

# your child @<sup>TM</sup>

highlights of what's happening  
at this stage of your child's development...

## 18 to 24 months

Your child at 18 to 24 months is becoming his own person. His sense of independence is growing as he starts to walk, run and climb with greater ease. This is a wonderful time to help your child's rapidly growing vocabulary by talking to him about everything, and reading together every day.

### your child's health

#### Typical immunizations at this age will include:

- DTaP or DTP
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Chickenpox

#### The Well Visit

At your child's 18-month check-up, you should expect your doctor to give certain vaccinations. Also, use this visit to catch up on any missed immunizations. Usually shots are completed by the 18th month and therefore no shots will be needed at 24 months. Most doctors have you bring your child in for a well visit again at 24 months. Contact your doctor if issues about your child's health and development or illnesses arise between visits.

#### Nutrition

By 18 months, toddlers should eat most table foods cut up into small pieces, drink from a sippy cup and be fully weaned from a bottle. Because toddlers may not be interested in sitting still for meals, you can make sure your toddler gets enough food by:

- Giving him five to six small meals per day.
- Offering finger foods so she can feed herself.
- Making meals fun by serving foods with a variety of colors, textures and tastes.

#### take note...

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, at 18 months, let your doctor know if your child:

- Cannot walk.
- Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks exclusively on his toes.
- Does not speak at least 15 words.
- Does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, fork, spoon).

#### Sleep

Most toddlers sleep about 14 hours a day. They often take one nap a day, usually from about 1 to 3 pm, and go to bed between 6 and 8 pm. It is still important for her to sleep during the day. If she is well rested, she can fall asleep easier and sleep longer during the night.

### your child's growth and development

Between 18 and 24 months, you will see your toddler make great strides in all areas of development. By the time your child reaches 24 months, he will probably do most of the following:

#### Intellectually

- Refer to self by name and use the words "me" and "mine."
- Copy single words spoken by someone else and use the words "please" and "thank you" if prompted.
- Choose between two objects.
- Enjoy humming or trying to sing familiar songs.
- Use two to three word sentences.

#### take note...

At this age, your child needs the freedom to explore and make choices, as well as clear limits to follow.

#### Physically

- Walk well and run, even though he may not always stop and turn well.
- Toss or roll balls.
- Enjoy moving on small-wheeled riding toys.
- Feed himself with a spoon.
- Begin to gain some control of bowels and bladder.

#### Socially and Emotionally

- Imitate actions.
- Get angry and even may have temper tantrums.
- Act shy around strangers.
- Have trouble sharing.
- Show signs of independence, like saying "no" and trying to do many things independently.

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN<sup>SM</sup>

Reviewed and approved by the  
American Academy of Pediatrics

Sources: *Your Baby's First Year* and *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shelov, MD, FAAP, editor in chief; *Understanding Children*, Civitas and Richard Saul Wurman; *KidBasics*, Civitas; *Healthy Sleep, Happy Child*, Marc Weissbluth, MD.

Civitas thanks **Parents as Teachers**, an international early childhood parent education and family support program, for their ongoing support.

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### nurturing your child

#### remember...

To encourage good behavior from your child, you should try to be patient as well as clear and consistent with your rules and consequences.



#### Discipline

Because your child is starting to understand expectations and consequences, you can begin to teach your child proper behavior. You should try to:

- Praise good behavior — teach through positive reinforcement.
- Ignore small incidents and accidents, such as spilled milk.
- Give your child the opportunity to correct misbehavior by giving her a second chance.
- Never use spanking or other physical punishment and limit your use of the word “no.”
- Model good behavior.

#### Literacy

This is a period of huge growth for language skills and you can help your toddler along by talking and reading with her as much as you can.

- Teach new words all the time. The more you speak to your toddler about what you are doing and what is around you, the more you build his vocabulary.
- Expand your child’s language by adding to what he says. If he says “kitty” you can say, “Yes, the kitty is little and soft.”
- Pick books that address your child’s interests like animals, trains or a new sibling.
- Even if your child can’t speak yet, ask “Where’s?” and “What’s?” whenever you can while looking at pictures and reading a story.
- Add songs and rhymes into all of your routines, sing “Rock-a-Bye Baby” at bedtime or “Rub-a-Dub-Dub” at bath time.
- Give your child the tools to learn by scribbling, drawing or pretending to write.

#### Attachment

Your toddler is, at the same time, excited about his new-found independence, but hesitant to stray too far from you. Chances are, he struggles with goodbyes and returns often to your side. To help your child transition away from you:

- Say goodbye when you leave. At first he might cry, but soon he’ll learn that you always come back. If you leave without saying goodbye, he may begin to fear that you may slip out at any time, and so he may cling to you even more.
- See that your child is involved in an activity when you’re ready to leave. If he’s busy, he will have an easier time getting over your departure and getting re-involved after you leave.

#### take note...

When you leave, give your child an object that will soothe him and make him feel close to you.

#### Play

You may notice that as your child approaches two, she does less imitative play and more fantasy or pretend play, plays with toys for longer periods of time, and enjoys doing things for herself. Use these strategies to enhance your child’s play:

- Play simple recognition games. Place three familiar objects in front of your child and say, “Please give me the...”
- Encourage your child to play by himself, but be available to help out if an activity seems too difficult.
- Arrange play dates. They can be rocky but it is good for toddlers to learn about interaction with other children. Remember, toddlers are just learning how to play with someone else and should not always be expected to share.

### your child’s safety

As a parent, safety always should be your first concern.

- Limit access to rooms, drawers and dangerous objects: block staircases, install safety latches on cabinets, toilets and drawers and cover sharp edges.
- Avoid climbing accidents by using “L” brackets to secure large objects and furniture and installing window guards to prevent your child from falling out.

- Keep hot liquids out of reach.
- Make sure window treatments are not strangling hazards.
- Call Poison Control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous:

**1-800-222-1222.**

*Born Learning*<sup>SM</sup> is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child’s first teacher, *Born Learning* educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas. For more information, visit us online at [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

