

## An Ideal Age For Trips

Your toddler is the ideal age for regular trips to a nearby park or playground. Weather permitting, you can both dress for the season and enjoy some outdoor play year-round. Follow this checklist to make sure that no accidents spoil your toddler's playground fun.

- ♥ Is the play equipment strongly embedded in the ground? Make sure nothing wobbles.
- ♥ Is there grass, straw or wood chips beneath the slide, for a "soft landing"?
- ♥ Is the area free of pipes or objects sticking out of the ground that could cause your toddler to trip?

- ♥ Are there toddler-safe swings? The safest are chain swings with box-type seats and restraining bars.
- ♥ Is the sandbox clean and free of animal matter, sharp objects or any hidden dangers? You might bring along a small toy rake to clear a space for your child's sandbox play.
- ♥ Is the play equipment shaded from the sun? In warm weather, a metal slide could burn small legs.
- ♥ Is the slide a safe height? No child under eight years of age should climb or even play near a slide higher than five to six feet.



## Protect Your Toddler Against Diseases

By the 18<sup>th</sup> month, most toddlers have received all their early childhood immunizations. Additional vaccines will be required at around age four. Be sure your youngster is up to date. Did he or she have the Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) Vaccine at 12 - 15 months? Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tetanus (DPT) Vaccine at 15 to 18 months?

The American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends a "well child's visit" to your toddler's doctor at age 18 months. Be sure to ask your doctor any questions you may have about your child's health, behavior or growth.

## Check These Out!

Visit your nearby Public Library. You'll find these and other resources to check out free on your library card.

**My very first mother goose** / Edited by Iona Opie; illustrated by Rosemary Wells (CB)

**Games to play with toddlers** / By Jackie Silberg (B)

**What to expect the toddler years** / Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi E. Murkoff, Sandee E. Hathaway (B)

**Can a cherry pie wave goodbye?** / Songs for learning through music and movement (CD)

(B) book, (CD) Sound Recording  
(CB) children's book to read to your child

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# Healthy Stages

## 18-24 MONTHS

Now you're going to need every ounce of those skills, plus patience and understanding. Child development experts say that the period from 18 to 30 months can be trying - for both you and your toddler. He wants to do everything himself! She wants to do it at her pace! He gets frustrated. She says "No!" a dozen times a day. Listen to Dr. Burton L. White, author of *The First Three Years of Life*. He says, "Why a child has to become ornery and stay that way for six or seven months is one of the mysteries

that make the study of children so rich and fascinating."

But there's fun ahead, too! You can hold conversations with your toddler now. And, as he or she discovers some new skill, you can almost see that cartoon-style light bulb turn on overhead, to the tune of "Aha! That's how it's done!" Cherish these

days. Take pictures. Write down funny things that happen. The memories will warm your heart all through life.



# Eighteenth Thru Twenty-fourth Month

## TOYS FOR NOW

Research has shown that the quality of a child's play life is closely linked to development. Play is your toddler's "job" at this stage. For the next 18 months, the play stage of your child's life is described as "learning to learn". You'll see lots of curiosity about how things work, and imitations of how adults do things. A toddler who is encouraged in this stage of "learning to learn" will become a preschooler who is excited about going off to school. He will welcome new experiences. She will greet challenges with, "I'd like to try that!" Here are toys and activities, which your toddler will enjoy. They're ideal for this "learning to learn" stage!

## Swing and slide equipment

If you can have safe, sturdy equipment for the backyard, great! If not, make frequent trips to a local park or playground. (See the Safety article that follows for additional tips).

## Toys with "Little People"

They come in sets, including a firehouse, a farmhouse, a schoolhouse, a home and a school bus. The Fisher-Price brand is one of



several that feature sturdy, colorful people which fit into round slots in the houses, cars, tractors and other play pieces. Toddlers love "pretend play" with little people!

## Story and Picture Books

Toddlers can learn many new words by being read good books with simple stories. Special favorites are stories with repeating words or actions, such as those in "The Three Little Pigs", or "Goldilocks and the Three Bears."

## Beach Balls

Experts say balls are the single most popular toy of the second year of life! Inflatable plastic balls cost very little, so it's possible to get a number of them in different sizes and colors. Get one really big one that inflates to at least 24 inches across. Your toddler will love carrying, throwing and kicking it around.

## Notes on Nurturing

### Make Time For Cuddles

You sometimes may wonder "Where did last year's adorable little baby go?" But remember, though your toddler is growing, this rugged individualist still needs lots of nurturing. Be sure to find time to show love, through your words, touch and actions. Here are suggested ways to slip a kiss or a cuddle in throughout the day.

#### Wake-up time.

At first sight, greet your toddler with a kiss, a hug, and a happy greeting. Have a talk while you fix breakfast.

#### Dressing and diaper changes.

Be gentle. Don't rush. Add kisses and pats along the way. Tell your toddler how glad you are he's a boy or she's a girl.

#### Good-bye times.

Don't rush off and disappear. Have a kiss, a hug, and a little talk about what each of you will do apart, and what you'll do when you're back together again.

#### Homecomings.

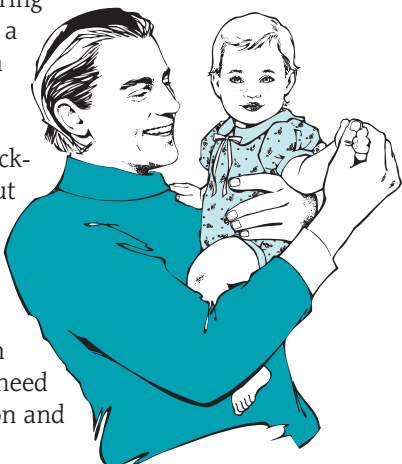
Make a kiss and a chat the first order of your return. Let your toddler tag along while you change clothes and start supper or do other chores.

#### Outings.

Stop along the way to point out things your toddler may enjoy seeing: a red car, a new puppy, a pretty flower. From time to time, tell him or her, "I like going out with you. It's fun!"

#### Bedtime.

Follow a soothing, reassuring ritual. It could be a bath, a story or song, a cuddle in the rocking chair, and a goodnight hug and kiss. Sprinkling hugs, kisses, tickles, and smiles throughout your toddler's day reminds him or her of your love. Granted, not all toddlers are alike in their craving for affection and cuddling. But all do need warm, nurturing attention and praise. *Give it often!*



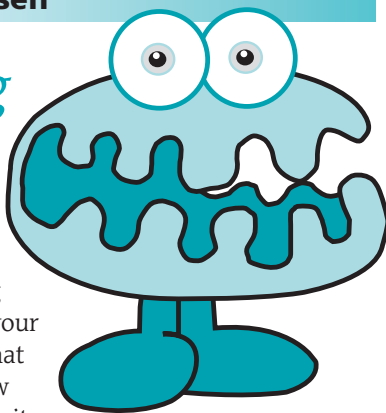
## Nurturing Yourself

### Handling Your Anger

You've been a loving patient parent. Now your toddler does things that cause you to do a slow burn. You must set limits.

Yet when you do, the response may be whining, crying or defiance. Sometimes, it makes you feel angry. What to do?

- ♥ **Admit it.** When anger mounts, tell your toddler what you're feeling. He or she is better off learning how to recognize and relieve anger.
- ♥ **Be careful how you act on it.** Never reach out with a slap or an insult. Don't bully or frighten your child.
- ♥ **Apologize for blowups.** If you do "sound off" and feel guilty later, tell your toddler, "I'm sorry." Kiss and make up. You'll both feel better.
- ♥ **Work off angry energy.** Beat a rug. Scrub a floor. Rake leaves. Take a fast walk – even just around the house or yard! High-energy action will help to "melt down" the tension.
- ♥ **Let go of your anger.** Don't bottle it up and pretend it's not there. The feelings will come out as hostility or negativity, if not anger. Experience it. Forgive yourself. And go back to being the loving parent you are.



### Your Toddler and TV

At this age, most toddlers aren't yet excited by television. However, it's time to begin planning TV's role in your child's life. Here are some tips:

- ♥ Don't use TV as a babysitter.
- ♥ Don't expose your toddler to Saturday cartoons. They average 17 acts of violence per hour! Your little one doesn't yet know the difference between "real" and "pretend", and could be upset by what's on the screen.
- ♥ Do join your toddler in watching beneficial shows like "Sesame Street" on PBS. Talk about what you've seen.

## See How I Grow

### Your Toddler's Intellect Seems To Grow Daily

The 18-to-24-month-old toddler slows down in physical growth. But his or her intellect seems to grow daily! Look for these strides, remembering that each child develops at a pace that's right for him or her.

#### PHYSICAL SKILLS

Now, or very soon, your toddler will be able to:

- ♥ Creep backwards down stairs.
- ♥ Move a chair to a cabinet to reach something.
- ♥ Try to climb out of the crib.
- ♥ Walk fast without falling and run in a stiff-legged way.
- ♥ Climb up and sit on an adult's chair.
- ♥ Jump with both feet.
- ♥ Scribble with a crayon.
- ♥ Try to turn knobs on everything: the radio, the television, the bath room sink!

#### LANGUAGE SKILLS

Your toddler now may:

- ♥ Point to and name his own body parts – hair, eyes, nose, mouth.
- ♥ Ask for something she wants by name: cracker, milk or a toy.
- ♥ Call self by name.
- ♥ Make singing sounds.
- ♥ Name objects in a book: ball, hat, cow.
- ♥ Use the word "no" more than any other!
- ♥ Say two-word phrases such as "all gone" and "bye-bye."

#### MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Now, or soon, expect your toddler to:

- ♥ Remember where familiar things belong.
- ♥ Imitate the way adults do things such as driving the car, mowing a lawn, or mixing a cake.
- ♥ Have a short attention span.
- ♥ Sometimes have temper tantrums when tired or frustrated.

#### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Nowadays, your toddler:

- ♥ Wants parents' attention and may demand it.
- ♥ Shows off a new toy with pride.
- ♥ Follows older children around, to see what they do.

#### SELF-HELP TRAITS

Your toddler may soon:

- ♥ Show some readiness for toilet training. (Experts recommend that parents not worry about starting this until the second birthday.)
- ♥ Dislike spending even a minute in a wet or soiled diaper.
- ♥ With every activity, want to "do it myself!"

#### NUTRITION AND FOOD TRAITS

Your toddler may:

- ♥ Handle a spoon in self-feeding.
- ♥ Have a decreased appetite due to slower growth.
- ♥ Exhibit independence by refusing certain foods.



## PLAYTIME

Try some of these activities to stimulate your child's language development and physical skills:

- ♥ Read aloud to your toddler – every day, if possible.
- ♥ Get him or her to join in as you sing songs and nursery rhymes.
- ♥ Teach your toddler to jump: hold hands and jump together.
- ♥ Show your toddler how to stand on one foot, then the other. Hold one hand and hop around!