



THE EIGHTEEN MONTH OLD

DEVELOPMENT

- Walks...Runs...Climbs
- Able to throw a ball but rarely catches one
- Independently feeds himself or herself and lets you know when he or she has had enough. Never force more food than your child wants.
- Scribbles with a crayon (everywhere – watch out)
- Turns pages in a book
- Points to body parts when asked
- Single words are increasing. Your child can understand your complete sentences. Indicates wants now by pointing or single words. Give him or her choices when possible - do you want the blue or red cup?
- Imitates older kids or parents (cleaning, dancing, dress-up)

EATING

Your child should be eating a well-balanced diet of table food cut into small pieces. They often need nutritious snacks between meals (cheese, fruit, crackers with peanut butter or hummus). Continue to avoid soda, gum, chips, and fast food. Avoid hard foods like peanuts, popcorn or hard candy. They must SIT to EAT. Choking on food while walking is a hazard at this age.

PLAY

- Music for learning language and for dancing to improve coordination
- Books, books and more books
- Wooden blocks – large maple blocks come in many shapes for building on the floor
- Large cardboard boxes to draw on and then play in
- Riding toys that they push with their feet
- Outdoor playgrounds with swings and small slides
- Dress up clothes
- Stay away from battery toys whenever possible
- Minimal to no TV.

SAFETY – POISON CONTROL 1-800-222-1222

This is the peak time for poisoning. Also, watch out for family pets since children at this age are not gentle. An eighteen month old has little awareness of danger. Watch them closely around cars, bicycles, staircases, and older active children. Do not let them run with objects such as pencils, forks, or sticks. Some learn how to climb out of their crib. If they can climb out, time to put them in a regular bed or just a mattress on the floor.

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BEHAVIOR

Eighteen month olds are developing a sense of self and independence that you will want to foster. Work on giving them choices to minimize their frustration – do you want to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt? Show them respect by letting them know the plan (we are going to put on your shoes and then go to the park; we are going to play with these blocks and then take a bath). If they throw a tantrum (and they will sometimes), at least you have shown them respect by telling them the plan. It is easier to explain the plan before the tantrum. Then, you can ignore the tantrum. If a child is treated with respect at an early age, they will grow up with a good sense of self and show others (including parents) respect.

When a child this age loses control (yells, hits, runs away from you), these parent options are appropriate - ignore, restrain, time out, pick up your child and leave the situation, and talk in a firm, quiet voice. It is never ok to hit a child. Hitting a child teaches them that you have lost control of the situation, and your child needs to trust that you will always take care of him in any situation.

A bedtime routine of brushing teeth and reading books or telling stories is important. They will know that the next step is being put in their bed to fall asleep. Some toddlers awaken frequently at night. Reassurance is usually all that is needed. Some children need for a parent to sit next to their bed to fall back asleep. Avoid feeding anything but water in the middle of the night. If you bring them to your bed, they will get used to it and expect to be there every night – it is your choice.

Toilet Training: It is best to wait until 2-2.5 years, but introduce words for urine and bowel movement at this age.

NEXT CHECK UP IS AT TWO YEARS OLD.