

Your Toddler's Development: 15–18 Months

Your toddler is using all his new physical, thinking, and language skills to be a good problem-solver. He might push a stool to the counter and try to climb up as he points to the cookie jar and says something like Mine! How do you see your toddler figuring things out?

What Your Toddler Can Do	What You Can Do
<p>I'm using my body to explore and learn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am walking and may be running and climbing. • I can scribble with a crayon and build a block tower. • I can feed myself. 	<p>Encourage your child to use his fingers and hands to explore. Let him scribble, tap a toy piano, or hold a bubble wand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play “baby olympics.” Create some safe challenges—like climbing over a stack of pillows—for your child to master.
<p>I'm using language to understand the world around me.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can understand simple questions and directions like Kick the ball to me. • I communicate by combining sounds and actions—pointing to a cup and saying wawa for water. • By 18 months, I may say as many as 20 words. 	<p>Ask your child questions: Would you like yogurt or a banana for snack?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put her gestures into words: You're pointing at the bird flying in the sky. • Read, sing together, and make up rhymes and stories. This builds a love of language and words.
<p>I am beginning to understand my feelings and others' feelings too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may try to comfort someone who seems sad. • I repeat sounds and actions that make someone laugh. • My feelings can be hard for me to handle. • I may start having tantrums and will need your help to calm down. 	<p>Read books that talk about feelings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect what you are reading to your child's experiences: • That little boy in the book felt sad saying good-bye to his daddy, just like you do sometimes. • Stay calm during tantrums. Take deep breaths, count to 10, or whatever helps you to not react. Staying calm helps your child recover more quickly.
<p>I'm becoming a good problem-solver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may do something over and over to figure out how it works. • I use objects the way they are supposed to be used—like talking on a toy telephone. • I imitate what I see others do—like trying to wipe the table with a sponge. 	<p>Let your child repeat the same activity, if he wants to. It may be boring to you but is important practice for him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once your child has learned a new skill, like throwing the ball, add a twist: Set up a laundry basket for him to toss the ball into.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: www.zerotothree.org.

