

# Developmental Skills for Children 18–24 Months

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TheraNotes™

Following are developmental skills typically seen in children 18–24 months of age.

## ***Sensory Development***

- The baby likes rough-and-tumble play.
- The baby is easily frustrated and jealous of attention given to others.
- The baby has a repertoire of emotional expressions.
- The baby enjoys getting messy while playing with paints, play dough, and sand.

## ***Gross Motor Development***

- The baby runs fairly well.
- The baby climbs forward onto an adult chair, turns around, and sits.
- The baby climbs up and down a short slide.
- The baby begins to jump in place with both feet.
- The baby walks up and down stairs alone using a handrail, placing both feet on each step.
- The baby throws a ball at a target 3 feet away.
- The baby independently propels a ride-on toy without pedals.

## ***Fine Motor Development***

- The baby starts using his fingers and thumb to grasp crayons.
- The baby picks up tiny objects using the tips of his fingers and his thumb to place in a small container.
- The baby imitates vertical and circular scribbles.
- The baby turns the pages of a book one at a time.
- The baby strings one to three 1-inch beads.
- The baby snips a piece of paper using scissors.
- The baby builds a tower with three to five blocks.

## ***Language/Social Development***

- The baby entertains herself for longer periods of time.
- The baby points to two to six body parts upon request.
- The baby follows one- to two-step related oral instructions (e.g., pick up your shoes and bring them to me).
- The baby grabs, pushes, or pulls peers to communicate.
- The baby pretend plays using toys that resemble real objects (e.g., play telephone, play food).
- The baby tests limits and wants to control others.
- The baby remembers where items belong and defends her possessions.
- The baby chews thoroughly with rotary jaw movements.
- The baby no longer uses a bottle and holds a cup with one hand.
- The baby plays with her food.
- The baby uses jargon and words in two-word phrases to communicate.
- The baby repeats four-word phrases, and uses nouns, verbs, and modifiers (e.g., “I go to car”).
- The baby has up to 200 words in her vocabulary.

## Activities for Children 18–24 Months

Following are activities you can perform to encourage development in children 18–24 months of age.

### *Sensory Development*

- Put a plastic drop cloth on the floor and sit on it with your child. Form some scented play dough into a ball and give it to him. Let him manipulate, poke, smash, twist, and pull the play dough. Be near so he will not eat it. Put it away and try another kind of scented play dough.
- Roll your child on the floor inside a plastic barrel.
- Play “climb the mountain,” by encouraging your child to climb stacked pillows. Prompt him to keep his head up while climbing up or down.
- Have your child play on a rocking horse. Put on music that has a heavy, bass beat. Be near and watch cautiously. Make sure your child holds on.

### *Gross Motor Development*

- Go to the park or the backyard. Let your child roll and tumble in the grass. Pretend to be different animals. Encourage her to swing, slide, climb, and jump.
- Give your child balls of various sizes to play with. Practice throwing, rolling, and kicking the balls.
- Get beanbags and a target. Have your child throw the beanbags overhand and underhand at the target. Praise her for attempts and accuracy.
- On a nice day, take your child for a walk. Have her ride a ride-on toy that moves when her feet propel it.
- Place a rope in the grass. Make it into different shapes. Have your child jump in and out of the rope.

### *Fine Motor Development*

- Get shovels and pails to scoop sand. Have your child sit in the sandbox. Demonstrate pouring sand into a pail. Have him imitate you.
- Have your child sit on the floor or at a child’s table with his feet touching the floor. Give him paper and crayon. He should spontaneously pick up the crayon and scribble. After scribbling for 1–2 minutes, draw his attention to you. Make vertical and circular strokes. Have him imitate these strokes.

- Sit and play with your child. Place small plastic shapes or animals and a small cup or container in front of him. Demonstrate putting the objects into the container using your fingertips and thumb. Have him repeat your actions.
- Play post office. Cut a 1-inch slit in the lid of a shoe box. Have your child imitate folding a piece of paper. Then place the folded paper into a shoe box.
- Get a straw and some loop cereal. Show your child how to put the cereal on the straw and take them off. Have him imitate you.
- Using a child’s scissors, show your child how to cut a piece of paper. Manipulate his hands around the scissors and snip the paper. Repeat. Let him practice without your hands on the scissors.

### *Language/Social Development*

- Play a game of “Whose is this?” Gather personal, nonbreakable familiar objects. Ask your child, “Whose is this?” Elicit words like *mine*, *yours*, *hers*, and *his*.
- Look at a picture book. Have your child point to action pictures. Talk about what action is shown, (e.g., dog running, baby jumping).
- Play a game of matching. Gather common objects and matching pictures of them (e.g., brush, ball, hat). Ask the child to match the object to the picture (e.g., “Find the brush”). She should put the brush on the picture of the brush. Praise her if she is correct or say, “No, the brush goes here,” matching the pair, if she is incorrect.
- When games and play are over, have your child help put toys away. Sing a song to make it fun. Praise her for cleaning up.