

Key Development Milestones for Your Child at 18 to 24 Months



Highlights

Development milestones are social, emotional, and physical skills that children develop over time.

Different skills, emotions, and activities emerge at different ages.

Every child develops at their own pace.

If you are concerned about your child's development, consult a doctor or child health professional.

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What Are Development Milestones?

Development milestones are social, emotional, and physical skills that children develop as they grow. These milestones include crawling, walking, talking, playing with toys, and self-feeding.

Children typically reach these milestones in a similar order, but each child develops at their own pace.

If you are concerned about whether your child is reaching their milestones within the expected period, consult a doctor or child health professional.

How Can I Help My Child to Develop?

Toddlers experience rapid development, but every child reaches milestones at their own pace.

To support development:

Ensure your child gets 11-14 hours of sleep in 24 hours, with 10-12 hours at night and 1-2 hours during the day. A consistent bedtime routine can help with sleep.

Encourage and praise your child when they try new activities to build confidence.

Support their existing skills to encourage further development.

Provide opportunities to explore their surroundings while staying close for security.

Talk and read to your toddler to help them develop language skills.

What Physical Skills Should My Child Have at 18 to 24 Months?

By 18 months, most toddlers can walk and may begin to run. They may also start to go downstairs with assistance.

Other physical milestones include:

Eating habits may change, with some toddlers eating less due to slower growth. Toddlers may become fussy about food and want to eat independently using a

spoon, cup, or fork.

Some toddlers begin helping with undressing, such as removing socks, shoes, or clothing.

Improved coordination allows them to kick or throw a ball, scribble with a pencil, and build with blocks.

They may enjoy pulling toys, stacking cups, and attempting tasks on their own.

What Social and Emotional Skills Should I Expect by 18 to 24 Months?

Toddlers at this age begin to interact more with the world around them.

They may:

Give objects to others

Pretend to feed a doll

Point at interesting things

Enjoy playing near other children without directly interacting \(\parallel play\)

Emotional development includes experiencing emotions like anger, shame, and excitement.

They may deliberately test limits, sometimes leading to temper tantrums. These tantrums may include anger, crying, shouting, running away, or other expressions of frustration. Hunger or tiredness can make tantrums more frequent.

Separation anxiety may be strongest around 18 months and may lessen by 24 months.

What Should My Child Be Able to Understand and Communicate at 18 to 24 Months?

By 18 to 24 months, toddlers typically:

Find hidden objects

Sort shapes and colors

Complete familiar rhymes or song lyrics

Name objects in books

Language development milestones include:

Learning and using 1-7 new words per week
Naming body parts like "nose"
Mimicking animal sounds
Pointing to objects in books
Following simple instructions
Using words like "more," "no," and "why"
By 24 months, knowing 50+ words and forming two-word sentences
Understanding and using words like "I," "we," and "me"
Toddlers may start linking emotions with words, showing affection by giving toys or hugs.

Toilet Training

Some toddlers show signs of toilet training readiness around 18 months, but many are ready closer to 24 months.

Signs of readiness include:

Noticing a soiled diaper
Showing interest in others using the toilet
Communicating when they need to go

Forcing toilet training too early can cause frustration. Follow your child's cues and keep the process relaxed.

What If I Am Worried About My Child?

Children develop at different rates. Consider speaking to a doctor or child health professional if your 2-year-old:

Cannot use two-word phrases like "drink milk"
Does not recognize common objects like a hairbrush, phone, fork, or spoon
Does not copy words or actions
Cannot follow simple instructions
Cannot walk steadily
Has lost previously learned skills

If you have concerns about your child's development, seek professional advice.

What Vaccines Does My Child Need?

Routine childhood vaccinations help protect your child's health.

At 18 months, recommended vaccines include:

Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella (chickenpox) (MMRV)

Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough)

Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) vaccine

Check with a healthcare professional for specific vaccination recommendations.

Tools and Assistance

Parenting Helplines

Parenting helplines provide immediate support and advice for parents concerned about their child's development. These services can help you understand milestones, offer tips on managing challenging behavior, and answer any questions you may have.

Early Intervention Services

If you're worried about your child's development, early intervention programs can provide the help your child needs. These services often include speech therapy, occupational therapy, and developmental assessments to address any delays or concerns.

Educational Resources

Access to books, interactive apps, and learning materials can support your child's development at home. Many libraries and websites offer free resources to help with language skills, social development, and creative play.

Pediatric Care

Regular check-ups with a pediatrician are essential to track your child's growth and development. If you have concerns about your child's physical or emotional progress, your pediatrician can offer guidance or referrals to specialists.