

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES: Your Child at Eighteen Months



What are developmental milestones?

Developmental milestones are skills that are achieved by most children by a certain age. Developmental milestones include physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication skills that are appropriate for the child's age. Milestones give important clues to a child's health and well-being. Any child who is delayed in their milestones should be further evaluated by a health or developmental professional.

- **Social and Emotional milestones** include how children learn about their own emotions and the emotions of others. These milestones also involve learning how to interact and play with other people.
- **Language and Communication milestones** involve language, speech, and nonverbal communication (for example, hand gestures or facial expressions). These milestones include a baby's babbling, first words, and even the art of listening to others and holding a conversation.
- **Movement/Physical development** involves both gross-motor skills and fine-motor skills. Gross motor skills are typically the first to develop. Gross motor skills include the ability to support their head, sit up, stand, crawl and walk. Fine-motor skills involve precise movements such as grasping a spoon, picking up small objects, and drawing.
- **Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving) milestones** are centered on a child's ability to think, learn and solve problems. Cognitive milestones include an infant learning how to react to different facial expressions and a preschooler learning to say the alphabet.

As a parent, you spend the most time with your child and know them the best. If your child is not meeting these milestones for his or her age, or if you think there could be a problem with the way your child plays, learns, speaks, or acts, it is important to tell your health care provider so they can assess your child's development. Discuss any concerns with your primary care provider at your child's 18-month well child exam.

Your Child at 18 Months Old

This is what most children do at this age:

Social/Emotional

- Likes to hand things to others as play
- May have temper tantrums
- May be afraid of strangers
- Shows affection to familiar people
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a doll
- May cling to caregivers in new situations
- Points to show others something interesting
- Explores alone but with parent close by

Language/Communication

- Says several single words
- Says and shakes head "no"
- Points to show someone what he wants

Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Knows what ordinary things are for; for example, telephone, brush, spoon
- Points to get the attention of others
- Shows interest in a doll or stuffed animal by pretending to feed
- Points to one body part
- Scribbles on his own
- Can follow 1-step verbal commands without any gestures; for example, sits when you say "sit down"

Movement/Physical Development

- Walks alone
- May walk up steps and run
- Pulls toys while walking
- Can help undress herself
- Drinks from a cup
- Eats with a spoon

Tell your doctor if you notice any of these signs of developmental delay for this age. Every community should also have a early childhood intervention program that can help assess your child.

Reference and Resources

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/developmentalscreening.pdf

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/> (Texas Early Childhood Intervention services)

To refer a child to Texas Early Childhood Intervention Services for developmental evaluation and developmental support services, call: 1-800-628-5115

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