

2-3 YEARS

Booklet 3

Supporting your family during your toddler's third year



2-3 YEARS

BOOKLET
3

YOUR TODDLER AT 2 - 3 YEARS

Healthy eating and active play are important for your toddler.

This booklet provides information on your toddler's health and tips for parents' health too.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nutrition



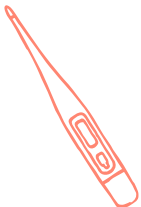
- Keep breastfeeding until 2 years of age and over if you and your child are happy to keep going
- It is best for your toddler to drink from a free-flow cup or an open cup and to stop all bottle feeds
- Drinks can include:
 - water
 - reduced fat cow's milk
 - soy or calcium enriched rice and oat milk can be used, but it is important to plan this with a health professional
- Toddlers need lots of different healthy foods every day. This includes aiming for 2.5 serves of vegetables and 1 serve of fruit

Active play



- **Lots of exercise and play:** Make sure your toddler spends at least 3 hours doing lots of different activities, every day
- **Staying active:** It's good for children to be active! Try to make sure they aren't still for longer than one hour at a time, unless they're sleeping
- **Screen time:** At 2 years, children should be limited to less than 1 hour of screen time in a day with an adult watching or playing with them on an educational program or an app. Spending less time on the screen is better
- **Sleep:** 11 - 14 hours of good quality sleep every day. This can include night sleeps and naps

Immunisation



- Your child will need to do a Personal Health Record (Blue Book) check at 3 years. Make an appointment with your Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN) or GP
- Your child's next immunisation is at 4 years
Check www.nsw.health.gov.au/immunisations for more details
- Other immunisations are available, please discuss with your GP

YOUR TODDLER'S NUTRITION



From 2 - 3 years your child will continue to go through developmental changes, physically and emotionally. They will start choosing foods to eat and use words to express their thoughts and how they feel. They will let you know when they are hungry and stop eating when they are full. It is important they see you making healthy eating choices.

Family mealtimes and eating healthy

- Try to eat meals together as a family - choose 1 meal a day to eat together, talk and enjoy your time in a relaxed way. If your toddler is rushed or pressured to eat this can make them feel stressed and release hormones that makes them lose their appetite
- It can take around 20 minutes from when your toddler begins to eat for them to feel full, so try not to rush them when they are eating
- Follow your toddler's appetite, some days they may eat a lot and other days not - this is normal. Their appetite changes based on their growth cycles
- Some children test their boundaries by demanding food, not eating food, or being fussy about some types of food - it is all normal and part of their social, intellectual and emotional development. If you are concerned about your toddler eating too much or too little think about it and record what they have eaten over a week. If you are still worried talk to your GP, CFHN or a registered dietitian
- If your toddler goes to day care and they enjoy a lunch time meal, they may not be very hungry when they get home - just offer a lighter meal like a boiled egg, omelette, sandwich, steamed vegetables or salad
- Offer everyone the same food - especially food eaten in your culture. It is also good to try foods from different cultures





Managing toddler demands: Pester power

Child: "Mum, can you buy me a snack?"

Mum: "No"

Child: "Please... I want it...I want it..." Followed by a big tantrum in the aisle of the supermarket

Sounds familiar?

Your toddler is constantly learning about the world around them. There are so many interesting things that catches their attention especially at shopping centres and supermarkets where they can see toys and unhealthy food at their eye level. This includes advertising for takeaway foods, 'sometimes foods' and foods that they see their family and friends eat.

Children asking or "nagging" their parents to buy them food or drink products because of what they see around them is commonly known as "pester power". When you say "no" when they ask for these items, toddlers will often respond with a tantrum, pestering or whingeing as they get older. This can be tiring for you and can be hard to say "no" in public places. Tantrums are a normal response when you say "no", because toddlers are still developing how to manage their emotions, behaviour and how to talk.

As your child gets older and if you give in to pestering, your child learns that pestering works to get their way and will keep pestering!

Tips to help prevent your toddler pestering




- Talk to your child about what behaviour you expect before you go shopping
- Praise your child for good shopping behaviour
- Offer non-food based, healthy rewards (e.g. 'If you can get through this shopping trip without asking for stuff we can't get, we'll stop at the playground on the way home')
- Talk to your child about unhealthy food or beverage advertising (e.g. 'See the ads about free toys, it is to get you to buy the burger and chips that aren't good for you')
- Avoid junk food aisles in the supermarket





Stopping all bottles and looking after your child's teeth

It is really important that your toddler is not given any milk in a bottle. This reduces the chance of tooth decay and ear infections. If they do not drink milk from a bottle they will be more hungry for healthy family foods. If you need more help to stop your toddler having the bottle see your CFHN or call Tresillian PH: 1300 272 736 or Karitane PH: 1300 CARING helpline.










3 easy steps to keep your child's teeth and gums healthy	
	Put your toddler to bed without a bottle Stop offering any bottles at this age
	Offer water or reduced fat cow's milk from a cup Formula milk, flavoured milk, fruit juice, soft drinks or other sweetened drinks are not recommended as they can cause tooth decay
	Help your child brush their teeth morning and night Use low fluoride toothpaste

YOUR TODDLER'S PLAY

Fundamental Movement Skills

It is really important that you keep practising Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) with your toddler. It might be tricky at first but with practise they will get better and as they grow it will help them play different games, sports and activities during preschool, primary school and high school. Practising the FMS movements with your toddler can help them see how you do it and encourages them to try.



Action	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Stability skill Balance on one leg	 <p>Slowly lift up one leg and bend the opposite leg</p>	 <p>Bend your arms at the elbow</p>	 <p>To balance for longer look at something on the ground</p>
Locomotor skill Running	 <p>Eyes looking straight ahead</p>	 <p>Swing your arms in opposite direction to the legs</p>	 <p>Knees up, while moving one leg in front of the other</p>
Manipulative skill Catching	 <p>Place your arms out in front</p>	 <p>Catch the ball as it comes towards your hands</p>	 <p>Bring your hands and arms together</p>



Co-operative play

As your child grows older, you will see them starting to play together with other children instead of playing next to each other. Co-operative play is where children interact and play together. They will be interested in what other children are doing, want to play with them and try to copy them.

Around 3 years of age children will start learning to share and understand how to take turns. Talking to your toddler about sharing is important. They learn how to share with positive role-modelling from their parents and carers. This is a skill for life that needs to be practised, so when they do share, give them lots of praise.

For example - throwing a ball to your child and letting them throw it back can be an example of taking turns, or sharing toys can be positive for your child.

Getting enough activity in a small space

Create a routine or have some structure to make sure your toddler is getting enough activity in their day. Remember - your child needs 3 hours of active play spread across each day!

Things to do: visit the park, meet up with friends for a play date, have a picnic at the local park, visit the library, a museum, community spaces, public pools, beach, indoor play centres, walk around your neighbourhood, see a farmer's market, or catch a train, bus or ferry.

Join a playgroup: going to playgroup can also get your child up and moving. To find your local playgroup, visit www.playgroupnsw.com.au or call 1800 171 882

Gardening: involve your toddler in growing their own vegetables and fruit. Allow them to feel, smell and name the vegetables. When ready; picking and helping you with cooking will show them the whole growing process. This will help them become interested in vegetables and fruit.



SLEEP

Your toddler becomes a pre-schooler when they turn 3! At 3 - 5 years children need 11 - 13 hours of sleep at night. Many pre-schoolers will also have a day nap of around 1 - 2 hours.

Sleep is very important for pre-schoolers. They need it for good health, growth and development. Sleep helps build immunity against illness and helps them to concentrate, learn and play. When children get enough sleep they are happier during the day.

It can sometimes take a while for pre-schoolers to fall asleep. A good bedtime routine can help, for example:

- 6:15pm:** give them a bath, brush their teeth, let them go to toilet and put on a night nappy if needed
- 6:45 pm:** quiet time – read a book (limit this to 2 or 3 books), tell a story, sing a song, have a cuddle
- 7:00 pm:** put them to bed and kiss them goodnight

Most pre-schoolers are ready for bed by 7pm. If your child has a much later bedtime it may be hard for them to get enough sleep and this will make them frustrated during the day.

To help your child fall asleep earlier:

- slowly change their sleep time by starting their bedtime routine 15 minutes earlier over a few days aiming for a 7pm bedtime
- children should sleep in a room that is quiet, dark and without a TV or other screens
- wake them up in the morning at the same time
- keep bedtime and wake time the same during the week and on weekends

Many pre-schoolers still need an afternoon nap because they are usually very active playing and exploring the environment. Even if they can't sleep it is good to set aside some quiet time. The best way to encourage a nap is to set up a routine for them like you do in the evening. This includes packing away toys and reading a book whilst lying down quietly in their bed.



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Why is it so important to look after yourself?

The job of parenting may be one of the hardest things you will ever have to do. It usually involves being available 24 hours a day, with no sick leave, no days off and giving endless love and patience. Parenting doesn't come with a manual and most parents learn as they go.

Now that your toddler is becoming more independent your parenting role also changes, and for many parents this can be challenging and frustrating, as well as being a fun time. Your toddler may be starting to say "no", not listening to what you say, throwing themselves on the floor when they don't get what they want, throwing food, drawing on the walls, refusing to eat or taking off their nappy full of poo!

It is normal to experience parts of parenting that influences your feelings towards your toddler. It is good to be honest about your feelings as these feelings are very common among parents and usually temporary.

Your toddler is not being naughty on purpose, but simply exploring their world and enjoying their new independence. They don't yet know how to control their behaviour like throwing food, as they follow their emotions. They can get emotional when they don't get what they want or don't know what they want and start having a tantrum.

If you are sometimes finding it difficult to control your frustration or anger and possibly shouting at your toddler, it is important to find a way to learn how to manage your emotions. Sometimes as adults we haven't been taught good strategies to look after ourselves or calm ourselves down when we are angry or frustrated.

Tips to manage your emotional health

Toddlers learn how to regulate their behaviour when they are supported and soothed by a calm, kind adult. If you are stressed you will find it hard to think and respond in a calm and supportive manner to your toddler. Ensure you:

- eat a healthy diet - 5 serves of vegetables and 2 serves of fruit every day and less 'sometimes' food
- keep up your physical activity - at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity



- less screen time on the TV, phone, computers or tablets and more quality time with your toddler and the family
- find something that helps you to relax and take time out for yourself and for your relationship with your partner or other close friends

If you are experiencing a persistent low mood, feel overwhelmed, or the stress in your life is affecting your usual activities, please speak to your Child and Family Health Nurse or GP or seek support through one of the services listed below.

Beyond Blue **1300 224 636**
1800RESPECT **1800 737 732**
LIFELINE **13 11 14**

FUN

- Listen to music
- Dance like no one is watching
- Sing to your favourite songs

FOR YOU

- BREATHE
- Stay at home
- Saying no
- Have a break from your phone and social media
- Take a step back
- Let go of guilt
- Be kind to yourself
- Cook your favourite meal
- Browse the shops

SELF CARE CAN BE...

ASKING FOR HELP

- Chat to a friend or loved one
- Talk to counsellor, GP or psychologist
- Learn to set boundaries
- Ask for what you need

PLACES

- Relax in the park
- Swim at the beach
- Go for a bushwalk
- Go to yoga or meditation



WHAT TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR TODDLER'S HEALTH



Keep me healthy, give me fruit and vegetables every day



Water in a cup is best for me and my teeth



Keep me active, I don't need screen time for play



I'm a toddler now, not a baby, I can sleep at night without any milk



Reward me with cuddles and praise, food rewards are unhelpful for me



**HEALTHY
BEGINNINGS**



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