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18 MONTHS

## DEVELOPMENT

By now, your child will be walking alone, climbing, and using 2-3 words phrases. He/she will also be kicking and throwing a ball, waving “bye bye” and carrying small objects while walking. Speech and language continue to develop more rapidly, with around 10-20 words in their vocabulary. This is a great time to be reading to your child, as they become more interested in books and can identify some pictures by name. Intoeing, out toeing, and bowleggedness are common. You can foster fine motor development by encouraging your child to feed him/herself, stack blocks and play with crayons.

## FEEDING

Modeling good nutrition is important at this age. Enjoy family meal times, offering nutritious foods with a variety of fruits and vegetables. Offer three meals a day with snacks in-between. Milk intake should be limited to 16 ounces a day and juice should be limited to 0-4 ounces day. If your child is thirsty between meals, offer some water! Appetites go up and down at this age – this is normal! Try to think of the big picture. Your child should be seated while eating to avoid choking. Foods should be cut into small pieces and avoid choking hazards such as hot dogs, candy and uncooked carrots. Now is the time to wean that final bottle! Encourage your child to use a sippy cup or cup for drinking. It is OK to introduce peanut products, tree nuts, and shellfish – there is no evidence that delayed introduction reduces food allergies.

## SLEEPING AND NAP TIME

At this age, most children sleep about 12 hours per night and take one or two naps a day. If your child is attempting to climb out of the crib, it's time for a bed! You can use a toddler bed or a bed with a safety railing to prevent falling.

## SAFETY CONCERNS

Never leave your child unattended. Use gates at the top and bottom of stairs, and be sure they are securely in place. Safety latches on cupboards protect the child from cleaning supplies and other dangerous substances. Never leave medication within the child's reach. Supervise your child around pets and teach animal safety. Toddlers should never be alone in a car, or bath. Water safety is very important as your child becomes more mobile. Standing water should be eliminated and bath time supervised – no matter how shallow the water. Use sunscreen in the summer and reapply frequently.

## PARENTING CHALLENGES

Children are naturally self-centered at this age; sharing can be a very difficult concept. Encourage group play by providing multiple toys (i.e. blocks) to allow choice. Brief “time-outs” are appropriate at this age (one minute for each year old...). Your child is beginning to learn what behavior is acceptable and will look to you for guidance and limitations.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

Today's immunization is Hepatitis A. As with all vaccinations, discomfort at the injection site, or low grade fever (below 101.0°) are common side effects. You can treat these with acetaminophen (Tylenol) and cool compresses to the injection site. Please call our office for any high fever, if your child cries inconsolably for longer than 3 hours, or if he/she becomes very pale or limp.

## DON'T FORGET TO BRUSH!

Your child should brush their teeth once to twice a day with plain water or a fluoride-free toothpaste! Dental visits are not needed unless there are concerns regarding the teeth. No bottles or sippy cups in bed! This can cause cavities.

*If you have any questions about this handout please contact our office at 847-676-5394*