangerous situations at home and in the neighborhood.** Your child can fall off play equipment, out of windows, down stairs, off a bike or tricycle or anything that can be climbed. Be sure the surface under play equipment is soft enough to absorb a fall. Use a rubber mat, or 12 inches of sand, saw dust, or wood chips underneath play equipment.
 - **Lock the doors to any dangerous areas.** Use gates on stairways and install operable window guards above the first floor. Fence in the play yard.
- **Burns**
 - **The kitchen is a dangerous place for your child,** especially when you are cooking. If your child is under foot, hot liquids, grease and hot foods can spill on him or her and cause serious burns. Find something safe for your child to do while you are cooking.
 - **Remember that kitchen appliances and other hot surfaces such as irons, ovens, wall heaters and outdoor grills can burn your child long after you have finished using them.** If your child does get burned, immediately put cold water (not ice cold) on the

- burned area. Then cover the burn loosely with a bandage or clean cloth. Call your doctor for all burns. To protect your child from tap water scalds, make sure that the maximum temperature of your hot water heater is 120°F or less.
- **All homes should have smoke alarms.** Test the batteries on your smoke alarm every month to be sure that they work. Change the batteries twice a year on a date you'll remember, such as Daylight Saving Time and Standard Time change dates.
 - **Sun Exposure**
 - **Avoid the sun during the hours of 10 am to 4pm.** If outside, stay in the shade, use a hat to protect your child's face, and use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater and that is approved for children. Sun exposure during childhood can cause skin cancer and premature aging of the skin later in life.
 - **Poisonings**
 - Your child will be able to open any drawer and climb anywhere curiosity leads. Your child may swallow anything he or she finds. Use only household products and medicines that are absolutely necessary and keep them safely capped and out of sight and reach. Keep all products in their original containers.
 - If your child does put something poisonous in his or her mouth, call the poison help line immediately. **Add the Universal Poison Control Number (1-800-222-1222) to your cell phone contacts.** Do not make your child vomit.
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 - **Firearm Hazards**
 - Children in homes where guns are present are in more danger of being shot by themselves, their friends, or family members than being injured by an intruder. It is best to keep all guns out of the home. **If you choose to keep a gun, keep it unloaded and in a locked place separate from the ammunition.** Handguns are especially dangerous. Ask if homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored.
 - **Car Safety**
 - Car accidents are the greatest danger to your child's life and health. The crushing forces to your child's brain and body in a collision or sudden stop, even at low speeds, can cause injuries or death. To prevent these injuries, correctly USE a car safety seat EVERY TIME your child is in the car. Now that your toddler is two years old, you may turn the car seat to face forward. **Children from 20 to 40 pounds should be placed in a forward facing 5 point harness car seat until your child out grows it and children up to 4 feet 9 inches your child should be in a belt-positioning booster seat. Check the car seat manufacturer guidelines.**
 - For more information about car safety seats and for information about having your seat checked for proper installation call 1-800-252- 8255 (safe riders program) or 1-866-SEATCHECK (seatcheck.org).
 - **The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.** In an emergency, if a child must ride in the front seat, move the vehicle seat back as far as it can go, away from the air bag.
 - **Do not allow your child to play or ride a tricycle in the street.** Your child should play in a fenced yard or playground. Driveways are also dangerous. Walk behind your car before you back out of your driveway to be sure your child is not behind your car. You cannot always see your child through the rear view mirror.

Reading Suggestions and Resources The following are a few books and websites that we can recommend:

- **Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5**, The American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age 5**, Penelope Leach.
- **Toddler 411**, Ari Brown, Denise Fields.
- **www.healthychildren.org**, A parenting website sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- **www.seatcheck.org**, You can find a child safety seat technician closest to you with this website.
- **www.cdc.gov/nip**, National Immunization Program. Federal government sponsored online information about vaccines.