

Ages and Stages: 12 to 18 Months

This is a very active time in your growing child's life. Your 1-year-old is practicing many new skills. He or she is crawling, walking, running, climbing, throwing and kicking. Children at this age learn about many things through action and exploring. They begin to want more independence, wanting to do many things by themselves. They are very busy and curious. They need adults to be understanding and have a good sense of humor.

Look at your child grow!

When your child is 12 to 15 months old, he or she may:

- walk by him or herself, but is probably still unsteady.
- learn to run, most likely on his or her toes.
- like to help dress him or herself.
- enjoy feeding him or herself.
- use a spoon, but not very well yet.
- show you what they want by pointing at the object.

When your child is 15 to 18 months old, he or she may:

- enjoy climbing and taking things apart.
- say about six to 20 words---or maybe more.
- stack things and make towers.
- hold his or her own drinking cup in both hands.
- walk by him or herself and seldom fall.
- walk up stairs with help.
- understand some words.
- points to objects and names pictures.

Your child wants you to know several things. He or she may:

- need you to help him or her find safe places to run, climb and explore.
- be messy feeding him or herself, but practicing helps the child learn.
- need lots of loving attention, like hugs, kisses and encouragement.
- want to carry around a special toy or blanket in order to feel safe.
- need you to pay attention when he or she is being good. Children need to know how to get your attention in a positive way.
- need to be shown what to do. Saying "no" only tells a child that you don't approve. Children will better understand if you show them what to do.

- enjoy having books read to him or her. Help the child look at the pictures in books or magazines. Talk about what the child is seeing.
- need lots of protection from accidents. Children are exploring all they time and don't know what is unsafe.
- feel strong and confident when you help him or her try new things. Children learn from doing things on their own.
- be a little scientist who is experimenting with different activities. For example, when a child repeatedly throws a spoon on the floor, he or she is trying to understand spoons and throwing.
- need your careful attention. Every child is different. If you watch your child closely, you will get clues about how to help him or her grow.

Your child is an active learner who:

- likes to explore spaces and objects.
- wants to try doing more things on his or her own.
- can follow simple, clear instructions.
- understands more than he or she can say.
- tries to make new, exciting and interesting things happen.

Your child is learning to connect with other people and may:

- use words like "no" and "mine" a lot.
- begin to imitate the behaviors of other children.
- begin to recognize him or herself as a person separate from the family.
- NOT share well yet.

Play helps your child learn. He or she may:

- be possessive of toys and not understand the idea of sharing.
- play around other children, but not with them.
- approach other children by offering looks and smiles, and offering objects.

Your child may enjoy toys and activities such as:

- large blocks and other items that he or she can stack and build with that are safe.
- large pieces of paper to draw on with big crayons.
- toys they can pull around.
- toys that can be safely taken apart, put inside each other, or stacked.
- balls to kick and catch.
- simple books with pictures and sturdy pages.
- board books
- books with songs
- rhymes
- simple stories and pictures
- wide, water-based markers
- fat, nontoxic crayons

- large, blank paper
- large blocks
- people, animals and vehicles made of wood or rubber
- sand and water play with plastic measuring cups, boats, containers and washable dolls.

* The information is considered typical for this age. If you have questions about your child's development, contact your pediatrician or health care professional. If we do all we can do to help children develop and grow now, they will have the best chance to succeed in life.

Adapted from Alabama Cooperative Extension System by Traci Johnston. Originally developed by Ellen Abell and H. Wallace Goddard.