



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



15 Months

FUN & FRUSTRATING

Your child at 15–18 months

Your toddler is using all their new body, thinking, and language skills to be a good problem solver.

What your child can do

Your toddler is using their body to explore and learn:

- They are walking and may be starting to run and climb
- They can scribble with a crayon and build a block tower
- They can feed themselves

Your toddler is using language to understand the world:

- They can understand simple questions and directions like "Kick the ball to me"
- They mix sounds and actions to talk to you. They may point to a cup and say "wawa" for water
- By 18 months, they may say as many as 20 words

What you can do

Encourage your child to use their fingers and hands to explore. Let them scribble, tap a toy piano, or hold a bubble wand.

Play "Baby Olympics." Create safe challenges, like climbing over a stack of pillows, for your child to try.

Ask your child questions. "Would you like yogurt or a banana for a snack?"

Use words to describe their gestures. "You are pointing at the bird in the sky."

Read together, sing together, and make up rhymes and stories. This builds a love of language and words.

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

Your child is learning about feelings

Your toddler is starting to understand how their actions affect others. They may try to comfort someone who seems sad. They may repeat sounds and actions that make someone laugh. Big feelings can still be hard to handle at this age, and tantrums are common and normal. Your child will need your help to calm down.



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Your toddler is also becoming a good problem solver

- They may do something over and over to figure out how it works
- They use objects the way they are meant to be used, like talking on a toy phone
- They copy what they see others do, like trying to wipe the table with a sponge

What you can do

Read books that talk about feelings. Connect what you read to your child's life. "That little boy felt sad saying goodbye to his daddy, just like you do sometimes."

Stay calm during tantrums. Take deep breaths or count to 10. Staying calm helps your child recover more quickly.

Let your child repeat the same activity if they want to. It may feel repetitive, but it is important practice for them.

Once your child learns a new skill, add a small twist. If they love throwing a ball, set up a laundry basket for them to toss it into.

Other things to know and try

Toddlers solve problems by using their bodies and minds to reach their goals.

When a block tower keeps falling, try suggesting they add more blocks to the bottom for support. Doing simple chores together, like sweeping, also helps children practice solving problems. It is also a great time to teach your child that asking for help is a good thing.

Respond warmly when they do.

At this visit

The care team will measure your child's length, weight, and head size. 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 child's growth, sleep, eating, and safety, and there will be time for any questions or concerns you have.

What comes next

Between 18 months and 2 years, your toddler's language will grow quickly, and they may start putting two words together. Big feelings and strong opinions are very common at this stage. This is sometimes called the "terrible twos." But their many opinions are just a sign that they are gaining a sense of independence. Your calm and steady presence continues to be one of the most important things you can offer.

Have more questions?

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

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