

encourage his thinking skills

GIVE YOUR TWO-YEAR-OLD PLENTY OF STIMULATION EACH DAY The best boost to your toddler's thinking is to provide him with lots of stimulation. His curiosity and learning skills are enhanced through toys, games, songs, and nursery rhymes. Provide daily activities that are varied, and avoid leaving him alone for long periods with nothing to do.

TALK TO HIM There is a strong link between language and thinking – development in one area influences development in the other. The more you talk to your two-year-old, the better.

Chat while you move round the supermarket with him, while you play with him, while you bathe him and change him. He uses these spoken interactions to improve his speech.

PROVIDE HIM WITH A RANGE OF TOYS Choose ones that have good play value (those that he will enjoy playing with frequently because they are so interesting to him). Puzzle toys, such as nesting barrels and shape sorters, enhance his thinking skills.

If your toddler experiences frustration because the toy is too challenging, distract him and encourage him to try later.

ENCOURAGE HIM TO EXPLORE He needs your encouragement to make new discoveries while exploring his environment. Instead of immediately showing him how to open the small box that has a toy inside, for example, hold back for a few minutes to give him a chance to complete the task by himself. Then go over and give him lots of praise for his achievement.

GET YOUR TODDLER INVOLVED IN PLAY All children are curious by nature – the urge to discover is inborn – but some children are more passive than others, preferring to look and observe rather than to have a hands-on experience. However, the more active involvement your toddler has in the learning process, the better his thinking skills become.

LET HIM STRIVE TO REACH A SOLUTION HIMSELF It can be frustrating to watch your growing child try to master tasks, such as finding a toy he has misplaced, or building a stack of bricks on top of one another. He often faces demanding learning activities in play, and you may be tempted to rush in and rescue him. But your toddler wants to make discoveries by himself.

DON'T PUSH TOO HARD In your zeal to develop your child's thinking skills, you may fall into the trap of driving him too hard. Yet it is essential to strike a balance between under-stimulation and over-stimulation. The challenge facing you is to match the level of stimulation to his needs and abilities so that his enthusiasm remains high as his thinking skills develop.

MAKE SURE YOUR TODDLER HAS A NOURISHING DIET Like all human organs, the brain continues to grow between the second and third year. He needs a sound intake of nourishing food in order to fulfil his physical needs and to ensure that his full capacities are achieved. A good wholesome diet remains the best way of encouraging adequate brain growth.

LET HIM LISTEN TO MUSIC Music stimulates the senses and may also stimulate your two-year-old's creativity. Let him listen to CDs of classical music as well as of children's songs. It won't do his thinking skills any harm; it may even do them some good. And if you think you can stand excessive noise, buy him a set of toy musical instruments.

MAKE HIM FEEL GOOD ABOUT HIMSELF AS A LEARNER Happy, confident, and self-assured children learn better than those who have doubts about themselves. Tell your two-year-old how much you love him and how you think he is wonderful because he managed to fit the correct shape into the whole. And make sure he hears you brag about his latest achievement to his grandparents. **YP**

