

What's Special About Me at this Age?



Character Building

- I am learning how to be respectful and caring. My behavior reflects our family. I need you to teach me good life habits. Teach me not to bully small animals or other children. Teach me that there is a protector who sees my actions.
- I am learning about the environment. I am learning that the environment will take care of us if we treat the land well. Teach me to pick up garbage if I see any.



Communication

- I am learning to use specific words to describe details. I can name parts of things. I am learning specific terms for weather and directions.
- I ask many questions! Support my thinking skills by encouraging me to think of answers on my own.



Skill Building

- My muscles are growing. I need to be busy and active. Help me grow strong by having me carry things for you. Ask me to move heavier objects when I am able.
- I am ready to learn small motor skills. I like to do tasks with my hands, such as pile up small rocks or move bones around to make a miniature camp.
- I am developing observation skills. Ask me to describe the weather each morning. Ask me to describe experiences from memory.

Applying Inuit Values

Avatitinik Kamattiarniq (Being Aware of Our Environment)



Description

We must look after the environment and the people and animals in it. If we do not take care of our environment, it will not sustain us. Learning to be in tune with our environment should begin at an early age. If we are knowledgeable about our environment, we are able to observe changes and respond.

Example

A young couple was cleaning fish and leaving the guts for seagulls. The father-in-law began to collect the guts to bury them. "Why don't you let the seagulls do the work"? The couple asked him. "Seagulls are a sign of a dirty camp and a lazy hunter," he said. We should leave the land as we find it. For example, we are taught to mop up the blood after butchering a caribou so there was no evidence of the hunt left. This awareness and care is *avatimik kamattiarniq*.

Reminders

- ✓ Encourage healthy eating. Active young children need protein from fresh meat and calcium from soft bones and milk.
- ✓ Clean small cuts and bandage them. If there is any pus, soak the cut in warm salted water.

Inunnguiniq

Childrearing Advice from Inuit Elders

2 to 2½ Years



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About this Age

At this age, children are very impressionable. They learn by mimicking others' behavior. They copy what they see and hear. They may try to do adult activities, such as cutting meat or other dangerous activities. They like to play independently. They like to pretend. They also like to mimic real life situations in their play.

Little girls tend to mimic their mothers and little boys tend to mimic their fathers. As boys copy their fathers, they often become protective of their mother. They can also learn bad habits. For example, if they see their father constantly playing cards or video games, they will want to do the same.

Boys also tend to get into trouble more than girls. They may try to blame someone else to avoid trouble.

At this age, children want to dress themselves. As they dress themselves, they learn right and left, and the right and wrong ways to put things on. They may love to borrow clothing and play dress-up. If you try to take the clothing away, you may find yourself chasing after the child, as she tries to keep the clothing.

Grandparents often have close relationships with a child at this age, because they have more patience, authority, and tell stories that teach the child standards for his life. At this age, the child may have a special trust for his grandparents, because grandparents can often spend more time with the child busy parents can.

At this age, children tend to be picky about food. They have favourite foods. They may refuse to eat certain foods.

What Parents Can Do

- **Teach proper behaviour.** For example, teach not to hit or punch, not to go into another's cupboard or fridge, and not to take another's things.
- **Discipline firmly but calmly.** Your style of discipline now influences the child's life. If you slap a child in anger, she learns to slap others in anger.
- **Agree on parenting methods.** Discuss parenting issues with your partner in private. Be in agreement with each other when you are with the child.
- **Encourage creative play and fun.** At this age, children always want to be busy and active. Give them small things to play with and activities to try, especially when it's too cold or buggy to go outside.
- **Encourage their curiosity and interests.** But, always watch them closely and keep them from danger.
- **Visit grandparents.** Have your child spend lots of time with grandparents. Encourage grandparents to tell stories and teach Inuit sayings (*inusipagutit*).
- **Know that fathers are needed.** Fathers, take on a bigger role with children this age. Boys and girls both need their father's attention.
- **Talk with your child.** Ask her what she's thinking about. Get to know her personality.
- **Observe your child's personality and support his strengths.** Is your child a quick learner, a helper, or a natural leader?
- **Provide healthy foods!** Make sure they are eating country foods and healthy store-bought foods.

Parenting Skills to Practice for this Age

- Support children at this age to make choices. For example, invite them to choose which socks they want to wear or what activity they want to do.
- Teach children this age to observe and concentrate. Have them select the biggest or smallest object from a group, or objects that are the same or different from each other. Teach words that give specific directions or that describe details of objects.
- Take children this age to new places. For example, take them to the library or the radio station.
- Encourage creative play. Have good play materials available. For example, empty boxes can be used to make cars, playhouses, sleds, and anything else your child dreams up.
- Lead group games when there are other children around. For example, teach children to play Simon Says or Follow the Leader.
- Support children to develop physical coordination, such as by playing with a ball. Children this age can learn to roll, push, trap and bounce the ball and even hit targets.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ Discuss parenting issues away from the child. Don't disagree in front of them. This will confuse the child. It could make them feel insecure and lose trust.
- ✓ Respect your child's development as an individual. Encourage their unique strengths. Notice their weaknesses and correct bad behavior. Have clear expectations so your child will learn to get along well with others.