

motor development

Between 2-3 years, most children:

- Walk and run without falling;
- Carry a large toy while walking;
- Push and pull large toys;
- Climb and sit in a chair;
- Walk up steps without help;
- Scribble, favoring one hand;
- Eat using a spoon or fork;
- Dance;
- Show signs of **toilet readiness**.

**To support these developing skills,
at Gretchen's House
we do things like:**

- Play with large trucks and push toys inside and out;
- Chase and throw large balls or tennis balls;
- Dance with props like scarves, bells, and shakers;
- Provide plenty of dump and fill activities – loading manipulatives into trucks, buckets, and shape sorters;
- Color with markers, crayons, and chalk;
- Paint using brushes and other tools;
- Add challenging tools to **sensory play**;
- Play in lofts and small climbers;
- Go outside everyday.

guidance

At Gretchen's House we:

- Have consistent and appropriate expectations for children's abilities;
- Use techniques appropriate for individual children's development;
- Re-direct inappropriate behavior;
- Distract **frustrated** children;
- Model empathic behavior;
- Give children time away from the group (reading alone, perhaps) when they are disruptive or inappropriate;
- Balance quiet and active times to avoid over-stimulation and combat boredom;
- Give children positive alternative behaviors when they act inappropriately;
- Recognize struggles and successes;
- Strive to make children feel powerful in every possible way.

**Easy ways to make a 2 year old
feel powerful:**

- Provide meaningful and appropriate **choices** whenever possible;
- Help children be responsible for taking care of their own belongings;
- Give them small jobs: putting dirty clothes in a hamper, etc.;
- Follow their lead in activity planning and implementation;
- Listen when they say NO (when appropriate!);
- Let children work through their **tantrums** rather than trying to placate them.

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Gretchen's House at 734.761.2576

Active Learning at Gretchen's House



**your
2-3 year old
child:**

- **joker-**
- **tester-**
- **worker-**

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cognitive development

Between 2-3 years, most children:

- Build small towers with blocks;
- Find new ways to use objects (like a spoon for a shovel);
- Recognize some colors and simple shapes;
- Can remember what has happened in the past;
- Can take things apart (e.g., snap lids) and try to put them back;
- Enjoy creative art activities;

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we do things like:

- Provide a variety of manipulatives and accessories for more complicated building projects;
- Play with puzzles, take-apart toys, and challenging toys to open and close;
- Provide stimulating props for **dramatic play**;
- Challenge children with problems and support their attempts to solve them. Say things like: "The paper is on the wrong side of the table. How can we color on it?"
- Tell stories that reinforce concepts and encourage participation;
- Store toys where children can select them without adult help.

language development

Between 2-3 years, most children:

- Have a rapidly increasing productive vocabulary;
- Start dropping baby words and replacing them with "grown-up" ones;
- Speak in simple sentences "Mommy go bye-bye." "Sammy all done."
- Ask questions;
- Point to objects after hearing their names;
- Use adjectives "Big dog;"
- Can say their own name;
- Follow simple directions.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we do things like:

- Get down at the children's level to speak and interact with them;
- Maintain a **positive verbal environment** using tone of voice, word choice, and positive phrasing;
- Fill in the blanks when children are missing important words;
- Support children's transition to "proper" speech as they are ready;
- Read books with rhythmic text and rich language;
- Sing songs and fingerplays that allow children to fill in the blanks;
- Use **gender-neutral** terminology;
- Use rhymes and songs to signal routine events.

social-emotional development

Between 2-3 years, most children:

- Are still more adult-focused than peer-focused;
- May develop fears;
- Show spontaneous affection for adults and companions;
- Alternate between independence and dependence on adults;
- Act contrary at times;
- Express interest in **toilet learning**;
- Show pride in their work;
- Resist change.

To support these developing skills, at Gretchen's House we do things like:

- Play with the children rather than supervise them, so we are available to problem-solve when needed;
- Do plenty of **dramatic play** to model appropriate behaviors and practice problem-solving skills;
- Acknowledge children's fears and offer healthy ways to cope with them;
- Support children's wishes to be independent or dependent at different times;
- Diffuse contrary behavior rather than getting locked in **power struggles**;
- Give plenty of warnings for transitions and interruptions like diaper changes.