Top 10 Tips for 2-Year-Olds

Here is advice for 2-year-olds (and hints of behavior parents may expect from them):

1. Be adorable. When you get into something you should not (and you will), being adorable will serve you well. If adorable doesn’t work, try looking scared, hurt or sad.

2. Practice the tough stuff on the people who love you and understand you best. This person will likely be a parent you trust with your life. Here is an example: When you go to child care Monday through Friday, eat your lunch, clear your dishes, wash your hands and lie down on your cot for a two-hour nap. When you are home during the weekend, test out what going without sleep for a full 48 hours feels like because your parent is so interesting and you know your parent will love you no matter what you do.

3. Keep as many healthy adults on your side as possible. If you have an adult who loves you like you are the world to that person, keep that going. You will need all of that love to develop your brain and keep you safe. Add more healthy adults whenever possible. That includes grandparents because they are pretty cool.

4. Sleep is very important to the adults in your life. They need it. You, too, should get lots of sleep, such as about 10 to 12 hours at night, plus a refreshing one- to three-hour nap after lunch. This will power you up for the rest of the day. It also makes going to bed on schedule at night easier for you. Keep your bedtime routine short and manageable so your parents can remember it. They are tired, too.

5. Practice saying “no” a lot. This will help when you are 6 and the neighbor kid dares you to run into the street or 12 and your friends want you to drink alcohol. You will need to know how to say “no” and mean it, so practice, practice, practice.

6. If you want to wear your robot shirt but suddenly you find yourself in your rocket shirt, let your adult know that you prefer having a choice of two shirts before you feel the need to blast off about it. Be sure to use the phrase “Me do it!” when you see your snowsuit, mittens or pajamas.

7. Speaking of tantrums, don’t be too thrown off by these feelings. Your emotions are strong and your problem-solving skills still are developing. If you are tired, hungry or sick and your sibling is playing with something that looks like fun, then your turn is probably not happening fast enough. Well, yes, that’s not fun for anyone. If you have a wise adult to distract you and snuggle you, show some understanding and give you words for your pain, feed you and rock you to sleep, you will see the world as a positive place and your caregiver as a very secure base.

8. Sharing? What’s that?

9. Try a bite of everything on your plate. Eating is a little sketchy this year. You are drinking out of a cup with your meals. You are forming some patterns. You are experimenting with the words “yuk” and “more.” Your adult is trying more foods just to model healthy eating for you, so
appreciate that. And yes, you will have your food jags. If you don’t like what you are trying, you always can spit it out in a dramatic fashion.

10. Keep your drooly little chin up. You soon will have those painful molars out of the way for this year. Your words are starting to form to match your opinions. You are getting tall enough to reach stuff all on your own. Your head still is big so be careful of tipping and falling. And do you know that you are so beautiful when you are sleeping, your adults almost want to wake you up for one more hug?

You will find more information about young children at https://www.zerotothree.org/

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