

# Your Child at 18 to 24 Months

**IMITATION AND INDEPENDENCE ARE BIG THEMES** when it comes to the end of your child's second year. At 18 to 24 months, children are more aware of themselves as individuals. Their sense of independence grows as they start to walk, run and climb more easily. Your young child is developing thinking skills and has an increased curiosity about the nature of people and things. You may notice your child's problem-solving and memory skills improve. He or she may also be finding it easier to understand and respond to simple requests.

At this age, children will identify with their toys and will not want to share them. They may begin to show frustration when they cannot do what they want, but can usually be redirected to other interesting alternatives. It can help to offer choices rather than having to always say "no."

**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 to sleep during the day. If children are well rested, they fall asleep easier and sleep longer during the night.

**Nutrition** By 18 months, toddlers should eat most table foods cut 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 five to six small meals per day
- › Offering finger foods toddlers can feed themselves
- › Making meals fun by serving foods with a variety of colors, textures and tastes

### Physical Development

- › Walks well and runs, though may not always stop and turn well
- › Tosses or rolls balls
- › Enjoys moving on small-wheeled riding toys
- › Feeds self with a spoon
- › Begins to gain some control of bowels and bladder

### Social and Emotional Development

- › Imitates actions
- › Gets angry and may have temper tantrums
- › Acts shy around strangers
- › Has trouble sharing
- › Shows signs of independence, like saying "no" and trying to do many things on his or her own

### **Cognitive Development**

- › Refers to self by name and uses the words “me” and “mine”
- › Says 30 to 50 words
- › Copies single words spoken by someone else and uses the words “please” and “thank you” if asked
- › Chooses between two objects
- › Enjoys humming or trying to sing familiar songs
- › Uses two- to three-word sentences

### **ADDITIONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR BABY AT 18 TO 24 MONTHS**

A Home Safety Checklist should be completed at each stage of your child’s development. A sample checklist is provided for you on page 70.

- › Prevent climbing accidents by using “L” brackets to secure large objects and furniture and installing window guards to prevent your child from falling out
- › Reduce the risk of injuries from falls by seeking out playgrounds with soft surfaces like sand, woodchips or rubber
- › Prevent poisoning by never referring to vitamins or medicine as candy
- › Prevent burns by keeping matches and lighters out of children’s reach and avoiding use of portable heaters in rooms where children play or sleep.

### **Positive Parenting Activities that Promote Nurturing and Attachment**

- › Praise good behavior
- › Ignore small incidents and accidents, such as spilled milk
- › Give your child the opportunity to correct misbehavior by giving a second chance
- › Never use spanking or other physical punishment and limit your use of the word “no”
- › Model good behavior
- › Talk and read to your child every day to encourage language development
- › When you leave, give your child an object that will soothe him and make him feel close to you
- › To encourage good behavior from your child, you should try to be patient as well as clear and consistent with your rules and consequences



### **When to be Concerned**

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

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

### **HERE'S HELP**

Use the **Family Resources on pages 72–78** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.

