

A Fresh Start for You and Your Toddler

By: Lori Barret, Thinkertots Founder

I have a friend who looks forward to rainy weekends. While other people anticipate Saturdays filled with activities outside their homes, or Sundays reading the newspaper and enjoying a leisurely brunch, she relishes the opportunity to straighten out closets, or sort out her wardrobe without feeling guilty about missing a few hours of rest and relaxation. For her, days like these are the perfect time to make a fresh start. When it comes to your toddler's developmental needs, you can use a similar approach to find the time to take stock of your child's world and make changes for the better.

As a child development specialist, I can offer several ideas to help you jumpstart the process.

Prioritize – Make a short list of the three things that are most important to tackle at home. Then narrow it down to one and start to work on it. Forget the others. Moms often feel like failures because they have one big list of “things I haven't done yet” in their heads.

Get Organized – If you weren't lucky enough to be born with good organizational skills, try some of these quick fixes. Buy a “Family” organizational wall calendar that has slots for work, social and toddler-related activities on each date. Buy big plastic bins in fun colors. They stack easily and can hide an abundance of “stuff,” both your junk and your child's. If your home looks less cluttered, you feel less cluttered on the inside, which is invaluable for your spirit and for keeping your stress levels in check.

Child's Room - If you are like most Mom's of 2 year olds, you have allowed a lot of excess toys, stuffed animals and other playthings to accumulate in your child's room. You could probably get rid of half of it without him missing any of it (Of course, you never let them see you do this, because they would suddenly become very attached to anything you want to remove!)

Ask for Help – Moms are known for multi

Finding time to make a fresh start will not only improve your child's world, but make yours easier as well. A bit of careful planning can make your child's early days happy ones filled with learning, fun and excitement. Taking an early, active role in your child's educational preparedness and development is an investment in time and love that will pay lifelong benefits.