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2 and 2 1/2 -Year Well Visit

Your 2-year-old child is now the boss of the household. This child is seeking to establish who they are through brave exploration. The world is suddenly noticed as a land of possibilities and the curious mind of a 2-year-old wants to take advantage of a new-sensed freedom. Boundaries are pushed—not only in their immediate environment but also any limit you set will be pushed, they are asserting their autonomy and are definitely “up for a fight”.

Developmental milestones to aid them in this include the ability to kick a ball, throw a ball overhand, jump off the ground, stack 4 blocks, combine 2 words—at least over the next few months, point to 2 pictures you ask them to, name an object with a word they come up with, remove their clothes (yes, they are all little “streakers”). Some can start to put on their clothes, less are likely to do this but by 2 ½ will be closer to dressing themselves, will start to imitate drawing a vertical line, point to 6 different body parts, 50% understandable and (thank goodness) are able to wash and dry their hands.

So, your little explorer, general of their own fight, with all these skills and incentive will try to be your general. The only problem with this is, of course, your little one is two years old! With little experience you must teach what is right and where the boundaries are! This is a delicate balance—you do not want to extinguish the curiosity but do want to teach.

Some good books to help you navigate this include:

1-2-3 Magic by Thomas Phelan, PhD,

Love and Logic Magic for early childhood by Jim Fay and Charles Faye PhD.

Some good advice I can offer is:

1. Pick your fights
2. When you make a boundary, be consistent
3. Reward good behavior
4. Give choices.

Some specific issues include:

Food: They will always win the fight regarding what food they eat. The only thing you, as a parent, can do is to offer healthy variety. Push the boundary of their food preferences by letting them get a bit hungry by not giving milk and juice before food and by not giving into what they prefer.

Toilet training: Do not push them. They must lead the way. Best is to teach what is expected through example and by reading children's book such as, Once Upon a Potty by Ilona Frenkel and Everyone Poops by Taro Gomi, go to the library and checkout all the potty books. The rest is up to them, they will make the choice in their own time!

If you allow freedom to experience life and teach appropriate choices through consistent limit-setting, you and your little general will go far.

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