

Emotional Development

Your Toddler at 31 to 36 Months

Typical Emotional Skills

- Objects to major changes in routines
- Recognizes and responds to other children's feelings
- Becomes more comfortable with new people

Emerging Emotional Skills

- Explains feelings when asked about them
- Is more able to understand the feelings of other children, and talk about them
- Gets excited about activities she does (e.g., baking cookies)

Comfort

If you do this:

- Try to maintain regular routines; tell him when a change is coming
- Acknowledge his feelings and talk about them

Your toddler will:

- Feel a sense of security and predictability
- Learn to understand his own feelings and respond appropriately to those of others

Play

If you do this:

- Find people pictures showing different emotions; talk about the person's feelings and why they might feel that way
- Encourage your child to do small excursions with other familiar caregivers

Your toddler will:

- Begin to think about what causes people to have different feelings and recognize words that match emotions
- Become more comfortable being away from her parents

Teach

If you do this:

- Read books with your child about different feelings
- Create a picture chart of his day (e.g., showing breakfast time, nap time)

Your toddler will:

- Have a chance to ask about emotions and learn about his own
- Have a comforting reminder of his routine and learn about the sequence of events

Social Development

Your Toddler at 31 to 36 Months

Typical Social Skills

- Uses social conventions like "please", "thank you" and greetings
- Is more able to play cooperatively and take turns
- Plays make-believe games

Emerging Social Skills

- Imitates adult behaviours, for example, shopping in make-believe grocery store
- Helps other children to do things
- Develops pro-social skills like turn-taking, sharing, using words to resolve conflicts

Comfort

If you do this:

- Introduce your toddler to familiar neighbours and community workers
- Acknowledge his positive behaviours (e.g., "The way you shared was so polite")

Your toddler will:

- Learn to recognize people and feel safe with them
- Know his behaviour was appropriate and be motivated to repeat it

Play

If you do this:

- Provide many dramatic play props like food containers, play money, a basket
- Invite two of your child's friends over for a cooking or craft activity

Your toddler will:

- Recreate her experiences in pretend play situations (e.g., shopping)
- Be able to practice his social skills as he shares art materials or takes turns adding ingredients

Teach

If you do this:

- Provide puppets and dolls for dramatic play
- Play simple turn-taking games like "I Spy With My Little Eye"

Your toddler will:

- Expand her language skills and use her imagination
- Practice waiting his turn while developing his observation skills

Fine Motor Development

Your Toddler at 31 to 36 Months

Typical Fine Motor Skills

- Imitates drawing a cross, circles, dots, small lines, swirls while holding pencil in writing position
- Cuts paper with scissors, but may not be able to cut along straight lines
- Turns pages of a book one at a time

Emerging Fine Motor Skills

- Draws squiggles and says that's her name
- Plays with different manipulative toys (e.g., connecting straws and snap blocks)
- Puts on and takes off clothes

Comfort

If you do this:

- Compliment your child's drawing skills, and comment on how "grown up" he is
- Read your child's favourite book to him and put him in charge of turning the pages

Your toddler will:

- Feel proud of his abilities and creations and want to make more and show them off
- Learn to love looking at books because of the time spent reading with you

Play

If you do this:

- Provide different things to write and draw with (e.g., pencils, crayons, chalk)
- Supply your child with board books to read to her dolls and teddy bears

Your toddler will:

- Be encouraged to use different things to colour with and express herself
- Practice turning pages as she develops her early literacy skills

Teach

If you do this:

- Provide different kinds of dress up clothes with snaps, buttons, zippers
- Role model reading and writing in front of your child

Your toddler will:

- Practice self-help skills at his own pace through creative play
- See reading and writing as useful and want to do them too

Gross Motor Development

Your Toddler at 31 to 36 Months

Typical Gross Motor Skills

- Participates in group activities that include running, galloping, crawling, rolling over and twirling around
- Climbs up the ladder of a slide or other play equipment
- Pedals a tricycle

Emerging Gross Motor Skills

- Walks on balance beam a few steps, going forward and backward
- Kicks ball with increasing accuracy
- Throws ball overhand with fairly accurate aim

Comfort

If you do this:

- Count out loud how many stairs she manages independently and offer praise
- Set up a big target for your child to throw a ball at or a big box to kick a ball into

Your toddler will:

- Know you are noticing her and gain self-confidence
- Feel successful every time she hits the target or gets the ball in

Play

If you do this:

- Play music and provide him with colourful scarves to move and dance with
- Demonstrate movements like galloping and twirling by playing "Follow the Leader"

Your toddler will:

- Do different actions with his body in response to the music
- Learn different possibilities for movement by observing and trying them out

Teach

If you do this:

- Show your child pictures of animals (e.g., sea creatures and ask, "How do you move like a fish?")
- Create a simple obstacle course with blocks and hoops

Your toddler will:

- Show her understanding of how animals move using creative movement
- Practice concepts like going over and around, in and out

Intellectual Development (Language & Thinking Skills)

Your Toddler at 31 to 36 Months

Typical Language Skills

- Asks questions frequently, using “who”, “what”, “where”
- Participates in storytelling and recites nursery rhymes
- Talks to self about recent events and make-believe characters

Emerging Language Skills

- Comments on details in picture books
- Answers complex questions like, “What is this?” or “How did you do that?”
- Responds to requests like, “Go find your coat,” or “Please get a paper towel”

Typical Thinking Skills

- Tries to dramatize thoughts and ideas (e.g., pretends to be a dinosaur)
- Counts three objects
- Matches similar pictures and objects, sorts different ones

Emerging Thinking Skills

- Makes a plan before taking action (e.g., searches for a needed toy)
- Uses words associated with an understanding of time (e.g., sleep time)
- Pretends to be community helpers

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Comfort

If you do this:

- Take time to talk to your toddler and ask about the things that interest her
- Sing counting rhymes like “Five Little Monkeys”

Your toddler will:

- Share ideas and experiences because she knows you are interested in her opinion
- Learn number concepts and counting in a playful way

Play

If you do this:

- Ask open-ended questions like, “What did you see on your walk?”
- Provide simple puzzles with three to six pieces

Your toddler will:

- Practice using descriptive words
- Gain confidence in his ability to put things together

Teach

If you do this:

- Introduce the concept of time during routines (e.g., bedtime)
- Create a sorting game so children can sort objects by colour, shape, size

Your toddler will:

- Begin to understand that events follow a sequence
- Begin to understand the concept of sorting and grouping

Notes

