

## 12-18 Months

1. **What's the Scoop?**-Your child is just starting to use a spoon. Let her hold a spoon during all meals & play with a spoon, even if she is still using her fingers. Place a food that sticks to the spoon on it, such as yogurt or mashed potatoes and see if she can guide it to her own mouth. Guide at the elbow if needed and fade your assistance. You can practice these same food scooping skills in water, sand or rice/bean tables. **Skills:** self-feeding, fine motor
2. **Step Up & Down**-Help your child begin to negotiate steps from a standing instead of a crawling position. Hold both or one hand as needed and practice on one step or a curb to start. Once your child can do 3-4 steps with one hand held then you can start to work on the staircase in your home. **Skills:** Gross motor, strength, depth perception, body in space awareness.
3. **Roll the Ball**-Sit on the floor a few feet from your child and demonstrate how to roll a large ball. Encourage them to roll it back and make a fun game of it. You can sing "roll, roll, roll the ball gently across the floor" instead of Row Your Boat. **Skills:** Gross/Fine Motor, turn taking, language.
4. **Joint Attention**-By now your child should be starting to gesture or point toward people or objects he wants or to show you something or gain your attention. She should also be following your gesture or point to look toward things you show her. For example, a child hear an airplane and looks around and then looks up and points to the sky. She may not be able to say "airplane" yet, but she is indicating to you that she sees the plane and wants you to know that she saw it, thus gaining your attention for what she is interested in. Or she is looking for her ball and you say, "Your ball is behind you" and you point toward her back and she looks around, finds the ball and then smiles at you, showing that she understands your gesture/words. **Skills:** Cognitive, receptive/expressive language, joint attention, socialization.
5. **Megaphone**- Use empty paper towel or toilet tissue rolls and show your child how to put it against their mouth and speak, sing or make silly sounds. Sometimes this greatly enhances a child's participation in sound making, speech imitation. **Skills:** Receptive/expressive language, imitation.
6. **Dump & Fill**- Toddlers LOVE to dump and fill repeatedly, so provide them with varied containers and dump truck type vehicles to do so. They will help clean up, but probably as soon as everything goes into the box it will all be dumped out again! **Skills:** Fine motor, grasp, release, wrist rotation.
7. **Sing & Do**-Sing familiar and new songs with your child, especially songs with gestures. If you don't know the gestures, make them up! "Itsy Bitsy Spider", "Wheel on the Bus", "Old MacDonald" are a few. Encourage your child to sing along as best they can and to imitate the gestures. **Skills:** Receptive/expressive language, imitation, motor planning.

8. **Bubble Popping**-Blow bubbles and encourage popping using hands and/or feet. Clap bubbles, reach high and low for bubbles, stomp and jump on bubbles. **Skills:** Gross/Fine Motor, balance, coordination.
9. **Blanket Swing**-Use a large blanket and have your child lie down in the blanket, have one adult hold one end and another adult hold the other and swing the child gently back and forth while you chant or sing a song. **Skills:** Sensory, vestibular.
10. **On and off**-Help your child learn to get on and off a small trike or rocking horse or to straddle your legs for a horsey ride. **Skills:** Gross motor, motor planning, balance, coordination.
11. **Scoop & Poke**-Let your child practice with utensils for at least part of every meal. Some kids are able to poke food with a fork before they can scoop food with a spoon. Use hand over hand when needed. **Skills:** self-feeding, fine motor
12. **Furniture Climb**-As your child grows he will naturally want to climb onto adult furniture and this is good practice for his motor skills. Allow him to climb onto low couches, ottomans, chairs and stools with supervision. If you have a child sized chair, help him to negotiate climbing into the chair and turning around to sit down properly. **Skills:** Gross Motor, motor planning, strength, balance, coordination.
13. **Paper Tearing**-Just like babies, tearing paper is still a fun toddler activity. Save tissue paper from gifts and demonstrate tearing paper and rolling it into balls and then use a glue stick to stick it to a piece of paper or cardboard to make a colorful torn paper collage. **Skills:** Fine Motor, pincer grasp, creativity.
14. **Sit on a Stool**-Toddlers are still working on balance and coordination, especially now that they are sitting in chairs and not solely on the floor. Use a small foot stool, the perfect size means your child is in a 90-90-90 position with back straight, hips straight & feet flat on the floor. Doing activities while seated on a stool requires your child to focus more on sitting and improve sitting control and balance. **Skills:** Gross motor, balance, trunk strength, stability, coordination.
15. **Peek a Boo/Hide and Seek on the Go**-Now that your toddler is mobile and active you can continue to play peek a boo by encouraging him to hide behind furniture or doors while in the move. If he goes into another room, say "Where did Tommy go?" and hear him giggle and then go find him with a "Peek a boo, I see you" or a "There you are!" and see how long he will continue this game. **Skills:** Gross Motor, Cognitive, Socialization
16. **Walk and Carry**-Toddlers are continuing to refine their walking skills, so once your child has been walking for a few weeks or month you can begin to encourage him to carry a large ball or stuff toy while walking. This will help bring his arms in toward his body and help him work on walking balance without having to use his arms (often out to sides for new walkers in what is called "high regard") to help stabilize himself. **Skills:** Gross Motor, balance, coordination, strength, stability.
17. **Squat and Stand**-Practice having your child go from standing down to a squat position to pick something up off the floor and then then back up to standing again. Place a bunch of small toys on the floor and stand above your child holding a small basket or box. Encourage your child to bend down into a squat position to pick up a toy and then

- stand up and drop the toy into the basket. Eventually your child should be able to do this task without needing his hands to touch the floor while squatting or returning to standing. **Skills:** Gross motor, squatting, strength, balance, coordination, fine motor, reach, grasp, release.
- 18. Dance, dance, dance-**Toddlers love to move & music is a great motivator so put on your favorite tunes and shake it up with your child. See if he can imitate arm movements, leg movements, spin in circles, etc. **Skills:** Gross Motor, balance, coordination, listening, rhythm, music appreciation.
  - 19. Cheerios in the Bottle-**Need entertainment for after a meal at a restaurant? Use a trial size bottle with a small opening and bring a container of puffs or Cheerios. Show your child how to drop the Cheerios into the bottle and invert the container to dump them out again. This dump and fill activity with a very small container can provide 15 minutes or more of entertainment. **Skills:** Fine motor, neat pincer grasp, wrist rotation, cognitive, attention.
  - 20. One Step Commands-**Toddlers are good at following simple directions, but not complex ones and not directions with more than one step. Practice having your child follow simple one-step commands such as "Get your cup", "Find your shoes", "Put it on the table". If she can easily follow one step command then you can begin to work on two step related commands such as "Get your cup and put it on the table" or "Pick up your book and put it on the shelf". **Skills:** Receptive/Expressive language, listening, following directions.
  - 21. Body Parts-**Play a game of body part identification by pointing, using a mirror or singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes". **Skills:** Cognitive, identification, memory, receptive/expressive language.
  - 22. Yours & Mine-**Once your child knows and can point to a few body parts you can begin to work on having her identify your body parts and learn the words "yours" and "mine". Says "Where is your nose?" and encourage them to point to their own nose and then say "Where is my nose?" and see if they point to your nose. **Skills:** Receptive/expressive language, cognitive, identification, memory.
  - 23. On, Under, In, Behind-**Help your child start to learn prepositions by encouraging them to find toys that are "on" the table, "under" the table, "in" the toy box or "behind" their back. **Skills:** Receptive/expressive language
  - 24. Bubble Blowing-**Bubbles are fun indoors or out. Blow bubbles for your child and then allow them to try to blow bubbles themselves. **Skills:** Oral motor, language.
  - 25. Puzzles-**Use simple puzzles with 4-6 pieces, wooden puzzles with large knobs work great for little hands. Encourage your child to remove pieces and then guide them to use trial and error to find where the pieces fit. **Skills:** Cognitive, discrimination, problem solving, fine motor, reach, grasp, release, spatial awareness.
  - 26. Feed the Baby/Feed the Stuffed Animal-**Begin demonstrating pretend play using baby dolls, stuffed toys or action figures. Use plastic spoon and a cup and encourage your child to "feed the baby" or "give the bear a drink". **Skills:** Self-help, feeding, cognitive, imaginative play.

- 27. Fill in the blank**-By now your child is familiar with certain songs such as “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”, sing this song and begin to leave a word off at the end and see if she makes an attempt to fill in the blank. For example, “Twinkle, twinkle, little \_\_\_\_”. **Skills:** Receptive, expressive language, cognitive, memory, attention.
- 28. Where is?**-Encourage your child to find familiar objects, people and pets. Ask “Where is Daddy?” and see if he goes to find him in another room or ask “where is the cat?” and see if he points to him or seeks him out. **Skills:** Receptive/expressive language
- 29. Put it on the post**-You can use old dvds or cd as rings and use a taper candle in a candle holder as a post and encourage your child to place the rings on the post. **Skills:** Fine motor, perceptual motor, hand-eye coordination.
- 30. Squeeze & squirt**-In the bathtub and/or swimming pool, use turkey basters to squeeze and squirt water or use sponges to squeeze out water. **Skills:** Fine motor, hand strength, dexterity