

Child Development 18-36 Months

Mental Skills

Children:

- Have mental images of people and objects that are not present.
- Can use imagination and begin to play pretend games.
- Use an object to represent a person, like a doll to represent a mother or a child.
- Recount events of the day and imitate actions and events that occurred in the past.
- Has a vocabulary of several hundred words; can use two- to three-word sentences; repeat words.
- Listen to stories for a short period of time.
- Understand that images and pictures represent real objects and people.
- Have a vague notion of time; still confuse the meanings of today, tomorrow, and yesterday.
- Generally have short attention spans and can be easily distracted.
- Are just beginning to remember rules and don't really understand right from wrong.

Social Skills

Children:

- Are developing a strong sense of themselves as separate individuals.
- Think they are the center of the world.
- Beginning to show signs of independence; can be stubborn and contrary: say NO to adults.
- Are possessive, with strong notions of territory: This is mine! Having difficulty sharing.
- May be having trouble waiting and want things right now.
- Have trouble expressing emotions with words; when frustrated or angry can have tantrums or hit and kick to get what they want.
- Play side by side with others more than cooperatively with them.
- Begin to understand that other people have expectations of them.
- Are more aware of feelings of others; enjoying adult's attention.
- Express their feelings through pretend play, make believe play.

Tips for Parents

- It is hard for children of this age to share things and take turns.
- The best way to deal with dispute over toys is to have more than one toy for them.
- Children of this age are always busy and often cannot do the same thing for long periods of time. Do not expect them to be happy in a place (church, grocery store) or situation (family dinners) or playing with the same toy or the same children for more than ½ hour or so without your support and attention
- When children fight over the same toy, teach positive and nonviolent solutions: (1) provide another toy or remove the toy; (2) if that doesn't work, redirect children's attention to something else or take them to another place. Always make it clear that hurting another child is not acceptable.
- Always help your child resolve conflicts by using words to express what is happening ("You want to play with the car and Joanna is playing with the car? Tell her 'I want the car'").
- Tantrums are typical of this age but when they happen,
 - Remain calm; use a few gentle words to calm or distract your child,
 - (b) Don't yell or hit your child Don't try to talk or teach in the middle of a tantrum,
 - (d) Give little attention or ignore,
 - (e) Shift your child's attention to something else,
 - (f) Stand firm, don't give in to tantrums; try never to reward a tantrum.
 - (g) Try to understand the causes
- Adults should try to save saying NO to situations involving safety and emotional well-being. In other situations, give choice