

# 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. She is still growing rapidly, but not as dramatically as in the first year. As she begins to walk, run and climb, she gains 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 1 month.
- Can not stand while supported.
- Doesn't search for objects that are hidden while he watches.
- 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 at left, which will keep your child healthy and growing strong.
- Recommend the PPD test to check for tuberculosis exposure and possibly a blood test for anemia and lead.

Your next visit may be at 15 or 18 months.

#### Typical immunizations at this age can include:

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

#### 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 pm 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
- Hotdogs
- Whole grapes

Because your baby is still exploring most foods, she 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. You should also begin weaning him off drinking from a bottle, offering a sippy cup instead. Don't forget to offer water throughout the day.

#### tip...

Now that your child has teeth, you can start brushing them with a baby's 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 she wants.
- Turn pages in a book.
- Like to push, pull and dump things.

#### Intellectually

- Understand and follow simple, one step directions.
- Say about 8–20 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.

Sources: *Your Baby's First Year* and *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shelov, MD, FAAP, editor in chief; *Understanding Children*, Civitas and Richard Saul Wurman; *KidBasics*, Civitas; *Healthy Sleep, Happy Child*, Marc Weissbluth, MD.

Civitas thanks Parents as Teachers, an international early childhood parent education and family support program, for their ongoing support.

### nurturing your child

#### Literacy

As your child's vocabulary grows, his interest in books and songs will grow, too. Take advantage of his interest 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 his verbal and nonverbal responses.
- Provide your child with books that can easily be carried by little hands and which offer flaps and textures he can explore.
- Teach new songs and incorporate hand movements such as Pat-a-Cake and the Itsy Bitsy Spider.

#### Discipline

Your child's growing sense of independence will push her to test her behavior with you. This is the right time to set a few limits. Your child's first rules should help protect her 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, she 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 her own will extend to her play. So, allow your child to use toys in any way she wants. When your child is able to explore freely, she learns to imagine, invent and problem solve. Other considerations:

- Plan play dates. Consider your child's nap time so she won't be too tired to spend time with her 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 him to choose and direct the activity, and helps build confidence.
- Try new ways to play games like peek-a-boo and introduce new toys she can push and pull, or items she can stack such as boxes or cups.

#### 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

- At 12 months and 20 pounds, your baby should ride in a forward facing car seat—preferably in the middle of the backseat of the car.
- For more information, go to [www.fitforakid.org](http://www.fitforakid.org).

#### 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.**

Born Learning™ is a public engagement and material distribution campaign that provides important information about what young children need every day to ensure quality early learning. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas.

For more information, visit us online at [bornlearning.org](http://bornlearning.org).

