



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

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Important Milestones: Your Child By Eighteen Months

CDC's milestones and parent tips have been updated and new checklist ages have been added (15 and 30 months). For more information about the recent updates to CDC's developmental milestones, please review the Pediatrics journal article [↗](#) and these important key points.

How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about your child's development. Developmental milestones are things most children (75% or more) can do by a certain age.

Check the milestones your child has reached by 18 months by completing a checklist with CDC's free [Milestone Tracker](#) mobile app, for [iOS](#) [↗](#) and [Android](#) [↗](#) devices, [using the Digital Online Checklist](#), or by [printing the checklist](#) [↗](#) [1MB, 2 Pages, Print Only] below.

"Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials are not a substitute for standardized, validated [developmental screening tools](#).

What most babies do by this age:

Social/Emotional Milestones

- Moves away from you, but looks to make sure you are close by [↗](#)
- Points to show you something interesting [↗](#)
- Puts hands out for you to wash them [↗](#)
- Looks at a few pages in a book with you [↗](#)
- Helps you dress him by pushing arm through sleeve or lifting up foot [↗](#)

Language/Communication Milestones

- Tries to say three or more words besides "mama" or "dada" [↗](#)
- Follows one-step directions without any gestures, like giving you the toy when you say, "Give it to me." [↗](#)

Cognitive Milestones (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Copies you doing chores, like sweeping with a broom [↗](#)
- Plays with toys in a simple way, like pushing a toy car [↗](#)

Download CDC's free Milestone Tracker App



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Concerned About Your Child's Development? Act Early.

You know your child best. Don't wait. If your child is not meeting one or more milestones, has lost skills he or she once had, or you have other concerns, act early. Talk with your child's doctor, share your concerns, and ask about developmental screening. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children be screened for general development using standardized, validated tools at 9, 18, and 30 months and for autism at 18 and 24 months or whenever a parent or provider has a concern.

Movement/Physical Development Milestones

- Walks without holding on to anyone or anything 📺
- Scribbles 📺
- Drinks from a cup without a lid and may spill sometimes 📺
- Feeds himself with his fingers 📺
- Tries to use a spoon 📺
- Climbs on and off a couch or chair without help 📺

Other important things to share with the doctor...

- What are some things you and your child do together?
- What are some things your child likes to do?
- Is there anything your child does or does not do that concerns you?
- Has your child lost any skills he/she once had?
- Does your child have any special healthcare needs or was he/she born prematurely?

If you or the doctor are still concerned:

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist who can evaluate your child more; and
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at [cdc.gov/FindEI](https://www.cdc.gov/FindEI).

For more on how to help your child, visit [cdc.gov/Concerned](https://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).



Tips and Activities: What You Can Do for Your 18 month old



As your child's first teacher, you can help his or her learning and brain development. Try these simple tips and activities in a safe way. Talk with your child's doctor and teachers if you have questions or for more ideas on how to help your child's development.

- Use positive words and give more attention to behaviors you want to see ("wanted behaviors"). For example, "Look how nicely you put the toy away." Give less attention to those you don't want to see.
- Encourage "pretend" play. Give your child a spoon so she can pretend to feed her stuffed animal. Take turns pretending.
- Help your child learn about others' feelings and about positive ways to react. For example, when he sees a child who is sad, say "He looks sad. Let's bring him a teddy."

[Click here for more tips and activities](#)

[More Parenting Tips and Activities](#)



- Ask simple questions to help your child think about what's around her. For example, ask her, "What is that?"
- Let your child use a cup without a lid for drinking and practice eating with a spoon. Learning to eat and drink is messy but fun!
- Give simple choices. Let your child choose between two things. For example, when dressing, ask him if he wants to wear the red or blue shirt.
- Have steady routines for sleeping and eating. For example, sit at the table with your child when she's eating meals and snacks. This helps set mealtime routines for your family.
- Limit screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) to video calling with loved ones. Screen time is not recommended for children younger than 2 years of age. Children learn by talking, playing, and interacting with others. Limit your own screen time when you are with your child so you are able to respond to her words and actions.
- Ask your child's doctor and/or teachers if your child is ready for toilet training. Most children are not successful at toilet training until 2 to 3 years old. If he is not ready, it can cause stress and setbacks, which can cause training to take longer.
- Expect tantrums. They are normal at this age and should become shorter and happen less often as your child gets older. You can try distractions, but it's ok to ignore the tantrum. Give him some time to calm down and move on.
- Talk with your child by facing her and getting down to her eye level when possible. This helps your child "see" what you're saying through your eyes and face, not just your words.
- Start to teach your child the names for body parts by pointing them out and saying things like "Here's your nose, here's my nose," while pointing to her nose and your own.
- Try to respond to your child's behavior in a safe, and loving way. Stay consistent as much as possible.
- Teach your child more words by adding to the words she says. For example, if she says "Dog," say "Yes, that's a dog. Dogs say 'woof, woof.'"
- Play with your child by rolling balls back and forth, pushing toy cars, and putting blocks or other items in and out of containers.
- Read books and talk about the pictures using simple words.
- Play simple games where both of you have a part to play. Blow bubbles and let your child pop them. Say things as he pops them, such as "Pop, pop."
- Create a spot in your home for your child to go to when he's upset. Stay nearby so your child knows he is safe and can come to you for help calming as needed.
- Give toys that your child can push or pull safely.
- Give toys and things to your child that encourage "pretend" play, such as a doll and a baby blanket.

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Related Pages

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Foods and Drinks for 6 to 24 Month Olds

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