

# 12-18 MONTHS

## MILESTONES *By end of 18 months*

- ✧ Imitates others during play
- ✧ May have temper tantrums
- ✧ Plays pretend (talking on a toy phone)
- ✧ May show fear with strangers
- ✧ Uses several single words.
- ✧ Points to things he/she wants
- ✧ Walks without help
- ✧ Scribbles on his/her own
- ✧ Says and shakes head "no"
- ✧ Drinks from a cup and eats with a spoon



## Let's EAT!

- 🍏 Allow lots of time for your toddler to practice feeding himself/herself with a spoon and drinking from a sippy cup.
- 😊 Provide time for your toddler to pretend to feed his/her doll or stuffed animal.
- 🍳 Provide play food, plates, pots/pans, cups, etc. for your toddler to "cook" with. Enjoy the pretend meal together!
- 📖 Teach and use simple sign language (see resource) such as "eat," "more milk," "please," "thank you," and "finished." Simple sign language is a wonderful tool to help your toddler communicate while language is being developed.

***First words, first steps, and first efforts at independence - what an exciting time for you and your growing baby. Toddlers are aware of other children, but still may prefer to play alone. Sharing is hard for toddlers and will be learned over time. Hearing your toddler say, "It's mine" is common. When your toddler does play with other children, offer plenty of materials. During this time of active exploration, it is best to direct your child to another activity if they are doing an unwanted behavior. Spend more time encouraging wanted behaviors. It will take MANY reminders as your toddler learns what is expected.***

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Zero to Three [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)






*ZERO TO THREE is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains, and supports professionals, policymakers, and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers.*

## Let's GET CLEAN!





- 😊 Explore with bath toys, plastic cups, squirters, strainers in the bathtub. Pour water from a cup into the bath from different heights.
- 🔍 Freeze a small bath toy in a paper cup filled with water. Peel off the cup and watch as the ice melts in the bathtub. \*The toy must be big enough to not fit into a toilet-paper roll to prevent possible choking.
- ▲ Sing "Five Little Ducks" (see song list) while acting out the song with 5 rubber duckies in the bathtub. Practice counting to 5.
- 👤 If your toddler is fearful of the sound made when taking the plug out to drain bath water, make crazy, fun sounds before and during the process.
- 😊 Give your toddler a brush/comb to brush their stuffed animal or doll's hair.



## Let's GO!





-  Encourage your toddler to throw, push and kick a ball forward.
-  Run, hop and march to music.
-  Sing action songs like "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and "Wheels on the Bus" (see song list).
-  Go for a nature walk and collect items (acorns, leaves, sticks, pinecones, etc.) to fill a wagon or bucket. Toddlers love to fill and dump things over and over again!
-  Make instruments such as a drum made from an oatmeal container, shakers with paper towel rolls filled with rice with tape over the ends, bells tied to ribbons, etc. Parade around in a marching band.

## Let's SHARE WORDS and STORIES!

-  Read Mouse Paint (see book list). Make mouse tracks by dipping your toddler's finger into red, blue and yellow non-toxic paint and pressing onto paper. Talk about how the colors mix to make other colors.
-  After reading a favorite story, ask your toddler to act out something a character did. For example, after reading The Little Engine that Could (see book list), ask your child to move like a train and make a sound like a train.
-  Look for books with real pictures of animals and practice making animal sounds together. Talk about the animals. For example, "the snake is slimy and makes hissing sounds."
-  Take books everywhere! Let your toddler "read" to you! Listen, smile and laugh as he/she points and babbles.








## Let's SAY HELLO - GOODBYE!



-  Make a "take along" book with pictures of familiar things, people and routines. Glue the photos to large index cards. Label each photo. Place the index card pages into zipper plastic baggies, punch a hole in the corner and tie with yarn or book rings.
-  When a storm is coming, or you get caught in the rain, ease your toddler's fear and make it fun by singing a song about rain such as "I Hear Thunder" (see song list).
-  After bath time, have your toddler use a cup to scoop out bathwater and put into a bucket. Then take it outside together to water the garden!
-  Tell your toddler before you are going to grandma's, childcare, etc. Make a book or picture chart (or picture schedule) showing the order that the activities and events of the day will occur.







## Let's REST!



-  Have your toddler put his/her doll or stuffed animal to bed, covering it and patting the doll or animal's back.
-  Read Goodnight Moon (see book list). Go and find the moon and talk about it together. You can even pretend to jump over the moon!
-  Read Time for Bed (see book list) and talk about how, where and when different animals sleep.
-  Have your toddler color or paint slowly while listening to lullabies or other slow, relaxing or classical music. He/she could also crawl, walk, or dance slowly to the tempo of the music.
-  Give your toddler choices! For example, allow your toddler to choose from 2 sets of pajamas. He or she could also choose a book from three selections. Count the books as you point to them.

## KEY LEARNING AREAS

-  Approaches to Learning
-  Creative Arts

-  Language and Literacy
-  Social Studies

-  Mathematics
-  Physical Health and Wellness

-  Science
-  Social and Emotional

# 18-24 MONTHS

## MILESTONES *By end of 24 months*

- ✧ Says 30-50 words & says two word sentences
- ✧ Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- ✧ May show interest in the potty
- ✧ Can name most familiar things
- ✧ Shows a wide range of emotions
- ✧ Understands "mine," "his" and "hers"
- ✧ Shows defiant behavior



***Your 18-24 month old is on the go! As your toddler begins to walk, run and climb with greater skill, a new sense of independence emerges. You may need to toddler-proof your house AGAIN! As your toddler continues to explore his/her world, you may see your toddler watching and imitating others. Your toddler might copy day-to-day tasks such as brushing his/her hair, dressing, and feeding routines. You may find your toddler using objects for different, new purposes, such as using a toothbrush as a brush for their stuffed animal.***

## INTERNET RESOURCES

American Academy of Pediatrics [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)  
The official Web site of the American Academy of Pediatrics—an organization of 60,000 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

## Let's EAT!







- ▲ Look at pictures and photos of foods in magazines and name them. Help your toddler to tear or cut out (with appropriate child-size scissors) pictures of food and glue them to make a food collage or book. Count the foods together.
- 🔍 Talk about how vegetables grow and help your toddler plant and care for a bean seed.
- ▲ When dining out, have your toddler point to, color and talk about different foods on the children's menu. Count food items as your toddler points to them.
- 😊 Make pudding together. Help your toddler pour and stir the ingredients. Describe the ingredients and expand your toddler's language (ex: your toddler says "milk" and you can say "yes, the milk is white and creamy").








## Let's GET CLEAN!

- 🍏 Assist your toddler with tooth brushing while playing/singing Raffi's "Brush Your Teeth" song (see song list).
- 😊 During bath time, encourage your toddler to name different body parts as he/she washes. Use a variety of washers (sponge, washcloth) to experience different textures.
- 🍏 Give your toddler a wet sponge or washcloth to wipe countertops, tables, etc. Allow her/him to help clean with child-sized brooms, mops, etc.
- 🔍 Put a bar of soap and plastic animals or dolls into a water table, sink, or tub and have your toddler wash them. Exploring with the bar of soap can be a new experience, since many families use liquid soaps. Talk about how the soap feels. For example, "slippery and wet."

## Let's GO!




-  Draw a simple map with 3 places (such as your house, a tree and a neighbor's house) before going for a walk and point out the places on the map as you pass them.
-  Read books that encourage movement and singing such as Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed (see book list).
-  Move like a variety of animals (ex: jump like a frog, crawl like a bug, etc.)
-  Throw and catch a ball outside. Inside, you can toss balls or beanbags into baskets or inside a hula hoop.
-  Play "Follow the Leader" by having your toddler follow you as you march, hop, etc. and then allow her/him to be the leader, following what he or she does.
-  Play outside daily weather permitting! Use push/pull and riding toys.

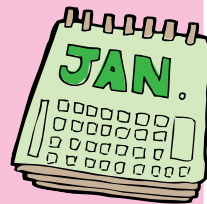
## Let's SHARE WORDS and STORIES!

-  Give your toddler a large paper heart, a blanket, and/or hats and allow him/her to hide various stuffed animals/dolls behind the heart, the blanket or the hat as you read Peek-a-Boo, I Love You! (see book list). The book ends with a heart-shaped mirror for your toddler to see himself/herself as you read "Peek a Boo, I love You!"
-  Relate stories to things that your toddler is familiar with asking things like, "Where do dogs live?" "What sound does a dog make?" or "What toys do you like to play with in the bath?"
-  Play "I Spy" while reading. "I spy something big and blue. What is it?"
-  Describe your toddler's emotions while reading. "This part of the story makes you laugh, feel sad, etc."
-  Allow your toddler to look at books independently and tell the story to you.








## Let's SAY HELLO - GOODBYE!



-  When it's time to clean up toys, sing "Toys away. Toys away. Time to put the toys away." Or sing "Clean Up" (see song list). Clean up with your toddler, showing him/her how and where to put toys and praise your toddler as he/she cleans up. "Wow, you are doing a great job putting your toys away!"
-  Move like an animal: walk quietly "like a mouse" into the doctor's office or library, hop "like a cricket" to the door before going outside to hunt for bugs.
-  Look at a calendar together. Point to and count the number of days until a special event such as a play date, first day of school, vacation, etc.






## Let's REST!



-  Ask your toddler to wiggle his/her sillies out, then point to a body part (nose, mouth, arm, etc.) and "put it to sleep" until your toddler's whole body is resting.
-  Put several items into a bag or empty tissue box and have your toddler reach in and feel and guess the item or ask him/her to find "something bumpy."
-  Have your toddler lie down on a big piece of paper (you can cut open a brown paper bag) and trace the outline of her/his body. Color the face, hair, clothes together.
-  Give your toddler strips of construction paper and a variety of stickers and make bookmarks together.
-  "Paint" with water on sidewalk, driveway, etc. with sponges, paint brushes and roller brushes. Explore with water and sidewalk chalk.

## KEY LEARNING AREAS

-  Approaches to Learning
-  Creative Arts

-  Language and Literacy
-  Social Studies

-  Mathematics
-  Physical Health and Wellness

-  Science
-  Social and Emotional

# 24-30 MONTHS

## MILESTONES *By end of 30 months*

- ✧ Copies others
- ✧ Gets excited when with other children
- ✧ Says sentences with 2 – 4 words
- ✧ Follows simple instruction
- ✧ Builds towers of 4 or more blocks
- ✧ Might use one hand more than the other
- ✧ Stands on tiptoe
- ✧ Throws ball overhand

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Center for Early Literacy Learning [www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pgparents.php](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pgparents.php)  
*The Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL) promotes the adoption and sustained use of evidence-based early literacy learning practices.*

## Let's EAT!

- 🍏 Explore ways to create fun snacks with your child. For example, ants on a log with cream cheese on celery and cereal down the center. Talk about how you are going to make it, as well as the textures, colors, smells and tastes. Brainstorm other snack ideas that you could try at a later time.
- 🍏 Set your child up for success. Prepare food in a form that is reasonably easy for your child to manage, for example, finger foods, thickened soups. Allow your child to be independent. If she/he does ask for help, assist minimally still allowing him/her to be as independent as possible.
- 🏠 Visit a local farmer's market or produce stand. Talk about what kinds of food come from the farm. Enjoy some locally grown foods together. Talk about colors, flavors, textures.
- ▲ At home or while dining out, count the number of place settings together.

**Children 24-30 months are consistently testing their independence, insisting on completing tasks without help. Expect to hear words and phrases such as "mine", "no" and "me do it." You will notice that your child plays next to other children and may begin to play more cooperatively with others. As your child becomes more social, provide opportunities for play dates with other children. Good news, you may begin to see your child showing signs of being ready to use the toilet (dry diaper for long periods of time, some regularity of bowel movements, urinates a lot at one time).**

## Let's GET CLEAN!

- 📖 Sing the following song, while drying off after a bath.

*After my bath, I try, try, try  
To wipe myself off til I'm dry, dry, dry.  
My arms, my legs, my neck, my nose,  
All my fingers and all my toes!  
Just think how much less time it would take  
If I were a dog and could shake, shake, shake!*


- 📖 Get creative and change the words to your favorite nursery rhymes. Rub a dub dub; a child is in the tub; and who do you think he/she be?; Why "child's name" is in the tub. Rub a dub dub; as clean as he/she can be.


- 🔍 Take a milk jug and make a few holes in the bottom of it. Be careful to sand down any rough edges. Your child will enjoy filling and watching the water pour out of the bottom of the jug. Engage your child in questions: Why is the water coming out of the bottom?; Can you find a way to stop the water from coming out?; Can we make the water come out slow/fast?






## Let's GO!


 Waiting in line at the grocery store is an excellent time to engage your child in conversation and vocabulary building. Point to a picture on a magazine cover while asking "What do you think this girl is doing?" Look for letters in big type. Point to a letter and say "Look, here's a B just like the letter B in your name."


 Go outside after it rains. Look for a puddle. Have your child drop a rock into the puddle and talk about what happens. "How can we make a BIG splash? A small splash?" Look for worms and talk about how they feel, and move. Follow up by reading Diary of a Worm (see book list).


 Lie in the grass and watch the clouds on a sunny day. Have your child share what shapes he/she sees OR find a certain shaped cloud and ask your child to search the sky for it. Follow up by reading It Looked Like Spilt Milk (see book list).



## Let's SHARE WORDS and STORIES!


 Have lots of conversations with your child. This boosts language skills, introduces the concept of conversation and enables your child to feel important. ***Two-year olds typically can speak between 200 and 250 words.***


 Your child can tell stories through drawing. Help your child understand that pictures have meaning. Ask him/her to tell you about his/her drawings. Show you are listening by asking questions about the colors, shapes and what the picture is about.


 Start a story and ask your child to add to it. When telling a pretend story, ask your child to make up details, for example, "What does the child's bike look like?" If the story is about a real person or place, ask your child to give details about them.




## Let's SAY HELLO - GOODBYE!


 When you are sending your child to a setting for the first time, there are a few things you can do to help your child get over those first day jitters. Visit the setting as many times as possible before you begin. You and your child both will be more comfortable if the surroundings, sounds and staff are familiar.


 Invite a friend over for a play date. Get your child excited about the visit, sharing how much fun he/she will have and offering many items of interest to explore. As children play, introduce new vocabulary and engage in conversations.


 Begin introducing the concept of time. Talk about what we do in the morning (get up, eat breakfast, play), what we do in the afternoon (nap, play) and what we do in the evening (dinner, play, story time and go to bed). Have your child start predicting what routines may come next.

## Let's REST!


 The soothing sound of a familiar voice helps your child drift off to sleep. Have a calming conversation while settling down for bed.

 Make bedtime fun and a part of the day your child looks forward to! Play a quiet game before going to bed. For example, Pick something in the room and give your child clues to help him/her guess what it is. For example, "I see something ..."

 Add a new twist to naptime. Take a blanket and pillow outside on a warm (not hot) afternoon and look for a shaded area. Have your child close his/her eyes and listen to the sounds all around. Listen for the birds, the cars, a dog barking, a door opening and closing etc.

 Create a fort together. Drape sheets and blankets over furniture. Crawl in with your child. Use a flashlight to make shadow puppets. You and your child will enjoy this indoor "camping" experience.

## KEY LEARNING AREAS

 Approaches to Learning

 Creative Arts

 Language and Literacy

 Social Studies

 Mathematics

 Physical Health and Wellness

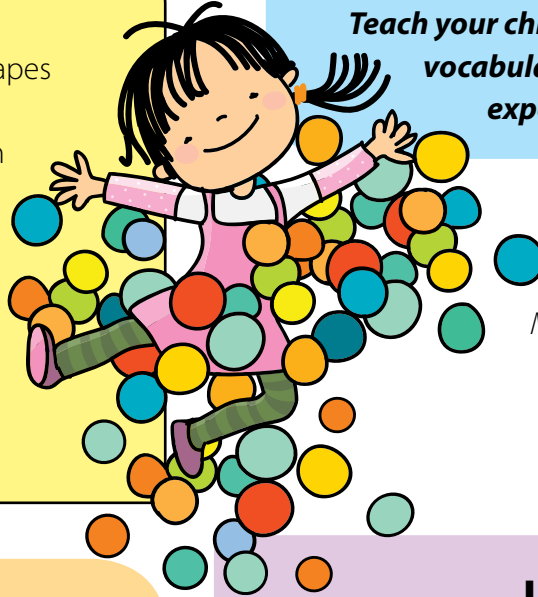
 Science

 Social and Emotional

# 30-36 MONTHS

## MILESTONES *By end of 36 months*

- ✧ Play begins to include others (i.e. tea parties, chase games)
- ✧ Begins to sort shapes and colors
- ✧ Finds things even when hidden
- ✧ Laughs at unusual words for things
- ✧ Follows two-step directions
- ✧ Points to things or pictures when they're named
- ✧ Kicks a ball
- ✧ Repeats words overheard in conversation
- ✧ Begins to run
- ✧ Makes or copies straight lines



***As children continue to demonstrate independence, they will test their limits and boundaries--taking risks and showing defiant behavior. Spend more time praising your child's positive behavior while limiting attention to negative behavior. Language is developing quickly and can help your child talk about his/her behaviors and feelings.***

***Teach your child to "use his/her words." Introduce new vocabulary by labeling emotions and talking about experiences.***

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Pennsylvania Public Libraries

[www.publiclibraries.com/pennsylvania.htm](http://www.publiclibraries.com/pennsylvania.htm)

*Most libraries have wonderful learning opportunities for children of all ages. To find out what programs are offered in your local community, please visit the link above which provides a listing of all public libraries within the Commonwealth.*

## Let's EAT!

- 🔍 Pretend that your kitchen is a science lab. For example, ask your child what he/she thinks might happen when you mix baking soda and vinegar OR make "goop" by mixing corn starch and water. Talk about how the "goop" feels (dry and wet at the same time).
- 🍏 Enjoy strawberries as a snack. Talk about the seeds on the outside. After washing, cut the strawberry in half and talk about what you see. JOKE: What do you call a sad strawberry? (A "blue" berry)
- 😊 Try new fruits and vegetables like star fruits, kiwis, corn in the husk, etc. Discuss the shape, texture and smells. Compare what the fruit/vegetable looks like on the outside to what it looks like on the inside. Ask your child questions and listen closely to his/her answers.
- 🖐️ When dining out, give your child a few choices (use picture menu if the restaurant provides one). Let your child choose what he/she will eat from the choices given.

## Let's GET CLEAN!

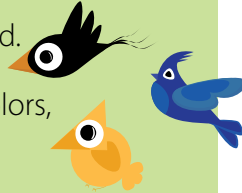
- 🔍 Provide several objects during bath time (a feather, cotton, leaf, rock etc...) and have your child predict whether the object will float or sink, then test them.
- 🍏 Time your toothbrushing. Play one of your child's favorite songs and have him/her brush teeth until the song is over.
- 🧴 You can encourage creativity in the tub! Make homemade bath paints with your child using 1 Tbsp (or more) of cornstarch, 1/3 cup dishwashing soap (eco-friendly) and food coloring. Encourage your child to paint away.
- 🧴 Create a microphone using an empty toilet paper roll and a piece of crumpled aluminum foil. Attach the ball of aluminum foil to the toilet paper roll with tape. Encourage your child to use the microphone to sing or to tell stories while in the tub.



## Let's GO!

▲ Go on a scavenger hunt with your child. Search your home looking for change that has been lost under sofa cushions etc. Once found, help your child sort the coins into separate piles by type. The money he/she finds can be used to purchase a treat the next time you are out and about!

🔍 Go outside and scatter birdseed or stale bread around. Make predictions on how long it will take the birds to come. Watch for the birds. Be sure to talk about colors, sizes of the birds and sounds they make. Take paper and encourage your child to draw the birds.



🏠 A great way to teach your child to give back is to volunteer. Your local SPCA can always use volunteers to walk their dogs. As you control the leash, your child will be happy to walk alongside a furry friend. Be sure to use this opportunity to build vocabulary and encourage discussion. You can also talk about dog safety.

## Let's SAY HELLO - GOODBYE!

👋 Moving from one activity to another (transitioning) can be stressful for children and parents. Offering two, acceptable choices can help ease the stress of transition times. For example, "Do you want to slither like a snake or jump like a frog to bed?"

🔊 Make cleaning up fun. Be sure to give a verbal or non verbal warning before it's time to clean up. Warning signals include: 5 minute verbal warning, ring a bell, turn on a favorite song or turn off the light.

📖 When picking your child up from a play date, school or a relative's house – show interest in them by asking specific questions about what they have done. Listen to his/her response and add comments or ask more questions to keep the conversation going. The number of words you exchange TRULY matters in language development!

## Let's SHARE WORDS and STORIES!

📖 Have your child choose her/his favorite stuffed animals. Take photos of the animals and create a book with a title page. Have your child look through the book and tell you the story.

🍏 Talk to your child about fire safety – steering clear of matches, lighters, candles, stovetops, radiators and heaters. Discuss what to do in a fire emergency and practice with your child.

🎨 Make your own face paint combining ½ cup of cold cream with 2 Tbsp. of cornstarch. Scoop mixture in empty egg carton containers and add food coloring. Turn your child into his/her favorite animal or character. Get creative!

## Let's REST!

🍏 Yoga provides many health benefits for children and adults. Try "the Tree Pose" by standing up straight and tall. Breathe in and out and feel your legs reaching toward the ground and your head reaching toward the sky. Lift your right leg, bending at the knee and place it on your left leg above or below the knee. Let your leg be strong like the trunk of a tree and stretch your arms up like branches!

📖 Read stories aloud to your child. Your child will enjoy hearing the same story over and over again. Repetition helps children learn about the structure of stories which prepares your child to become a reader and writer.

🔍 Take a quiet, peaceful walk inside or outside. Agree to be very quiet and pay attention to the sounds that are all around you. Ask, "What do you hear?" Talk about where the sounds may be coming from. At the end of your walk, reflect on all the different sounds you heard together. See how many your child can remember.



## KEY LEARNING AREAS

😊 Approaches to Learning

🎨 Creative Arts

📖 Language and Literacy

🏠 Social Studies

▲ Mathematics

🍏 Physical Health and Wellness

🔍 Science

👋 Social and Emotional