



Let's Grow

Issue #6: 13-18 Months

Your baby is becoming a toddler, and you may start to hear the words “No” and “Mine”. At this age, they are still unable to understand right from wrong. What a confusing age to be! Their feelings can swing in a moment from happiness to sadness. Some of the time they will cling to you and cry when you leave the room. Later they will push you away and announce, “Me do!”. They need to develop likes and dislikes of their own. They need your love and encouragement to learn to do new things.

Allow them to explore and learn but keep them safe. Encourage and support them to try new things. Show them how you expect them to behave and offer choices that will give them some control in their life. Your role is to keep a balance between their need for independence and their need to be protected.

Feeding & Nutrition

Is My Child Growing Well?

As parents, we are responsible for making sure that our children have what they need to grow and thrive. All children have a pattern of growth that is natural to them. Your health care provider will track their growth pattern over time and take note of any changes to this pattern. Your child is growing well when they follow a predictable pattern of growth.

In today's world, it can be difficult for parents, educators, and health care providers not to become too focused on children's body shapes and sizes. This happens when we get caught up in diet culture. Diet culture leads people to believe that thinness equates to goodness and health, weight loss can be used to build status, certain ways of eating are better than others, and that certain body types are of more value than others. These beliefs can create weight bias, which is negative attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and judgements based on people's size, weight, shape and appearance – and this can lead to prejudice, stigma and discrimination. This in turn can lead to exclusion, anxiety, and depression.

You can avoid passing diet culture and weight bias onto your children. Start by examining your own relationship with food – do you ever feel guilt or other negative emotions when eating? Do you trust your hunger and fullness cues? Consider your food parenting and how you want your child to feel during mealtimes, then help your child build a positive relationship with food and their body. You can:

- Avoid food rewards or punishments
- Respect your child's feelings of hunger and fullness
- Choose not to label certain foods 'bad' or 'good'
- Give your child a chance to explore a variety of foods
- Be mindful of how you speak about your own and others' bodies.

Taking steps to counter weight bias and diet culture protects your child's mental and physical wellbeing. Teach your child that you are a safe person to speak with about their changing body.

Learn more: [nurturing-healthy-eaters-elementary-schools.pdf \(odph.ca\)](#)

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What About Picky Eating?

Picky eating can be a normal part of the development process for children. These behaviours can be a source of stress and tension between caregivers and children. Take the pressure off by remembering that you and your child have different roles at mealtimes. Parents and caregivers oversee what food is served and when and where it is offered. Children are learning to trust in their body's cues and can decide whether and how much to eat.

If your child is refusing to eat, don't worry or prepare something else, respect their role and let them know that their meal will be put aside if they want to try eating in a short time. Feel confident you have met your role by offering them food at an appropriate time and place. Setting regular meal and snack times can help your child predict when they will be offered food and come to meals ready to eat.

Never label your child as a 'picky eater' – this behaviour is normal and does not define them. Positive feeding is based on trust, respect, and consent – it's about your child's relationship with you and any other parent or caregiver. Avoid power struggles, create supportive meal and snack environments, and role-model the behaviours you want to see.

For more: [Say Goodbye to Picky Eating! - Unlock Food](#)



Caring for Your Toddler

Oral Health Tips

Bottles and Sippy Cups

- Start giving your child an open cup at approximately 6 months of age or when your child is able to sit up.
- Wean your child from the bottle by 12-14 months of age.
- If your child needs a bottle to fall asleep, fill it with water only.
- Do not substitute a bottle with a sippy cup. Sippy cups are not recommended.
- NEVER let your child use the bottle as a pacifier.
- Offer water between meals and snacks. Having other types of beverages like milk or juice between meals and snacks can lead to cavities.

Snacking

Toddlers need a regular routine of meals and snacks to meet their needs. Offer your child 3 small meals and 2 to 3 snacks at about the same time each day.

- Constant grazing or choosing sweet and sticky foods or beverages for meals and snacks can lead to cavities.
- Encourage healthy choices from Canada's Food Guide such as cheese, vegetables, fruit and yogurt.
- If your child needs a drink between meals, water is best.



Immunization

Following 12 month vaccines, your child's next immunizations are due at 15 and 18 months. At the 18-month appointment, your healthcare provider will also do a developmental screen to make sure your toddler is progressing well. Make an appointment with your health care provider or call your local health unit to get these important, preventative immunizations.

- [Vaccines for babies and toddlers | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/vaccines)



- [Immunization \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](https://publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/immunization)



Eighteen months is a milestone in your child's development and often the last regular check-up before your child starts school. It is important to plan a visit to a family doctor or other health care provider and take the time you need to:

- ask questions about your child's physical, emotional and social development
- learn about specialized community supports and services
- get a regular checkup
- get caught up on your child's immunizations

Find out what to expect at your baby's Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit, including the 18-month immunization here: [Enhanced 18-Month Well-Baby Visit | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/enhanced-18-month-well-baby-visit)

Safety

Now that your child is climbing and exploring, here are some things you can do to keep them safe:

- Large stuffed animals, bumper pads, and toys still don't belong in their crib. They might use them to climb on.
- Keep their crib away from windows and blinds. They may get caught in blind cords or fall out the window.
- If they can get out of their crib, or when they are 90 centimeters tall, it is time to use a toddler bed with a rail for safety. A mattress on the floor is also a safe option. Be sure you have safety-proofed the room. Never lock them in their room.
- Give them safe shoes or slippers to wear. Floppy sleepers, big pants, and dresses can trip them.
- Fasten furniture to the wall, keep doors closed, and use a gate to protect them from exploring and falling.
- Be always within arm's reach if you are near a swimming pool, pond, or open body of water.
- Your child may seem like a big toddler now, but they still need to be watched. They don't know what is safe and what isn't.

To find First Aid and CPR training courses, try visiting 211ontario.ca or call 211.

Healthy Growth & Development

These developmental milestones have been provided to show some of the skills that mark the progress of young children as they learn to communicate. You may use these milestones to help monitor your child's development.

For more information visit [Early child development | ontario.ca](http://Earlychilddevelopment|ontario.ca)

By 18 months most children can:

- understand the concepts of "in and out", and "off and on"
- point to several body parts when asked
- use at least 20 words
- respond with words or gestures to simple questions (for example, "where's teddy?", "what's that?")
- demonstrate some pretend play with toys (for example, gives teddy a drink)
- make at least four different consonant sounds (for example, b, n, d, g, w, h)
- enjoy being read to and looking at simple books with you
- point to pictures using one finger

Let's Talk

By 18 months, most children can use at least 20 words. Your child can recognize their own name and the names of people that are special to them. They will start to make two-word sentences. They use many sounds joined together that sound like another language! Your child likes to point to things around them and look at you to tell them what they are.

If you have concerns about your child's speech, contact: [Preschool Speech and Language | Thames Valley Children's Centre \(tvcc.on.ca\)](http://PreschoolSpeechandLanguage|ThamesValleyChildren'sCentre(tvcc.on.ca))

Let's Sing As We Tidy (To the tune of "Farmer in the Dell")

***It's time to tidy up
It's time to tidy up
It's time to put your toys away
It's time to tidy up***



Let's Play

Challenge your child with engaging activities that help them learn, grow and thrive. You can sign up for an email or text once per week from Play&Learn with games and activities that are appropriate for their age. [Play & Learn - Games and Activities-Early Child Development | Health HQ:](#)

Learning About Things Through Touch

Your child will like exploring by touching and feeling things of different textures like plastic containers, running water, foods, and fabric. They will start to push and pull things. A cardboard box makes a great wagon for them. They can collect toys and take them for a ride! They may like to play with a large, inflated beach ball; encourage them to push it to you. Place several small toys inside a box and then inside a paper bag. Put it in one of their favorite play spaces. Now, play “Let’s find the toys”. Give them lots of big hints. Your child will now recognize themselves in the mirror, so show them all their body parts and name them. They can even show you where your nose is.

Toys

Your child’s job is to explore. They may especially like cupboards and closets. If you can, try letting them have their own space in a kitchen cupboard with safe bowls, pots, and pans. Put a safety lock on the cupboard doors they shouldn’t be exploring. Here are some ideas of toys they may like.

TO DEVELOP HAND-EYE COORDINATION:

- buckets of blocks of varying sizes and shapes
- unbreakable containers to open, close, fill, and empty
- make your own shape sorters
- board books that you can make yourself or borrow from the library
- wood puzzles with knobs

FOR PRETEND PLAY:

- Child-proof toy vehicles
- a doll with clothes and blankets to cuddle
- empty cardboard boxes to use as playhouses, tunnels, or vehicles
- child size table and chairs

DEVELOPING LARGE MUSCLES

- riding toys
- pull toys
- balls of varying sizes to throw and kick
- swimming, digging in sand or snow, hammering toys
- help your child to experience stairs and ladders



Positive Parenting

Parenting Your Child

"One Day at a Time"

Your toddler is now ready to learn to do some things for themselves. As they learn this independence, they may get quite frustrated. You may notice more crying, yelling, or foot stomping. They may even bang their head on the floor. When your toddler loses control, they need your help to learn how to calm themselves. Stay calm and provide comfort when they need it. Prevent them from hurting themselves. Even though you may both be frustrated, be patient and take time to help them learn how to deal with their feelings. Enjoy this special age one day at a time. Here are some tips to improve a difficult day:

- Let your toddler work with you; stirring, sweeping, dusting.
- Anticipate problems and learn the early signs that your toddler is struggling.
- Be flexible when planning your day. Do you really have to do everything on your list? Are there times when certain activities will be easier?
- Set aside time to play with your toddler. Read to them or sing rhymes. First thing in the morning sets a good tone for the day.
- Play music. Dance.
- Take them out for a walk. Stomp in puddles.
- When your toddler naps, take time for yourself to read, have a soothing bath or nap.
- Talk to a friend or relative about how you feel.
- Keep to a routine. Toddlers have a much easier time when they can anticipate what will happen next.
- Self-care is important. You need to fill your cup to fill up others.

For young children, behaviour is a way to communicate. When a child behaves in a challenging way, it's important to understand what led to the behaviour. Connecting emotionally with your child builds a healthy relationship. It's the foundation of positive discipline, and it starts with parents. Redirection—switching from one activity to another—works well with toddlers and sometimes older children.

For more information visit: [Positive discipline for young children | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/plns/index-eng.aspx)

Is your family ready for an emergency?

Know the Risks. Make a Plan. Get a Kit.

This guide explains in greater detail the steps Canadians should take to become better prepared for emergencies. Included are a Family Emergency Plan template and list of emergency kit items.

You can download the guide as an eBook or as a PDF file.

Visit: <http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/plns/index-eng.aspx>



For more information

- The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program provides information and home visits to eligible parents who need more support during pregnancy, after the baby is born, and as the child grows. For more information or to self-refer to the program, visit GBPH's website at Home Visiting Program (publichealthgreybruce.on.ca) or call Grey Bruce Public Health at 519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 extension 5.
- 211 quickly and confidentially connects people to social services and community programs across Ontario. 211 is available by phone for those looking to speak to a friendly voice or by text, online search, email, or chat. Service is available in multiple languages.
- Call 811 to find health services or information or get health advice from a registered nurse. Toll free TTY line: 1-866-797-0007. Live chat is also available. Health811 - [Health811 \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.health811.on.ca)
 - Looking for guidance about food and nutrition, including infant and child feeding? Residents of Ontario can connect with a Registered Dietitian to access free nutrition information and advice by calling 811 or starting a chat at Health811.
- Caring for Kids, a website developed by the Canadian Pediatric Society, provides parents with information about their child's health and well-being. [Home | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](https://www.caringforkids.ca)
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free programs for families and children from birth to 6 years old. You can learn and play with your child, meet people and get advice from early childhood professionals.
 - Find an EarlyON child and family centre: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>
 - For more information about Grey County: <https://www.grey.ca/resident-services/community-services/early-learning-and-child-care/earlyon>
 - For more information about Bruce County: <https://www.brucecounty.on.ca/human-services/earlyon>
- Discover how to prevent injuries before they happen – Parachute: www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics

