



# Wee Learn



## Wee Explorers (18 months - 3 years): Having Fun While Learning

As children begin to move from crawling to walking, they enter what's known as the toddler stage. This is an important stage of life, as toddlers are learning more and more each day.

Being a toddler and finally being able to toddle (and maybe wobble, for a while!) around the home on their own is a major milestone for a child, and they will be keen to learn plenty more. There's no set time in which they'll learn things, and toddler growth and development is very much an individual experience, with all toddlers progressing at their own pace.

As toddlers reach the age of two and try and become more independent, it can also be a time characterised by mood swings and impatience. That's why this age is often referred to as, 'the terrible twos.' It can be difficult for parents, but it's helpful if you can – where appropriate – understand a toddler's need to try and do things themselves.

### Main Ways of Learning

Toddlers learn constantly in many ways, but the key methods in which they learn are:

- Through watching and observing things that are going on around them, in the home and when out and about.
- Through listening to conversations between family members, and when out and about.
- Through asking lots of questions about things they don't understand or want to learn more about.
- Through trying out new activities
- Through practising all the skills as they learn them, as practice eventually makes perfect.

### Learning Through Play

All children love playing and, as well as being very enjoyable, it has the bonus of helping children learn too. It's good to encourage playing from a young age and, ideally, a variety of play types are great. For example, children will learn key skills such as problem solving, physical skills, reading, number skills and social skills through play such as:

- Joint play with other children.
- Imaginative play.
- Playing house or mimicking household tasks.
- Outside play in the garden.
- Playing with dolls or trucks.
- Doing puzzles.
- Playing with books and making up stories.
- Playing with water.
- Playing in a sandpit.

### Helping Your Child Learn

You can help your child learn even more by answering any questions and queries that they have (and toddlers are renowned for asking lots of questions!) and giving them plenty of variety in their life. You don't need to spend loads of money helping toddlers learn, but they do need plenty of attention, support and love.

When you're busy around the house and children want to know what you're doing, give them the time to ask questions and join in with any activities. The same goes for when you're out and about too. For example, in shops children might like to help choose shopping or ingredients for cooking, or you could teach them about wildlife through feeding the ducks in the park.

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