

# The Growing Child: 1-Year-Olds



After a baby's first birthday, the rate of growth begins to slow down. The baby is now a toddler and is very active.

## What can my baby do at this age?

As your baby continues to grow, you will notice new and exciting abilities that develop. Babies may progress at different rates. But these are some of the common milestones most babies reach in this age group:

- Takes a few steps on their own by 15 months
- Walks alone by 18 months, then starts to run
- Climbs stairs and then walks up a few stairs with or without help by 24 months
- Climbs on and off a couch or chair
- Dances with music
- Plays with toys, like pushing a toy car by 18 months
- Plays with more than one toy at a time, like putting toy food on a toy plate, by 24 months
- Can build towers out of blocks
- Kicks a ball by 24 months
- Scribbles with crayon or pencil and may imitate drawing a straight line or circle
- Mostly feeds self with fingers
- Starts to feed self with spoon
- Drinks well from cup
- First molar (back) teeth appear
- Takes one afternoon nap
- May sleep 10 to 12 hours at night

## What can my baby say?

Speech development is very exciting for parents as they watch their babies become social beings who can interact with others. Every baby develops speech at their own rate. But these are some of the common milestones in this age group:

- Imitates animal sounds and noises
- At 15 months, tries to say one or two words besides "mama" or "dada," like "ba" for ball or "da" for dog
- At 18 months, says three or more words besides "mama" or "dada"
- By 24 months, uses simple phrases or two-word sentences such as "Mommy up"
- By 24 months, uses more gestures than just waving and pointing, like blowing a kiss or nodding yes

## What does my baby understand?

By about 18 months old, children start to understand symbols. This is the relationship between objects and their meanings. Children may progress at different rates. But these are some of the common milestones children may reach in this age group:

- Looks at a familiar object when you name it
- By 18 months, understands one-step questions and directions such as "Where is the ball?"
- By 24 months understands two-step questions and directions such as "Go to your room and get your shoes."
- Tries to use things the right way, like a phone, cup, or book
- Understands object permanence. This means that a hidden object is still there.
- Points to things in a book when you ask, such as "Where is the bear?"
- By 24 months, can point to at least two body parts when asked, such as nose, hair, eyes
- Starts to understand use of certain objects such as the broom is for sweeping the floor
- May ask for parent's help by pointing

## How does my baby interact with others?

As children start to walk, they may begin to show independence and will try to walk farther away from the parent, but will return. Separation anxiety and fear of strangers may lessen, then return at about 18 months. Every child is unique and will develop different personalities. But these are some of the common behavioral traits that may be present in your child:

- Plays alongside others without interacting. This is called parallel play.
- May start clinging to parents around 18 months
- May start to say "no" more often to commands or needs
- May have temper tantrums
- May use a blanket or stuffed animal as a security object in place of the parent

## How to help increase your baby's learning and emotional security

Here are some ways to foster the emotional security of your 1-year-old:

- Give your child toys that can be filled and emptied, and toys for imaginary play.
- Help your child with simple 2- to 6-piece puzzles with shapes, colors, and animals.
- Help your child build towers of blocks.
- Give simple choices. Let your child choose between two things. For example, when dressing, ask them if they want to wear the red or blue shirt.
- Encourage your child to "help" you with household tasks.
- Give your child paper and large crayons so they can scribble and draw.
- Talk to your child with clear simple language about what you are doing.

- Use the correct names for objects, even if your child does not. For example, your child might say "wa-wa," and you say, "Water, that's right."
- Expand your child's sentences. If your child says, "Want cookie," you say, "Do you want another cookie?"
- Read to your child every day using picture and story books.
- Feed your child at family mealtimes.
- Expect tantrums. They are normal at this age and should become shorter and happen less often as your child gets older. You can try distractions, but it's OK to ignore the tantrum. Give them some time to calm down and move on.
- Limit screen time (TV, tablets, phones, etc.) to video calling with loved ones. Screen time is not recommended for children younger than 18 months of age. Children learn by talking, playing, and interacting with others. Children 18–24 months of age can learn from high-quality educational media if their parents play or view with them and reteach the lessons. Limit your own screen time when you are with your child so you are able to respond to their words and actions.

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