

## Areas of Development

Your toddler is amazing! They are developing in many different areas all at the same time. Your child's brain and thought processes will mature and become more organized. This is known as cognitive development. You will also see words, sentences, and ideas begin to emerge as they develop in the area of language and communication. There will also be new emotions and new interactions between your toddler and others as they grow through social and emotional development. Finally, you will be excited to see your toddler be able to do more by themselves such as playing with blocks and running and hopping. These are known as fine and gross motor skills, both a part of physical development.

## Cognitive Development

Your toddler's incredible mind is helping them to figure out their world! Not only are they busy figuring out their world, but that sharp mind of theirs is figuring themselves out as well. They know what foods they like or dislike. They can point to some body parts when asked, like their nose or their chin! They can even point to yours! They're becoming good at sorting objects by their color, shape, or size.

## Language and Communication

By your child's 18th month, they should be able to speak about 10 to 15 words and recognize about 50 words. Interestingly, your child's attempt at mimicking your speech comes out as gibberish at first and then slowly becomes more understandable over time. This is normal. By 18 months, your toddler will start making many consonant sounds, such as *t*, *d*, *n*, *w*, and *h*. This is HUGE! After this, they will rapidly be adding new words to their vocabulary each month. Watch what you say, mom and dad, because you'll soon hear it repeated back to you!

## Social and Emotional Development

As your toddler moves toward 18 months, they'll begin paying a lot more attention to others. As they work through new emotions, feelings, and communicating their wants, they may also become more frustrated by their limitations, and you may start seeing a few meltdowns about now. Your toddler's personality is really starting to emerge, and they'll demand more independence as they master new skills! They may have separation anxiety, and they may start having tantrums.

## Physical Development

Watch out world, here they come! Your toddler is growing and doing big things now! By 18 months they should be walking well, playing with and trying to kick a ball, or at least throwing it underhanded. But one of their biggest accomplishments will be that they will start running. Your job just got harder now that they can get into trouble faster! Their fine movement will also be increased. They'll be able to do things with their little fingers like: turn pages in books, carry toys, drink from a cup, stack towers, and draw pictures.

## Language/Communication Milestones

- Says 10 to 15 words (personal and object names)
- Speaks emerging consonant sounds *t*, *d*, *n*, *w*, and *h*
- Chatters
- Uses feeding words like "bite," "eat," "more," and "drink"

## Cognitive Milestones

- Imitates correctly using things like phone, remote, everyday objects
- Uses stick to reach toy
- Pretend role-plays (symbolic thought)
- Can sort by size, shape, and color
- Can take apart and put together toys
- Points to body parts or to get attention
- Can follow one-step verbal commands

## Physical Milestones

- Walks in circles
- Walks faster
- Starts to run
- Walks upstairs with help
- Climbs on furniture
- Plays with a ball
- Rides on 4-wheeled toys
- Squats to pick up toys

## When to Call Your Medical Provider

Don't stress about milestones, but if you notice your child has not achieved the following milestones by 18 months, then it is time to call your medical provider.

- Isn't walking
- Isn't making eye contact or doesn't gesture to objects of interest
- Speaks fewer than five words
- Doesn't understand simple requests

Remember, your medical provider will be tracking your child's progress, so make sure you go to all of your child's well-baby visits. If you have any concerns about your child's development, you should call your medical provider.

### Resources:

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## Fine Motor Movements

- Scribbles
- Turns pages in a book
- Opens drawers
- Uses utensils
- Helps in dressing themselves
- Throws balls
- Dips food in sauces

## Social/Emotional Milestones

- May shush with fingers
- Identifies pictures in books
- Attaches to a comfort toy or blanket
- Separation anxiety may continue
- May start to have tantrums