



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



12 Months

STEPPING INTO TODDLERHOOD

Your baby at 12–15 months

Babies watch their loved ones very carefully and copy a lot of what they see.

What your baby can do

Your baby is on the move:

- They may walk on their own or while holding your hand
- They are learning to crawl up stairs, but cannot come down yet
- They can throw a ball and turn pages in books

Your baby is starting to talk and understand much more:

- They may use simple words, like "duh-duh" for dog
- They show you what they want through actions—they may bang their highchair when they want more food
- When asked, they can point to a body part or a picture in a book

What you can do

Give your child just enough help to reach their goal. If they want to stand, let them hold your fingers for balance.

Support your child as they practice new skills, like climbing stairs. Children need time to work on new skills safely.

Encourage your child to turn pages when you read together.

Talk to your child. When they point to something and say "bus," you can add words, like "That is a yellow school bus." This is how they learn new words.

Name the people, places, and things your child sees each day. "Here is the grocery store, where we buy our food."

Play games that include following directions, like "Throw the ball to me."

Every child grows at their own pace. Your child may reach milestones faster or slower than other babies and still be growing just fine.

Your child wants to do more

Your child is starting to show more independence. They may say "no" or show they want to do things on their own. They also love to copy what they see you do, like stirring a pot, talking on a toy phone, or taking care of a stuffed animal.



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What you can do

Involve your child in simple tasks, like washing hands.

Follow your child's lead. Let them choose what toys or games to play.

Join in their play. If they put a blanket on a toy bear, ask, "Does Teddy need a bottle before bed?"

Give them things they see in real life, like plastic dishes, a toy telephone, or a small broom.

Other things to know and try

Many parents expect young children to share. But most children do not begin learning to share and take turns until around age 3 and a half to 4. Even then, it takes lots of practice. That is completely normal.

As your child tries new things and pushes for more independence, you may see fear, frustration, and anger. You may also see pride, excitement, and joy. You may have your own feelings about this, too. Your child's growing independence can feel exciting, a little scary, or both. Checking in with yourself first helps you stay steady so you can support your little one.

At this visit

The care team will measure your baby's length, weight, and head size, and they will check their heart, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Your healthcare provider will discuss vaccines with you at today's visit. The team will talk with you about your baby's growth, sleep, eating, and safety, and there will be time for any questions or concerns you have.

What comes next

Between 15 and 18 months, your child's language will start to take off, and they may begin putting more words together. They will become even more eager to do things on their own. They may test limits as they figure out their independence. Big feelings are very common at this age, and your calm, steady presence makes all the difference.

Have more questions?

Talk to your baby's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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