

18 Month Old Handout

Development

- Your child will begin turning pages of a book and looking at the pictures.
- She should be walking and may be running stiffly.
- Your child should be saying 4 or more words, including “no”, and understanding more complicated commands.
- She should be feeding herself and drinking from a cup.
- Your child is now able to climb up onto a chair or couch.
- Children this age became aware of all body parts and may touch their genitals.

Talking and Hearing

- Read and sing to your child often.
- Talk about and describe pictures in books.
- Use simple words with your child.
- Tell your child the words for her feelings.
- Ask your child simple questions, confirm her answers, and explain simply.
- Use simple, clear words to tell your child what you want her to do.

Your Child and Family

- Create time for your family to be together.
- Keep outings with a toddler brief—1 hour or less.
- Do not expect a toddler to share.
- Give older children a safe place for toys they do not want to share.
- Teach your child not to hit, bite, or hurt other people or pets.
- Your child may go from trying to be independent to clinging; this is normal.
- Consider enrolling in a parent-toddler playgroup.
- Ask us for help in finding programs to help your family.
- Prepare for your new baby by reading books about being a big brother or sister.
- Spend time with each child.
- Make sure you are also taking care of yourself.
- Tell your child when he is doing a good job. Praise is important in reinforcing good behaviors.

Feeding

- Make family mealtimes pleasant.
- Present food in a form your child can handle and in appropriate quantities.
- Make food soft and moist and serve at room temperature.
- Limit juice and milk to increase food intake.
- Your child should probably drink 16-24 ounces of milk a day.
- Give your toddler many chances to try a new food. Allow mouthing and touching to learn about them.
- Tell us if you need help with getting enough food for your family.

Safety

- Use a car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.
- Your child should still be rear-facing until 2 years old or until they reach the seat’s weight/height requirements for rear-facing use.

- Read the instructions about your car safety seat to check on the weight and height requirements.
- Everyone should always wear a seatbelt in the car.
- Lock away poisons, medications, and lawn and cleaning supplies.
- Call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222) if you are worried your child has eaten something harmful.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs and guards on windows on the second floor and higher.
- Move furniture away from windows.
- Watch your child closely when she is on the stairs.
- When backing out of the garage or driving in the driveway, have another adult hold your child a safe distance away so he is not run over.
- Never have a gun in the home. If you must have a gun, store it unloaded and locked with the ammunition locked separately from the gun.
- Prevent burns by keeping hot liquids, matches, lighters, and the stove away from your child.
- Have a working smoke detector on every floor.

Toilet Training

- Teaching is best accomplished when your child is ready. This is usually between the ages of 18 months and 3 years.
- Signs of being ready for toilet training include:
 - Dry for 2 hours
 - Knows if he/she is wet or dry
 - Uses word signals (“wee-wee”, etc) which indicates your child is aware of the urge to urinate or defecate.
 - Can pull pants down and up
 - Wants to learn
- Read books about toilet training with your child.
- Have the parent of the same sex as your child or an older brother or sister take your child to the bathroom.
- Praise sitting on the potty or toilet even with clothes on.
- Give lots of positive reinforcement, avoid scolding, and be patient.
- Be aware that the process can take months.
- Take your child to choose underwear when he feels ready to do so.
- Many children are still wetting the bed at night until the age of 6 or 7 years.
- Plan on postponing toilet training if there are other major changes in your child’s life such as moving to a new home or having a new sibling, or if you try teaching and fail.

Your Child’s Behavior

- Set limits that are important to you and ask others to use them with your toddler.
- Be consistent with your toddler.
- Praise your child for behaving well.
- Play with your child each day by doing things she likes.
- Temper tantrums and bad behavior will occur. Avoid reacting with anger.
- Avoid doing things that may bring on a tantrum. If your child’s tantrum occurs when she is tired, hungry, and in public places, avoid trips to the store when she is due for a nap and bring a snack along.
- Acknowledge your child’s feelings (“You’re feeling angry because you cannot have that toy”).
- When bad behavior occurs, keep your child in a safe place and try to ignore the behavior.
- An effective means of discipline is time-outs.
 - Keep time-outs brief (general rule - 1 minute per year of age).
 - Tell your child in simple words what she/he did wrong.

- Please refer to the “Time-Out” handout for details.
- Tell your child what to do in a nice way.
- Change your child’s focus to another toy or activity if she becomes upset.
- Parenting class can help you understand your child’s behavior and teach you what to do.
- Expect your child to cling to you in new situations.

Immunizations

- Your child received the Dtap and Hepatitis A vaccines today.
- There is a small chance your child will develop a fever, or have pain or redness at the injection site.
- You may give your child acetaminophen or ibuprofen for any of these symptoms.
- If your child has a fever higher than 102 F, call our office.
- For more vaccine information, go to www.cdc.gov/vaccines/.

The next check up is the 21 Month Visit.

Poison Help:

1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:

1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org