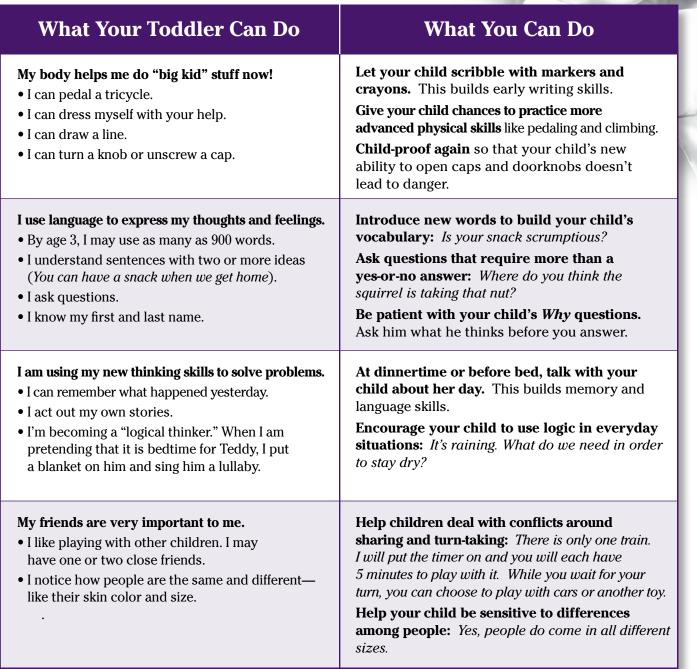
Your Child's Development

Older toddlers are full of personality and energy. They want to know the reason for everything, which is why you may hear your child ask *Why* a lot! *What kinds of questions is your child asking? What is she curious about?*





As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: www.zerotothree.org.



Your Child's Development

30 to 36 Months

What's on Your Mind

My 33-month-old son has such an imagination. He wants me to call him "King Diego" and he spends all his time building castles with his blocks. Should I be worried?

Playing pretend is very common for older toddlers and preschoolers, which is a really good thing. Why? Because using their imaginations helps young children develop their thinking, language, and social skills as they talk about and think through how their story should unfold. By taking on different roles, your son is also learning to see the world from another person's point of view. By acting out stories, he is learning how to solve problems like how to build the block castle so it won't fall down. Long story short, there is no need to worry and actually many reasons to celebrate King Diego. So take a moment to get down on the floor with your son and ask what part you can act out-Queen? Soldier? Horse? You'll be having fun together and helping your son learn at the same time.

Spotlight on Making Friends

Between 30 and 36 months, toddlers really enjoy playing with friends—doing things like acting out stories, building together with blocks, or exploring the playground.

Friendships are great fun. They also help children develop important social skills like taking turns, sharing, and helping others.¹ Through friendships, children learn to communicate with others, resolve disagreements, and understand others' thoughts and feelings.² Children who are friendly, confident, and who can cooperate with others are most likely to succeed in a classroom setting.

Keep in mind that brothers and sisters are often a child's first friends, even though it may not seem like it some days! Sibling relationships provide daily practice with sharing and cooperating. They also offer children opportunities to show compassion and loving support.

What You Can Do

Make time for play. Encourage brothers, sisters, and cousins to play together. Organize playdates with friends. Join a parenting group or attend community events like library story hours.

Give nonverbal feedback. Give your child an encouraging smile when he is unsure about sharing.

Notice positive behavior. You two figured out how to share the trains. Nice job!

Help children understand others' feelings. Janelle is covering her face. She doesn't like it when you

throw the ball so hard. Let's roll it gently instead.

Encourage children to problemsolve. You both want the tricycle. What can we do about this?

Suggest problem-solving

strategies. *How about while* Marco has a turn on the tricycle, you pretend to be the traffic light and say "stop" and "go?" Then you two can switch.

> What can you do to help your child learn to be a good friend?

Did You Know...

The more television 3-year-olds watch each week, the more they ask for the foods they have seen advertised.³

What It Means for You:

Young children are influenced by what they see on television. So limit your child's TV time and try to avoid shows with advertisements. Make sure that what she *does* watch is right for

her age. And begin teaching your toddler good eating habits by offering healthy meals and snacks. You can also be a role model by eating healthy yourself. Most importantly, keep the whole family active by making time for active play every day.



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www.zerotothree.org

Endorsed by: American Academy of Pediatrics



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1 - Kemple, K. M., 2004

- 2 Gurian, A., & Pope, A. in www.aboutourkids.org
- 3 Taras, H., Sallis, J., Patterson, T., & Nader, P., & Nelson, J., 1989.

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