

Areas of Development

Toddlers are always exploring and absorbing the world around them. They are like sponges soaking in everything they see, hear, and experience. From 18 to 24 months, there are many great developments. At this point your child is really beginning to understand how things around her work. Basic puzzles and shape sorters are great activities to enjoy with her as she now has the ability to connect the shapes and find where they belong.

Language/Communication Development

Watching your child learn to talk and communicate can be both fun and frustrating. At 18 months, they know and use only single words like “Mama” or “mine,” and they also can put two words together like “What’s dat?” As they move closer to 24 months, they also know up to 50 words and will start to string words in short phrases and sentences! As parents, we are usually very much in tune with our child’s own language while other people can’t understand much of it. As they inch toward 24 months, other people can understand 50 to 60 percent of what they are expressing. Words like “I,” “me,” “you,” and “mine” are probably being used more and more by your toddler. These pronouns will help you and your child know more specifically whom they are referring to. Be careful what you say around your little one! They are always listening and learning new words from books and everyday conversations.

Social/Emotional Development

If you haven’t already noticed, your child may be entering the temper tantrum stage. They may begin to express their feelings of frustration with anger, tears, and screaming. This can be a very trying stage as you teach them how to appropriately express these big emotions. Tantrums can be scary for little ones because they feel so out of control of themselves. As hard as it is, remaining calm and showing children that you are in control and can handle the situation will help them in the moment and in the long run.

Physical Development

If you haven’t watched your child in amazement at the amount of energy they have yet, you will in the near future. They now have the ability to go all over the place and never seem to get tired!

Movement

If you watch your toddler do this, you might notice that they can now jump with both feet. It’s a new fun movement for them, and they love it when you join in! They also are able to go up and down stairs easily now, so baby gates can safely help keep them where they need to stay. If you watch closely, you might be able to tell which hand might be the dominant hand. Whichever one they favor during daily activities could be the one! As they become more independent, a few fine motor skills they may begin to master by 24 months are: using a fork, making a tower of at least six blocks, and throwing a ball overhand. Your little one should begin exploring drawers and wastebaskets, and begin to open doors.

Toilet Training Readiness

While every child is different, some children show toilet readiness between 18 and 24 months. However, accomplishment typically occurs between 2½ and 4 years of age. Before they can really begin to train to use the toilet they should be able to walk well, recognize the urge to urinate, be able to tell you they need to use the bathroom, and they need to be able to take their pants off and put them back on.

When to Call Your Medical Provider

Every child develops at a slightly different pace, but if you notice your child has not achieved the following milestones by 24 months, then it may be time to call your medical provider.

- Can't follow simple directions
- Doesn't know what to do with common objects
- Can't speak in two-word sentences
- Doesn't run, or always walks on their tip toes
- Doesn't make good eye contact
- Doesn't engage in pretend play
- Can't point to body parts
- Doesn't express emotions

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.

Cognitive Milestones

- Figures out basic puzzles
- Understands cause and effect
- Knows the names of body parts
- Understands two-step commands
- Engages in pretend play

Language/Communication Milestones

- Can string two to four words together
- Uses 50+ words
- Uses pronouns
- Speech can be understood 50-60% of the time

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Expresses emotions
- Hums and sings
- Begins negative behaviors and temper tantrums

Physical Milestones

- Jumps on two feet
- Runs
- Kicks a ball
- Goes up and down stairs
- Uses fork
- Makes tower of six blocks

Resources:

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