

Well Check: 18 months

Toddlers want to learn what's behind, under, and inside everything they see. They may try out aggressive behaviors. This is a good time to start calmly teaching simple rules for safety and behavior, without scolding.

Feeding your child

Your child will learn healthy eating habits by watching you eat healthy foods.

- Offer new foods often, and try again with foods your child didn't eat before. Your child's likes and dislikes will change.
- Let your child decide when to stop eating.
- Let your child eat on their own, using a cup and a spoon. Don't worry about spills and manners.
- Limit juice to 4 ounces a day. Juice has a lot of sugar, which is bad for teeth. Offer water instead.
- If you're concerned about your child's weight or eating habits, ask your doctor for advice.

Keeping your child safe and well

- **Make sure your child gets recommended immunizations on schedule.**
- **Be safe at home and other places.**
 - To prevent falls, keep gates at the top and bottom of stairs, put crib sides up, and lock windows and doors. Move furniture away from windows.
 - Never leave your child alone near water or in the bath. Always empty play pools, buckets, and tubs after use. Make sure pools have a locked fence around them and a pool cover.
 - Always hold your child's hand when near a driveway or street or in a parking lot.
 - Have smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and an escape plan.



At 18 months old, most children:

- Walk alone, and can pull a toy while walking
- Can say several single words, and can follow 1-step spoken commands
- Point to show you something interesting
- Know what familiar things are used for, such as a brush, a spoon, and a telephone
- Show affection to familiar people, and may be afraid of strangers

Children will reach milestones at their own pace. For detailed information about milestones, visit [cdc.gov/actearly](https://www.cdc.gov/actearly), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

- Lock up dangerous items. These include medicines, poisons, chemicals, cigarettes, lighters, alcohol, and firearms.
- To prevent tip-over injuries, secure furniture.
- Prevent burns by keeping the water heater temperature below 120° F.

- **Be safe in the car.**

- Keep your child in a rear-facing car seat in the middle of the back seat until your child is 2 years old or reaches the maximum height and weight for the seat. Never place your child's car seat in a seat with an air bag.
- When you do turn the car seat to face forward, keep it in the back seat. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully to keep it safe.
- Make sure everyone in the car uses seat belts.
- **Never leave your child alone in a car.**

Helping your child grow

- **Make plenty of time for active play.**

- Your child learns through play. Spend time playing with your child, and allow play with others.
- If you want to introduce digital media, such as TV or other screens, choose high-quality options.
- Enjoy screen time together with your child because this is how they learn the best.

- **Help your child learn to talk.**

- Use simple, clear words to talk to your child and tell them what you want them to do. Help your child learn words for their feelings.
- Read to your child every day.

- **Help your child learn good behavior.**

- Your child may be starting to try out new behaviors such as hitting, biting, and pushing. Make a few important behavior rules, such as “only nice touch.” Be consistent about the rules, and be an example of responding calmly.
- Praise your child for good behavior.
- To show your child a behavior is wrong, turn your face away and don't give your attention.
- Most children don't understand sharing yet, so it's okay to not expect your child to share at this age.
- Give your child choices. Allow your child to choose between 2 good options.

- **Start preparing for toilet training.**

- Most children aren't ready for toilet training at this age. Signs they are ready include knowing when they are wet, knowing when they are about to have a bowel movement, and wanting to learn.
- Your child may be interested in the toilet before being ready to use it. Buy a toddler potty and let your child sit on it (with or without clothes on). Read books about toilet training. Let your child watch family members use the toilet.

- **Help your child learn good sleep habits.**

- Put your child to bed at the same time every night. If awakened in the night, offer a blanket or toy, but don't get them out of bed.
- Your child needs 11 to 14 hours of sleep a day at this age (including nap time). Some children need 1 or 2 naps, while others don't need any.



Follow-up appointment

Your next well-child visit will be when your baby is 2 years old.

Date: _____ Time: _____

Here are some helpful resources in the meantime:



For more age-appropriate safety information, visit safekids.org and sign up for the monthly newsletter.



If you need help with housing, food, or if you feel unsafe at home, call 2-1-1, or visit 211ut.org for community services.



When should I call?

If you think your child may have eaten poisons, medicines, or cleaning supplies, call Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

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