Developmental Skills for Ages 18 to 24 Months

When it comes to child development, there is a wide range of normal.
If younger babies don't have these skills yet, they should develop them by 2 years of age.

Gross motor (big body and movement) skills

Your child is learning to:

- Run fairly well.
- Walk on stairs, placing both feet on one step and using the wall or railing for help.
- Get on a riding toy (no pedals) and scoot it around with his or her feet.
- Practice jumping, and should be able to jump 2 inches off the ground, clearing both feet by age 2.
- Throw a ball about 3 feet.
- Climb onto an adult chair or couch, turn around and sit down.
- Squat while playing for a long time without losing balance.
- Kick a large ball forward.

Fine motor (play and self-help) skills

Your child is learning to:

- Build a tower with three to five blocks.
- Turn the pages of a book one at a time.
- Place three simple shapes in a shape sorter or puzzle board.
- Put small items (cereal, raisins) in a narrow-mouth container.
- Scribble, trying to imitate circles and lines you have drawn.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please let us know. We provide many free services including sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, TTYs, telephone amplifiers, note takers and written materials.

Language, social and brain development

Your child:

- Often uses single words.
- Imitates you as you do daily household tasks.
- Enjoys “pretend play” with toys.
- Puts toys away, if asked, and follows simple directions.
- Points to body parts, if asked to.
- Will test limits and try to control others.
- Gets frustrated or jealous if someone else is getting attention.

By age 2, your child can:

- Put two words together.
- Use 50 different words.
- Refer to him- or herself by name.

Sensory development

Your child:

- Likes rough-and-tumble play with running, jumping and climbing.
- Likes to play with food, Play-Doh, paints, sand and other messy things.

When should I be concerned?

Speak to your doctor if your child:

- Seems very weak, floppy or stiff.
- Uses one side of the body more than the other side, or the top half more than the bottom half.
- Has trouble running and climbing at age 2.
- Does not respond socially, respond to his or her name or use some words and gestures to communicate.
- Has trouble using both hands to explore and play with toys.
- Does not play with toys or other objects in new and different ways.
- Has a great dislike of bathing, grooming and dressing—these seem uncomfortable for your child.
- Has trouble settling down to sleep each night.

Activities

For gross motor skills

- Spend time outdoors at park and playgrounds. Let your child run, jump and play on swings and slides.
- Give your child a riding toy (no pedals).
- Play with balls. Have your child practice throwing, catching and kicking.

For fine motor skills

- Let your child play games, color and build blocks on a small table. When seated, your child's feet should touch the floor.
- Let your child scribble on paper. After a couple of minutes, show your child how to draw circles and lines.
- Help your child string Cheerios along a straw.
- Play together with small toy animals, trucks and imaginative play sets.
- Stack blocks and play with shape sorters together.

For language, social and brain development

- **Talk to your child.** Explain what you are doing. Try to get a response.
- Play simple matching games. Match an object to a picture or to a group of similar objects.
- Read books with your child. Ask your child to point to pictures or actions in the book.
- Sing songs that include actions, such as "Itsy Bitsy Spider."
- Ask your child to name items or people he or she knows.

For sensory development

- Give your child toys with different textures to play with. Try squishy toys or toys that can be molded, like Play-Doh.
- Put your child on a rocking horse or swing. Stay with your child to ensure safety
- Urge your child to run, jump and climb. Make a mountain of pillows or bean bags to climb.

Toys for your child

- Balls
- Blocks
- Crayons, markers, sidewalk chalk
- Toy versions of real-life items such as phones, tools, dolls, and kitchen play sets
- Shape sorters
- Pop-up toys
- Ride-on toys (no pedals)
- Carts or wagons to push and pull
- Simple puzzles
- Musical toys

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