

## 25 - 36 Months

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Toddlers are confidently exploring the world, and when given the chance, are socially engaged with other children and adults. They are beginning to understand the children's stories read to them and are talking about their own personal experiences and the events they are involved in. They are also engaged in more complex imaginary play, from watching and imitating people around them to pretending to be characters they hear about in the books read to them.

A toddler will:

- **Be actively forming friendships with his peers when given the chance.**  
A toddler may have one specific friend that he always plays with and prefers to be around. He learns to play, engage and interact with others. Ensuring he has consistent play experiences is important for his development.
- **Use more language between these months.**  
A toddler will communicate what he wants and how he feels. He is starting to have conversations with peers and the adults he's around, sharing details about himself and his adventures. He has a grasp of language and his speech is now more easily understood. His use of words, complete sentences and overall vocabulary will increase significantly.
- **Begin to use words to express his feelings.**  
Caregivers will know when a toddler is happy, scared, sad or mad. With encouragement he will try and use words to express these feelings, but of course, he will still use gestures, such as walking away, crying or throwing something.
- **Engage in more imaginative play.**  
Not only will a toddler imitate the people around him, but he will begin to use his imagination with several objects. He will enjoy pretending different objects symbolize something else—a block turns into a train or playdough turns into a dinosaur.
- **Become more aware of peers and will be increasingly sympathetic toward them when they are upset.**  
A toddler will recognize others' feelings and might even comfort peers when he sees they are upset.
- **Become more engaged in social play skills.**  
A toddler is beginning to learn how to share and take turns. Cooperative play may still be difficult but he is learning to play with others and enjoy their company.