

Norman Pediatric Associates
Parent Handout 18 Month Visit

Profile: The 18 - 24 month-old never seems to run out of energy. Your child will run everywhere, stoop over well, stop and sit, but cannot readily turn corners at a high speed. He/she can carry and move anything he/she is able to lift, and no cabinets or corners are out of bounds. Your child takes but cannot freely give, having no concept of the word “share”. He/she plays in the same area as other children but seldom plays with them. He/she enjoys pulling a toy along the ground and can stack 3-4 blocks. Your child will jabber constantly and understands many words, although he/she can clearly pronounce only 10-20 words. Your child will begin to combine two or more words at this age. Toddlers this age are affectionate, and enjoy giving kisses, blowing kisses and giving hugs.

Feeding/Nutrition: No snacks, cookie, juice or junk food except for very special occasions. Offer him/her a variety of 3- well balanced meals made up of small portions of foods. Your child needs 16-20 ounces of whole milk a day. Allow your child’s appetite to determine how much he/she eats. Do not bribe, coax or coerce your child to eat more. When a child is growing normally, he/she is eating enough! Your child may begin to use utensils effectively, especially a small spoon. Allow your child to feed himself/herself while sitting in a highchair or booster chair with the family. Your child needs a chewable or gummy multivitamin daily.

Sleep/Bedtime: This may be a challenging time for a bedtime routine. It is not unusual for children this age to have awakenings due to nightmares or night terrors. Encourage your child to quiet himself/herself with a toy or a blanket. Determine a plan for the middle of the night awakenings but keep the child in his/her own room and do not allow your child to sleep in your bed. Wean from pacifiers at this time.

Safety: Learn CPR.

Vehicle: Continue to use a car seat in the back seat of all vehicles, facing the rear of the car until your child is 2 years old. Read the instructions about your car safety seat to check on the weight and height requirements. Everyone should always wear a seat belt in the car. Your child should wear a helmet when riding on your bicycle and when riding his/her tricycle. When backing out of the garage or driving in the driveway, have another adult hold your child a safe distance away so he/she is not run over.

Childproof: Continue to use gates at the top and bottom of stairs and guards on second floor and higher windows. Move furniture away from windows. Look around to see what your child can now or soon be able to reach. Watch your child closely when he/she is on the stairs. Keep firearms unloaded and ammunition locked away. We recommend using trigger locks on all firearms. Use bug sprays with less than 30% DEET to prevent bug bites.

Smoking/Burns: If a member of the family smokes: STOP SMOKING - Ask us for help if you cannot stop smoking. A smoke free environment is important for child’s health. Make your home and car “no smoking zones”. Your water heater should be set at less than 120° F. Test your smoke detector and CO detectors frequently and change the batteries. Keep your toddler away from the hot stove, hot liquids, fireplace, curling iron, lighters and space heaters. Always use sunblock SPF 30 or higher on your child when going out to play.

Drowning: Always supervise your toddler around water: bathtub, toilet, bucket, pools, lakes or ponds. When boating, your child should always wear a life vest.

Poisoning: All poisonous substances: medicines, alcohol, lawn and cleaning agents, paints, and solvents should be kept out of the child’s sight and reach.

Teeth/Oral Health: Continue to use a soft toothbrush and a rice-grain size smear of fluoride toothpaste twice a day to clean your toddler’s teeth.

Parents and Family: Continue to find some time for yourself and individual time with your partner. It is important to listen to and show respect for your toddler as well as other family members. Spend time with each child. Show affection in the family. Help your child express feelings such as joy, anger, sadness, fear and frustration by telling your child words to express his/her feelings. Create time for your family to be together. Family outings should be relatively short. Lengthy activities are tiring for everyone and may lead to irritability or a temper tantrum. Conflicts between siblings should be resolved without taking sides. Do not expect a toddler to share. Give older children a safe place for toys they do not want to share. Teach your child not to hit, bite, or hurt other people or pets. If you are pregnant, prepare your child for the new baby by reading books about being a big brother or sister. Ask us for help in finding programs to help your family.

Discipline: Discipline will become more challenging. Decide what limits are important to you and your toddler and make sure others use them with your toddler. Be specific when setting these limits. Briefly tell your toddler why they are being disciplined. Attempt to be as consistent as possible when enforcing limits. Keep time out or other disciplinary measures brief. You may find it helpful to pick your toddler up and hold or remove your child from dangerous or conflicting situations. Reassure your toddler when the negative behavior has stopped and praise them for good behavior. Tell your child what to do in a nice way. When possible give your child an alternative. For example, “You cannot play with the remote control, but you can play with the blocks”. Children (and Moms and Dads) are less able to deal with frustration when they are hungry, tired or ill. Parenting class can help you understand your child’s behavior and teach you what to do.

Toilet Training: Toilet training is generally not accomplished until between 2 and 3 years of age. If your child shows some interest in toilet training, then you may proceed by talking about it. However, do not expect great accomplishments at this age and never scold him/her for accidents.

Development: Continue to encourage language development by reading books, singing songs, and talking about what you and he/she are seeing and doing together. Use simple words with your child when telling your child what you want him/her to do. Ask your child simple questions, confirm his/her answers, and explain simply. Limit television viewing to less than an hour. Promote your child’s sense of competence by allowing choices when possible. These choices should be limited between 2 items: for example, jeans or sweat pants. Make sure you will be happy with either choice. Also give your child many chances to try new foods. Allow tasting and touching to learn about them. It is normal for your child to go from being independent to clinging. Consider enrolling in a parent-toddler playgroup.

Immunizations: Today your child received the fourth Pentacel which is a combination vaccine that includes DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, & Pertussis), Hib (Haemophilus Influenza), and IPV (Inactivated Poliovirus) vaccines.

Oklahoma Poison Control Center:
(405) 271-5454 (OKC area)
1-800-222-1222 (state wide toll free)
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