

Your Child's Development

This is a delightful stage as children begin to talk and talk and then talk some more. Toddlers are also starting to pretend. This is a big step in their development and makes life really fun and often very funny.

How do you see your child starting to use her imagination?



What Your Toddler Can Do	What You Can Do
<p>I am learning new words every day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may say as many as 50-100 words by my second birthday. • I may even put 2 words together to make my first sentences! 	<p>Turn your child's words and phrases into sentences. When he says, <i>More milk</i>, you can say: <i>You want more milk in your cup.</i></p> <p>Talk as you read. Ask your child questions about the pictures and stories you read together.</p>
<p>I need help to begin learning self-control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand <i>no</i> but I still can't control my feelings and actions. • I may get frustrated when I can't do something by myself. Please be patient with me! 	<p>Put your child's feelings into words. <i>I know you're really mad that I turned the TV off. It's okay to feel mad. Instead of TV, would you like to read or play with blocks now?</i></p>
<p>I am beginning to use my imagination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may feed my doll pretend food. • I might make <i>brrrummm</i> noises when I play with cars. 	<p>Play pretend with your toddler. You can be a puppy, barking and running after a ball.</p> <p>Jump-start your child's imagination with dress-up clothes, animal figures, blocks, and plastic food and dishes.</p>
<p>I am a little scientist, always testing things out!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I love to fill and dump and open and close things to see how they work. • I may start to sort objects. I might put all my trains in one place and all my cars in another. 	<p>Help your child practice sorting. Ask your child to help you sort the laundry by putting socks in one pile and shirts in another.</p> <p>Encourage lots of exploration. Fill and dump with water or sand. Make an indoor "sandbox" of dry oatmeal or fall leaves.</p>
<p>I am becoming an even better problem-solver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may blow on my food when you tell me dinner is hot or try to get my own jacket on. 	<p>Help your child solve a problem but don't do it all for him. The more he does, the more he learns.</p> <p>Play games that use problem-solving skills. Try three- or four-piece puzzles or building with blocks.</p>



As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child's health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family's cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child's development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: www.zerotothree.org

What's on Your Mind

My 2 year-old definitely understands the word *no* since he uses it all the time. But when I say, *No touching the lamp!* he stops for a minute but then does it anyway.

Toddlers understand a lot of what you tell them. They just don't have much self-control yet. So while your son may stop when he hears you say *No*, he cannot stop himself from doing it again. He can't tell himself: *I really want to play with this lamp, but it's against the rules so I better not.* For now, make your home as child-safe as possible so you can use fewer *Nos*. When you do set a limit (*No touching the lamp*), guide your child away from it and offer a substitute—like a flashlight—to play with. Self-control takes years to develop. Your child will need lots of patience and consistency from you along the way.

Did You Know...

Parents may deal with challenging behavior in their toddlers every 3 to 9 minutes.¹

What It Means for You:

Testing is part of a toddler's healthy development. They do this by trying out different behaviors and seeing what reaction they get. How you respond makes a big difference in what your child learns and how she behaves. When you set limits:

Be clear about rules. Toddlers need lots of reminders about rules because their memory is still developing.

Be specific. Say *Please put the blocks in the box* instead of *Clean up your toys.*

Spotlight on Language Development

Learning to talk is one of the most important milestones of the first few years. How and when young children learn to use spoken words is different for every child. Some children may use words early and often, while others may take longer to speak. (If you have questions about your child's language development, talk with your health care provider or other trusted professional.)

Build your child's vocabulary through repetition. When your child uses the same sound over and over to name an object, it is considered a "word." If your child always says *muh* when he wants milk, it means that he understands this sound stands for a specific object—that yummy white stuff. Correct pronunciation will come over time. You can help him learn how to pronounce words by saying what you know he means: *You want more milk?*

Notice how your child uses his actions to communicate. Non-verbal communication is very important. When a toddler takes your hand and leads you to a toy, she is using her actions to say, *I want to play with this toy.* If your child is communicating through

actions like this, her spoken language skills will likely follow. You can help by repeating the message your child is sending: *You'd like me to play with you. Here I come!*

Talk together with your child. The more you talk with your child, the more words he will learn. He's learning language from you—his first, and best, teacher.

Young children benefit from learning two languages at the same time. This is a wonderful way for children to develop a close bond with their community and culture. As your child's language skills grow, be prepared for some "language mixing." It is common for children to combine words in English and in their home language in the same sentence.

Be consistent. Use the same consequences. For example, every time your child throws a toy off the high chair take the toy away for a few minutes. Then let him try again.

Stay calm. All children test the rules. The more calmly you respond, the more effective you will be at teaching your child self-control.

What is most challenging about limit-setting for you? Why? What might you do differently to feel more successful?



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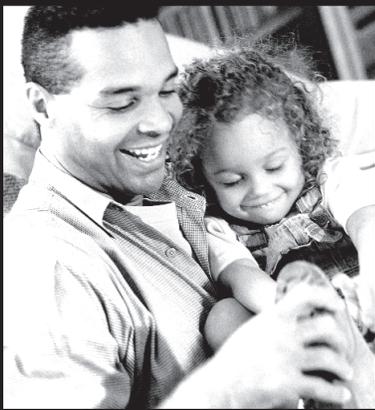
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Healthy Minds: Nurturing Your Child's Development from **18 to 24 Months**

What do we really know about how a young child develops? What can parents do to best support their child's healthy development and growing brain? Some of the answers are in this series of *Healthy Minds* handouts. Each handout is based on findings from a report* from the National Academy of Sciences that examined the research on child and brain development to establish what is known about the early years. The information we offer is age-specific, summarizes key findings from the report and suggests how you might be able to use these key findings to nurture your own child's healthy development.

These handouts are brought to you by ZERO TO THREE, the nation's leading resource on the first 3 years of life, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, dedicated to the health of all children.



► Key findings from the report include:

- Your relationship with your child is the foundation of his or her healthy development.
- Your child's development depends on both the traits he or she was born with (nature), and what he or she experiences (nurture).
- All areas of development (social/emotional/intellectual/language/motor) are linked. Each depends on, and influences, the others.
- What children experience, including how their parents respond to them, shapes their development as they adapt to the world.

How it looks in everyday family life:

Darryl is excited about taking his 21-month-old daughter, Alicia, to story hour at the local library. He is planning to meet a friend there, who is taking his own daughter. As they enter the room, Alicia spots the noisy crowd, buries her head in her dad's legs, and pulls him toward the door, whining, "Go home!" Darryl is disappointed and tries to get her to take a seat in the circle of children that's forming. But the more he pushes, the more distressed she becomes. Dad is ready to give up and go home. As they are leaving, he sees Alicia look at a book. He stops and asks if she'd like to read it and she nods yes. They sit in the back of the room and read quietly together. The group begins, and Alicia starts to look up more and more frequently to watch and listen to the storyteller. The next week, when Darryl asks if she'd like to go to story time, Alicia smiles and says, "Yes!"

This shows how all areas of Alicia's development are linked and how her father's response encourages her healthy development. Because of Alicia's **social and emotional connection** to her father, he is the one she goes to for safety and comfort when she is feeling anxious. She knows that she can count on her father for support. Her **intellectual ability** enables her to communicate her feelings by using her **language skills** – gestures, facial expressions and words. She uses her **motor ability** to pull on Dad to get him to take her home. Darryl's response helps Alicia master a challenging situation. He is able to put aside his own interest in staying at the group and "listens" to what Alicia is trying to tell him. This allows him to help her feel more comfortable entering a new situation, now and in the future.

Relationships are the foundation of healthy development.



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Charting Your Child's Healthy Development: 18 to 24 months

The following chart describes many of the things your toddler is learning between 18 and 24 months and what you can do to support your child in all areas of her development. As you read, remember that children develop at their own pace and in their own way. Understanding who your child is, what her strengths are and where she needs more support, is essential for promoting her healthy development. If you have questions regarding your child's development, ask your pediatrician.

What's going on:	What you can do:	Questions to ask yourself:
<p>Toddlers' vocabularies are growing by leaps and bounds. They are learning and saying many new words, and stringing words together, such as "Dolly fall." Toddlers are very independent and eager to be in control. Among their favorite words are "Me" and "Mine!"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expand on what your child says. When she says, "Dolly fall!" you can say, "Yes, Dolly tumbled down to the floor!" This helps you expand your child's language skills. ● Give your toddler ways to feel in control by giving choices among options that are all acceptable. Let her choose between the red or blue cup and the pink or green shirt. Avoid asking her opinions when only one option is okay; for example, do not ask, "Are you ready to go?" unless she can stay longer. Use language to help her predict what will happen. "In five minutes it will be time to go." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are your child's strengths in communicating? Where does she need help? ● How does your child express her thoughts and feelings? Is she more likely to use her words or actions? How do you respond?
<p>Toddlers are developing self-control, but they still cannot stop themselves from doing something unacceptable, even after many reminders. They also don't yet understand the consequences of their actions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help prevent tantrums or loss of control by heading them off at the pass. If you see your child getting frustrated, try to calm her down and suggest another activity before she starts hurling puzzle pieces. Help your obviously angry toddler avoid a fight with her friend by inviting them to pause for a snack. ● Use consequences that are directly connected to the behavior of your child. If she is pouring water on her high chair after being told not to, take her out of her high chair. Then offer other acceptable options such as water play in the bathtub or outside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What behaviors do you find most difficult to handle? Why? ● How were you disciplined as a child? How do you think that influences how you discipline your child?
<p>Toddlers are able to play and explore in more complex ways. They like toys that they can play with in many different ways such as blocks, cars and stuffed animals that lend themselves to imaginative play.</p> <p>Toddlers love to move. In just a matter of months, children go from crawling to walking to practically running! Practicing their new moves strengthens the brain connections that help with coordination. Children learn a lot from active play. For example, they learn about gravity and up and down when they swing and go down the slide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide your child with objects and toys that lend themselves to imaginative play and join in with them. You will learn a lot about her thoughts and feelings and can help her expand her thinking. Sand, water, play dough and drawing materials are all good choices for children this age. They help develop your child's creativity and strengthen muscles that your toddler will use later in handwriting. ● Turn a walk into a learning opportunity. Point out big and small dogs in the park. Talk about the colors of the cars on the street. This kind of learning makes new ideas and concepts stick. <p><i>*The report, From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, was a 2½-year effort by a group of 17 leading professionals with backgrounds in neuroscience, psychology, child development, economics, education, pediatrics, psychiatry and public policy. They reviewed what was known about the nature of early child development and the influence of early experiences on children's health and well-being. The study was sponsored by a number of federal agencies and private foundations.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are some of the ways your child uses pretend play? What does this tell you about her? ● What do you most/least enjoy about playing with your toddler?

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For more information go to:
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Television and Video Viewing

Children Ages 0-2

- Research shows that most infants and toddlers watch between 1-2 hours of television/videos per day. Television is likely on in the background much more than one realizes. No evidence has shown that TV is beneficial or educational for young children.
- Before the age of 2 years, children develop important listening skills, social skills, play skills and language skills. Children at this age learn through playing and exploring their environment and interacting with others. When the TV is on even just in the background, children tend to vocalize less. When children are watching television/videos they are not moving, exploring and learning through play or interacting with anyone! They also tend to "tune out" other sounds and become less responsive listeners. Also children learn through real-life experiences much better than through television.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under 2 years of age should not be exposed to television and videos. Some harmful effects of television/video watching include difficulty learning words or language delay, attention problems in later childhood, and decreased social interactions.
- Research done on children under age 2 who regularly watched Baby Einstein DVDs showed a decrease in language skills when compared to children who did not watch these videos.
- As a part of our developmental evaluations at the Developmental Clinic, we recommend turning television and videos off until your child can have a conversation with you about what they watch. Instead, play turn-taking games, describe their play activities in simple language, encourage their imaginations, go for walks, or read with your child.