

Fine Motor Development 12-18 Months

Fine Motor Milestones

- Starting to use a spoon efficiently when feeding themselves
- Throwing a small ball forward
- Operating simple toys
- Stacking a few blocks or toys on top of each other
- Using a crayon, pencil, or pen to mark on a paper

What is important during this age?

Your toddler is becoming more efficient at feeding themselves finger foods. They're able to interact with their toys by pushing buttons, turning pages of a book and picking up toys.

What can you do to support fine motor development?

Offer your toddler the opportunity to pick up small foods while eating. This will help build the small muscles in their fingers and hands while also promoting hand-eye coordination. Toys with buttons can be motivating to help your baby use their hands. A pull toy with a string can also be a great motivator for using their hands.

Gross Motor Development

12-18 Months

Milestones

- Pulls and pushes toys while walking
- Walks alone
- Walks more than they crawl
- Begins to run
- Kicks a ball
- Throwing a ball
- Goes downstairs while holding onto you for support and balance

What is important during this age?

During this time, your toddler will begin improving their coordination, balance and other skills needed for walking. You will notice they will begin to crawl less and walk more. By 18 months, your child will even be able to run and kick a ball forward.

What can you do to support motor development?

Provide practice for your toddler to work on their walking skills. Chasing a ball, pulling a toy on a string, or playing a simplified game of hide and seek in your living room can all provide your baby the opportunity to build coordination.

Extra caution needs to be taken with any stairs in the home during this time. Your toddler will want to work on walking down stairs while holding onto your hand and will need a lot of careful practice to develop this skill safely. Using baby gates at the top and bottom of stairs can increase safety for your toddler.

Social & Emotional Development

12-18 Months

Milestones

- Demonstrates a variety of emotions
- Mimics actions and responses
- Offers comfort through pats, kisses, hugs
- Laughs and smiles
- Seeks comfort when upset
- Likes games, stories, and books with repetition
- Likes to make others laugh

What is important during this age?

Your child is starting to understand actions and consequences as well as understanding structures and routines.

What can you do?

Help your child understand their day by using routines and make transitions easier by letting your child know what is going to happen next. Respond when they are upset or worried. Play games like a peek-a-boo. Laugh and sing songs with your child. Start labeling emotions “I can tell you are sad because you are crying” or “I can tell you are mad because you have such a frown on your face.” This help children to learn to recognize the emotions they are feeling and their response to feelings. Offer questions like “do you want the red cup or the blue?” to help your child make choices and feel involved.

Self-Help Skills

12-18 Months

Milestones

- Improving self-feeding skills
- Pushing arms through sleeve and lifting feet to have a shoe put on and pushing leg through pants
- Improving skills with a spoon
- Improving skills with drinking from an open cup
- Climbing over obstacles or up onto chair

What is important during this age?

Your toddler is starting to understand routines associated with self-care skills. They will begin to help with dressing by pushing their arms through sleeves and legs through pants. They will also sit and lift their feet so that you can put their shoes on.

What can you do?

Have your toddler practice using a small spoon during eating. They may drop pieces and struggle getting the food onto the spoon, but practice will help develop the fine motor coordination needed to successfully eat with a spoon. Also offer an open-cup (Sippy cup with no lid) so your child can practice bringing the cup to their mouth and back to table.

Toothbrush battles?

- **Try using a visual timer or app**
- **Let your child hold the toothbrush under your hand as you brush**
- **Let your child pick out a brush with their favorite character. Brushes with lights or music can help them brush for 2 minutes**

Speech and Language Development

12-18 Months

Language Milestones

12-18 Months

- Points at things they want
- Uses 6-8 or more words
- Says “no”
- Uses gestures like shaking head no or waving bye
- Attempts to say words you say
- Uses changes in tone while talking
- Follows simple request such as “Get the ball”

What is important during this age?

Your toddler understands much more language than they are able to express. They will be able to understand and respond to simple requests.

What can you do to support language development?

Support language by frequent communication throughout the day. Read to your child every day. Ask questions when you are reading and talk about the pictures. Prompt your child to try using new words and label objects that they point at. Narrate your day and encourage your child to repeat words you are saying.