

18-Month Visit



Language

Your baby is really toddling now and very interested in the world. They may be saying a few words and pointing, an additional form of communication. Encourage language learning by repeating the word for the object baby is pointing toward. For example, when they point at a ball, ask, "You want your *ball*?" If they point again, say, "This is your *ball*." Whether or not they make a sound that resembles ball, you can hand it over and say, "Here's your *ball*."



Science and Math

Many young children like to sort objects. When you are doing laundry ask your toddler to help you sort the clothes. Ask them to find all the socks. Maybe they can even match them up. While they're sorting, use number words. Say, "Look, you found three white socks," or "Can you find another sock like this one?"



Managing Feelings

Toddlers are now beginning to show they understand the feelings and intentions of others. This is a perfect time to start teaching empathy. The first way to teach empathy is by showing it. You can also point out when your child makes a kind gesture to a friend or animal. Say, "You were so gentle with the puppy." When baby is not gentle, stop them from hurting others. No need to ask for an apology at this age. With your good example, they will learn to say a heartfelt "sorry" when they are older.



Good books to read at this age:

- *Jamerry* by Bruce Degen
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.
- *Mama, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse
- *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* by Annie Kubler

Problem-Solving

Give your toddler a plastic container with a lid that can be easily removed. Put some interesting (and safe) items inside. Give the container to your child and describe what happens. Say, "Look, when you shake it, it makes a noise. Can you open it?" Stay nearby while your toddler tries to open the container. Watch patiently, and if the toddler hands the container back, demonstrate how to open it, replace the top and give your little one another try. Games like this build your toddler's persistence and the ability to focus on a task to completion.



Physical Skills

Your toddler may really enjoy doing things on their own now. In fact, they may insist on it. Give yourself extra time on outings and let them climb into the car and car seat. Then let them try to click the buckle of the car seat. When it happens, say, "You did it!" Everyday activities like this build a child's small and large muscles. (And their sense of confidence.)



Art and Music

This is a great age to introduce the song, *The Hokey Pokey* or other fingerplay and movement songs. Sing and play along with them. If you don't know the tune or lyrics, look up videos for toddler-friendly songs. Look for such songs such as, *Itsy-Bitsy Spider*, *Open Shut Them*, and *Five Little Monkeys*.

