

One to Two Years

Developmental Tasks

Discovering and establishing a distinct sense of self through continuous exploration of the world

Developing communication skills and experiencing the responsiveness of others

Learning to use memory and acquiring the basics of self-control



What's Happening in the Brain?

During this stage, the child's brain:

- ❖ Builds neural pathways by repeating and practicing tasks (e.g., holding a spoon, changing from crawling to walking)
- ❖ Has matured enough to recall actions or events that occurred earlier in the day (i.e., has memories)
- ❖ Is focused on learning language
- ❖ Is vulnerable to permanent changes through exposure to toxins such as lead or stressors such as domestic violence in the home
- ❖ Needs high levels of fat in diet (from breastfeeding, formula, or whole milk after age one) for continued growth

Domains

Physical

Typical Characteristics

Begins to walk, creep up and down stairs, climb on furniture, etc.

Enjoys pushing and pulling things

Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting

Provide large, safe spaces for exercising arms and legs, and teach the child how to get down from furniture, stairs, etc.

Provide push-and-pull toys, which aid the child in learning to balance self and objects.

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Physical

Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Is able to stack two or three blocks, likes to take things apart, and likes to put things in and take things out of cupboards, mouth, boxes, etc.	Provide toys or games that can be stacked, taken apart, nested or put into each other, squeezed, pulled, etc., and which are clean and not sharp or small enough to swallow.
Takes off pull-on clothing	Allow the child to try to dress and undress him/herself.
Begins to feed self with a spoon and can hold a cup	Allow the child to feed him/herself food that can be easily eaten (wearing a bib and with a cloth under the high chair, which should have a stable footing).
Is still unable to control bowels	Do not try to potty-train yet.

Emotional

Needs the warmth, security, and attentions of a special adult	A special, caring adult should regularly look after the child.
Is learning to trust and needs to know that someone will provide care and meet needs	Respond to the needs of the child consistently and with sensitivity.
Sucks thumb, a behavior that peaks at around 18 months	Ignore thumb sucking, as drawing attention to it may encourage the behavior.
May have many temper tantrums	Do not be rigid and demand compliance all the time; do not give in to the child's demands, but do not discipline, as the child is expressing him/herself the only way he/she knows how.
Is generally in a happy mood	Enjoy the child's behavior and keep up the good work!
May become angry when others interfere with certain activities	Accept the child's reaction as normal and healthy, and not as a threat to your authority; if necessary, modify the environment to reduce the need to interfere in the child's activities.
May become frustrated because of an inability to put wishes into words	Be patient in trying to interpret/understand the child's wishes.

Social

Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Enjoys interaction with familiar adults	Include the child in activities (as appropriate).
Copies adult behaviors	Be sure to be a good role model!
Begins to be demanding, assertive, and independent	Establish clear boundaries necessary to ensure child's safety; understand that boundaries help the child test limits and divide the world into manageable segments.
Still finds mother (or primary caregiver) very important	Ensure that a special person provides most of the care.
Waves "bye-bye"	Wave back.
Plays alone but does not play well with others the same age	Be sure an adult is close by to observe all the child's activities.
Is possessive of own things	Don't force the child to share, since sharing can be learned later.

Mental

Learns through the physical senses	Provide toys and play games involving different textures, colors, and shapes (pots, pans, boxes, blocks, etc.). Model pretend play with these objects. Caution: Stimulation in the environment, while important, must also be balanced. Many babies will "turn off" (i.e., withdraw or cry) if they are overstimulated.
Is curious, likes to explore, and pokes fingers into holes	Allow the child to explore, but first be sure the area is safe.
Is able to name some common objects	Talk to the child often, saying the names of objects seen and used and discussing activities such as bathing and getting dressed.
Uses one-word sentences ("No," "Go," "Down," "Bye-Bye"); points to and names body parts and familiar objects	Teach the names of body parts and familiar objects; tell stories, read picture books, and repeat familiar nursery rhymes.
Is able to understand simple directions	Give simple, clear directions and praise the child when the directions are followed.
Begins to enjoy simple songs and rhymes	Provide rhythmic songs that are repetitive and low in key.
Demonstrates limited capacity for decision making	Offer simple choices: "Banana or blueberries?"

Typical Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Is inwardly sensitive to adult approval and disapproval despite tantrums and bursts of anger	Acknowledge behaviors that you find pleasing or acceptable; when expressing disapproval be sensitive and mild-mannered but also firm and consistent.

Indicators Related to Developmental Lag or Potential Trauma

Overly withdrawn, passive, and/or fearful

Obsessive head banging, finger sucking, and/or rocking

Lack of interest in objects, environment, or play

Excessive temper tantrums: hitting, biting, and hyperventilating and/or constipation or smearing of feces (stool) as an expression of anger

Easily startled

Low weight, poor appetite, and/or digestive issues

Continuous screaming or crying