Your Toddler’s Development: 18–24 Months

This is a time of great fun for parents as they watch their babies become eager explorers who are thrilled to discover that they can make things happen. A 7-month-old knows, When I smile, mommy smiles back! A 9-month-old lifts her arms to tell her dad, I want you to pick me up.

How is your baby making things happen?

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| **This is a delightful stage as children begin to talk and talk and then talk some more.**  
- Toddlers are also starting to pretend. This is a big step in their development and makes life really fun and often very funny.  
- How do you see your child starting to use her imagination? | **Turn your child’s words and phrases into sentences.**  
- When he says, More milk, you can say: You want more milk in your cup.  
- Talk as you read. Ask your child questions about the pictures and stories you read together. |
| **I need help to begin learning self-control.**  
- I understand no but I still can’t control my feelings and actions.  
- I may get frustrated when I can’t do something by myself. Please be patient! | **Put your child’s feelings into words.**  
- I know you’re really mad that I turned the TV off. It’s okay to feel mad. Instead of TV, would you like to read or play with blocks now? |
| **I am beginning to use my imagination.**  
- I may feed my doll pretend food.  
- I might make brrrrummmm noises when I play with cars. | **Play pretend with your toddler.**  
- You can be a puppy, barking and running after a ball.  
- Jump-start your child’s imagination with dress-up clothes, animal figures, blocks, and plastic food and dishes. |
| **I am a little scientist, always testing things out!**  
- I love to fill and dump and open and close things to see how they work.  
- I may start to sort objects. I might put all my trains in one place and all my cars in another. | **Help your child practice sorting.**  
- Ask your child to help you sort the laundry by putting socks in one pile and shirts in another.  
- Encourage lots of exploration. Fill and dump with water or sand. Make an indoor “sandbox” of dry oatmeal or fall leaves. |
| **I am becoming an even better problem-solver.**  
- I may blow on my food when you tell me dinner is hot or try to get my own jacket on. | **Help your child solve a problem but don’t do it all for him.**  
- The more he does, the more he learns.  
- Play games that use problem-solving skills.  
- Try three- or four-piece puzzles or building with blocks. |

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