

# Healthy Child Development and Behavior



Below are milestones most children will reach between now and 15 months of age. Talk with your doctor at your child's next well-visit if your child is not yet reaching these milestones or there are skills your child no longer shows each day.

## Social and Emotional Milestones

- Copies other children while playing, like taking toys out of a container after seeing another child do it
- Shows you an object they like
- Claps when excited
- Hugs stuffed doll or other toy
- Shows you affection (hugs, cuddles or kisses you)

## Language and Communication Milestones

- Tries to say 1 or 2 words (besides "mama" or "dada") like "ball" or "dog"
- Looks at a familiar object when you name it

- Follows directions given with both a gesture and words (for example, gives you a toy when you hold out your hand and say, "give me the toy.")
- Points to ask for something or to get help

## Thinking and Learning Milestones

- Tries to use things the right way, like a phone, cup or book
- Stacks at least 2 small objects, like blocks

## Physical Development Milestones

- Takes a few steps on their own
- Uses fingers to feed themselves

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## Healthy Ways to Help Your Child Learn and Grow

### Development

- Teach your child to talk by using simple words and phrases. Repeat what your child tries to say and add to it. If they say "ba," you say "yes, a ball." Read books together and use simple words to talk about the pictures.
- When your child points to ask for something, say the word of the item to help build language skills.
- Offer your child pots and pans to play with or a small musical instrument, like a drum, to encourage your child to make noise.
- Read books, sing songs and play with your child often.

### Behavior

- Use positive words and praise when your child does what you ask them to do.
- When your child is doing something you don't want them to, redirect them quickly and consistently by offering a toy or moving them away. Try to use "no" only for behaviors that are unsafe. When you say "no," say it firmly. Do not spank, yell or give long explanations.

## Feeding

- Give water and 16–24 ounces of whole milk each day. Avoid sugary drinks like juice.
- Offer your child healthy foods. Provide 3 meals and 2–3 healthy snacks each day. Let your child decide how much to eat. It is common for young toddlers to have small portions or only take a few bites of a food. Offer small amounts of a few different foods.
- Avoid hard or round foods that can cause choking, such as popcorn, hot dogs, grapes, nuts and hard, raw vegetables.
- Use a small plate and cup, and encourage your child to feed themselves.

## Sleep

- Your child may sleep up to 14 hours over a 24-hour period, including 1–2 naps during the day.
- Have a consistent routine for bed (bathing, brushing teeth, books, bedtime). The hour before bedtime should be calm. Avoid giving your child a bottle or cup in bed.
- If your child wakes during the night, avoid giving enjoyable attention. Use words to reassure them and give a blanket or toy to hold for comfort.

## Teeth

- Schedule your child's first dental visit. Brush your child's teeth twice each day. Use a small amount of fluoride toothpaste, no more than a grain of rice.

## Digital Media Use

- Avoid screen time, including TVs, smartphones and tablets. Children learn best by playing and interacting with others.

## Water Safety

- Drowning is silent and can happen quickly. Do NOT leave your child alone near any water (including buckets, bathtubs, toilets, pools, ponds, whirlpools). Install a 4-foot-tall fence with a self-closing and self-latching gate around home pools. Learn more about water safety. *Scan the QR code*

## Vehicle Safety

- Your child's car seat should stay rear-facing in the back seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer. Learn more about car seat safety and installation. *Scan the QR code*

## Home Safety

- Use electrical outlet covers and keep hot, sharp and breakable items out of reach.
- Lock up medicines and cleaning supplies. Save the Poison Help Line number (1-800-222-1222) in all phones.
- Block stairs with a small gate. Keep furniture away from windows and install window guards.
- Keep cords, latex balloons, plastic bags and small objects like coins, marbles and batteries away from your child.
- Toddlers love to explore. Learn more ways to keep them safe at home. *Scan the QR code*

Find more useful, healthy tips for your family:

### Cincinnati Children's Blog

Visit: [blog.cincinnatichildrens.org](http://blog.cincinnatichildrens.org)

### Young & Healthy Podcast

Listen on:



*This information is meant to support your visit with your child's doctor. It should not take the place of the advice of your pediatrician.*

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents, 4th Edition* | American Academy of Pediatrics

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