TIP CARD FOR DADS OF TODDLERS (AGES 1–2)

DID YOU KNOW?
The toddler years are a time of great cognitive, emotional and social development—support from mom and dad is particularly important during these years.

Most children learn to walk, talk, solve problems, and relate to others during toddlerhood:

- Toddlers are learning to be independent. They may insist on doing things for themselves, become less cooperative, or say “NO” frequently.
- They learn by playing—on their own, with parents, or with friends.

Toddlers’ experiences can affect how their brains develop:

- Talking, reading, playing, and singing with a parent has a strong positive impact on development.
- Watching TV and looking at social media can negatively impact development.

Toddlers struggle at times to deal with their changing feelings and emotions:

- At one moment they may feel independent, then the next minute they feel dependent on a parent; they may feel confident, then doubtful.
- Out-of-control behavior like biting, hitting, whining, and crying may tell you they need help coping with their emotions.

MORE INFORMATION

NRFC Resources

- Webinar (2013)—Working with Dads: Encouraging and Supporting Father Involvement from Birth through Adolescence https://www.fatherhood.gov/webinars
- Safety Tips for Dads to Keep Young Kids Safe (ages 1–4) http://1.usa.gov/1SO8VBP

Other Resources

- Everyday Ways to Support Your Baby’s and Toddler’s Early Learning — tips from Zero to Three https://bit.ly/2iGMoIg

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Provide emotional security for your toddler — hug them, talk with them, read with them, sing to them, play with them. Just be there.

- Establish routines for bedtime, baths, naps, and eating to help them feel comfortable and secure.
  - Work with caregivers so everyone understands the routines.
  - Give your toddler a “heads-up” when it’s time to switch from one activity to another. (“We need to leave soon so you’ll have to stop playing when I say so.”)
- Read, sing, tell, or act out simple stories.
  - Toddlers love hearing the same story over and over again! They’ll start recognizing the pictures and learning the story.
  - As you read or talk, ask questions. (“Why did Jack do that?” “What do you think happens next?”)
  - Show them ways to play imaginatively with toys.
- Encourage them to explore and try new things.
  - Let them try dressing and feeding themselves.
  - Take them to new places or ride a bus or train together.
  - Let them figure things out for themselves, but be available to help if they ask.
  - Teach clear and simple safety rules. (“Don’t cross the street without me or mom.” “Don’t touch things in the kitchen that are hot.”)
- Be a good role model.
  - Children see what you do and hear what you say.
- Hug and kiss them every day!