

# your child @™

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

## 12 to 18 months

Your child at 12 to 18 months is developing a real personality. They are still growing rapidly, but not as dramatically as in the first year. As they begin to walk, run and climb, they gain confidence and a greater sense of independence. At this stage, your child needs encouragement and freedom to explore, as well as clear boundaries and limits to feel safe.

### your child's health

#### take note...

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, at 12 months, let your doctor know if your baby:

- Does not crawl.
- Drags one side of body while crawling for over one month.
- Cannot stand while supported.
- Doesn't search for objects that are hidden while they watch.
- Says no single words.
- Does not point to objects or pictures.
- Does not use gestures such as waving or shaking head.

#### The Well Visit

At your child's one-year check-up, you should expect your doctor to:

- Give certain vaccinations, listed below, which will keep your child healthy and growing strong.

Your next visit may be at 15 or 18 months.

Typical immunizations at this age will include:

- Polio • Hepatitis B • MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- Chicken Pox • Hib • Prevnar (pneumococcal)
- DTaP or DTP

#### Sleep

At around 12 to 18 months, your child needs about 14 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. At this time, most children start giving up their morning nap and instead take one longer afternoon nap per day. As your child begins to lose the second nap, you may notice he is ready for bed a little earlier while he adjusts to the change — anytime between 6 and 8 pm.

#### Nutrition

**Eating.** At 12 months, a baby should eat a balanced diet of healthy foods, such as: squash (vegetable), bananas (fruit), cheese (dairy), or chicken (meat).

All foods should be cut into small pieces so that the child can feed independently without the risk of choking. Foods you should AVOID include:

- Raw carrots
- Nuts
- Hard candy
- Popcorn
- Hot dogs
- Whole grapes

Because your baby is still exploring most foods, they probably won't eat a lot at a single sitting. So, try to provide five or six small meals a day instead of three larger ones.

**Drinking.** By 12 months, your baby is ready to stop drinking formula and begin drinking up to 24 ounces of whole milk a day. They should be drinking from a cup rather than a bottle. Don't forget to offer water throughout the day.

#### keep in mind...

Now that your child has teeth, you should brush them daily with a baby toothbrush and water.

### your child's growth and development

Between 12 and 18 months, your child might be able to:

#### Physically

- Walk without help.
- Enjoy holding objects while walking — often one in each hand.
- Hold a crayon and scribble (but with little control).
- Gesture or point to indicate what they want.
- Turn pages in a book.
- Like to push, pull and dump things.

#### Intellectually

- Understand and follow simple, one step directions.
- Say about 8 to 20 understandable words, including "hi" and "bye" if reminded.
- Identify objects in a book, if prompted.
- Pay attention to conversations.

#### Socially and Emotionally

- Enjoy being held and read to.
- Imitate others with sounds and facial expressions.
- Play alone with toys.

### nurturing your child

#### Literacy

As your child's vocabulary grows, their interest in books and songs will grow, too. Take advantage of their interests by reading, singing and talking all the time.

- Make reading interactive by asking questions while looking at pictures and reading stories. Even though your child cannot yet answer fully, pay attention to their verbal and non-verbal responses.
- Provide your child with books that can easily be carried by little hands and which offer flaps and textures they can explore.
- Teach new songs and incorporate hand movements such as "Pat-a-Cake" and "Itsy-Bitsy Spider."

#### Discipline

Your child's growing sense of independence will push them to test their behavior with you. This is the right time to set a few limits. Your child's first rules should help protect their safety and be enforced clearly and consistently. You can also try these age-appropriate discipline techniques:

- Stay one step ahead. Distract or redirect your child from unsafe objects or activities.
- Save "no" primarily for safety issues. If your child hears "no" too often, they will start to tune it out.
- Use non-verbal communication. Give a stern or firm look for minor incidents.

#### Play

Your child's desire and ability to do things on their own will extend to their play. So, allow your child to use toys in any way they want. When your child is able to explore freely, they learn to imagine, invent and problem solve.

Other considerations:

- Plan play dates. Consider your child's nap time so they won't be too tired to spend time with their new friend. Remember, children at this age are too young to be expected to share.
- Allow time for your child to play alone. Independent play allows them to choose and direct the activity, and helps build confidence.
- Try new ways to play games like peek-a-boo and introduce new toys they can push and pull, or items they can stack such as boxes or cups.

#### take note...

Never use spanking or other physical punishment. Spanking is never an effective form of discipline.



### your child's safety

As your child becomes increasingly mobile and curious, you must make "child-proofing" your home a priority.

#### In the Car

- The AAP recommends that children younger than 2 years of age should remain in rear-facing car seats in the backseat of the car.

#### take note...

Now is the time make sure the mattress on the crib is lowered all the way. It is also important to keep the side rail up when your child is in bed.

#### Around Your House

- Block staircases and the kitchen with gates, install safety latches on toilets, drawers, and cabinets or anyplace where cleaning materials are kept.
- Cover sharp edges, electric outlets and fireplaces.
- Keep hot liquids out of reach.
- Make sure window treatments are not strangling hazards and install window guards to prevent your child from falling out.
- Call Poison Control immediately if you think your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous: 1-800-222-1222 (American Assn. of Poison Control Center)

Born Learning<sup>SM</sup> is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children.