

Prince George at 2: What our future king has learned so far

As Prince George reaches the 'terrible twos', what does the coming year have in store for him - and his mother, the Duchess of Cambridge?

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Prince George Photo: Reuters

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Prince George **turns two** this weekend, and as a **mother** of a two-year-old (Motyo) myself, I can give the **Duchess of Cambridge** a pretty good idea of what life will be like over the coming year.

Being a toddler is the best practice ever for ruling a country. Most **mothers of children** in this age group spend a lot of time persuading their offspring that not everything is "mine" (which may be harder when your son is the heir to the throne).

Two-year-olds are control freaks – "me do it!" – with no fine motor skills. They see no difference between giving you a sweet snuggle and smacking you in the face with a toy hammer.

Toddlers have no bodily fears or concept of gravity. They never stop moving and never want to sleep. They're clingy and whiny and shouty, and so, so heavy (my goodness, they're heavy). But all it takes is one spontaneous little kiss and you'd forgive them (almost) everything.



The Duke of Cambridge and Prince William at the christening of Princess Charlotte

So I wish the **Duchess** the best of luck over the next year. It will be exhausting and infuriating, but also fun. Because these are the rules by which every self-respecting two-year-old swears:

1. Become a master of combat

There is no pain like a reverse headbutt to the windpipe, delivered during, say, the unwelcome application of footwear. See also: biting, hair-pulling, pinching and the following patented manoeuvres:

- Donkey-kicking during nappy changes
- The raised arms shoulder-socket release to avoid being picked up
- The arched back or “planking” to avoid being strapped into the buggy/car seat.

2. Learn to whine before you can talk

Every phone call you receive or make from now on will be drowned out by blood-curdling screams of “Dadddeee!”. George will delight in this, especially since “Dadddeee” started his new job last week. For Kate, this could mean frantic scrabbling for the phone while she tries to converse with Michelle Obama/Emilia Wickstead/potential housekeepers at an audible volume while trying to hold her handset as high up in the air as possible, still attached to her ear.

3. Mud and pram wheels are a food group

George will be sticking to the niceties of toddler etiquette at mealtimes – mostly throwing things on the floor and shouting “no”. Be aware that a stray raisin peeled off one of the wheels of **Charlotte’s** Silver Cross pram will be deemed absolutely delicious. Gardens will give new meaning to dining al fresco as George keeps up with the foraging trend, investigating mud, snails, drain water etc.

Bathtime is little more than an all-you-can-eat buffet; the bath water, the face flannel and the rubber duck are all irresistible delicacies. And nappy cream is like caviar for toddlers, best served straight from the bottom. In fact, the only thing your toddler will consistently refuse to put in their mouth will be... a toothbrush.

4. No clothes are always better than any clothes

George may have been styled in his adorable vintage tank tops, shorts and knee high socks, but what he really wants to wear is...nothing. Thanks to In the Night Garden's trouser-dropping Tombliboos, every child in the country now thinks it's their right to take off their shorts and swing them around their head. "Chase! Chase!" is a favourite game at the best of times, but children are never faster than when they don't have any pants on.

5. Pictures are to be taken on your terms

You may have Mario Testino as your chosen official photographer, but when it's just the two of you, George will no doubt display all the modelling prowess of any modern day toddler: devoting less than a second of his time to posing for photos, followed by ten minutes of indignantly screaming to see the as-yet-untaken 'PICS!' while attempting to wrestle the phone/camera from you.

6. Repetition, repetition, repetition

There is nothing a toddler likes more than repetition... apart from "MORE!" repetition. The Gruffalo will always sound better to George on the tenth reading than the first (Kate please do feel free to hide books you hate – we all do it); that funny face gets funnier every time you do it; and don't get me started on The Wheels On The Bus.

And obviously, if you ever decide to tune it out, just for a minute of your own sanity...that will be the moment he's actually trying to tell you Lupo's weed on the rug.

7. Dawdling is the new doing

Over the next 12 months Kate will be getting nowhere, fast. It's amazing what can amaze a toddler. Everything warrants a closer inspection: every stone, every plane in the sky, every discarded packet of cigarettes. And he will need to stop every few steps to exclaim or point or just sit for no particular reason. On the bright side, this will be excellent practise for his meet-the -public walkabouts later in life.



8. It's fun to embarrass mum

From 'Mummy why has that lady got a big bottom?' to 'Ugh, he smells!' centuries of royal diplomacy are about to go out the window as George delights in piping up with his own views on the world.

Kate will be spending a huge portion of most social encounters saying 'be GEN-tle', as members of the public politely endure having their eyeballs poked. (See also: noses. Toddlers, especially boys, love exploring nostrils, both removing items from and inserting objects into; usually, but not always, their own). And it might be time for a style rethink on those signature ladylike skirts, unless Kate doesn't mind having her knickers exposed by a two-year-old playing tent while she's watching the Trooping of the Colour.

9. Mess is as good as rest

The royal family have always been keen hunters, and now George is set to continue that tradition with his own 'Mummy traps': Lego, toy cars, puddles of sun cream, and Little Land figurines will all find their way beneath your LK Bennett wedges soon enough. No doubt George already has a Sophie The Giraffe, but a two year old will always prefer to relieve their teething pains either by chewing on something dangerous or irreplaceable. I'd advise to start checking for tooth marks on heirlooms at Kensington Palace. Also, never relax and think 'ah, a bit of peace, he's finally learned to play on his own'. That is how palace walls get graffiti-ed in crayon.

10. If you have it, hide it

Even if your home is immaculate (few toddlers' homes are) things will still go missing, thanks to every two year old's love of Hiding Vital Things In Weird Places. Can't find your credit cards, Kate? Check your Hunter boots. Lost your phone? Look in Lupo's basket. Missing Keys? Try the throne room. You get the idea.



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