



Toddler Development 13 – 15 months

Understanding what makes
your toddler tick - the key to
a happy, well-balanced child



Articles

Your Toddlers Development 13 – 15 months

Welcome to the world of the toddler! By now you have a little person on your hands. Whilst on the one hand, you may feel that your little person is 'all grown up', the other side is that she is still a baby and still needs to be treated like one. Your toddler is able to show some affection now – she will smile, laugh, babble and look for hugs. She can clap hands, and wave bye-bye.

You will be pleased to notice a sense of humour emerging – she loves to laugh and is responsive to you. Her behaviour will become very unpredictable, vacillating from very grown up behaviour such as walking and saying a few words, to collapsing in a heap in torrents of tears if a toy is taken away from her. Your little toddlers behaviour is totally unpredictable and not at all pre-meditated. Little toddlers at this age don't see their playmates as people with feelings at all. They are simply there as objects to play with and explore. So if they pull the dog's ears, or the tablecloth off the table, it is simply due to their need to explore their environment.

Your little toddler has been communicating for some time now by babbling with voice intonation and emphasis. At this stage her *receptive speech* (what she understands) is more advanced than her *expressive speech* (which is what she can actually say)

By using a single word, she is able to convey the meaning of a whole sentence. So she may say the word 'dog', which may mean that she is saying, "There is the dog", "The dog is eating" or "Where is the dog"? Her vocabulary is most likely to consist of a few words (about three or four), usually the names of objects that are part of her daily life such as 'mama' or 'dada'.

She will respond to her own name, and will understand a few simple commands such as, "Where is the light?" (how clever!).

She can now crawl well on all fours, and is into anything that looks interesting enough. Around her first birthday, she will most likely be walking with her hands held, or whilst pushing a trolley, and may be able to stand on her own for a few seconds before she collapses onto her bottom, or lurches to the next piece of furniture to hold onto.

- She will be able to walk whilst holding onto furniture (cruising).
- By 15 months of age, she will most likely be walking well on her own.
- She will start to help with dressing by putting her arms up and legs into clothing.
- She will begin to be able to rise from a sitting to a standing position unaided.
- She can definitely move very quickly from her tummy or back into the sitting position, so nappy changing time can become quite challenging!
- Her grasp of large and small objects will fully develop and she will be able to hold objects with the tips of her forefingers by picking up things with a precise thumb and index finger grip (pincer grip), and will love packing and unpacking objects.

Your little toddler will experience a range of feelings when she encounters people and experiences around her. These feelings can be joy, anger, fear, curiosity or frustration. As her language skills develop, she will begin to communicate

with you more effectively to express her needs. However, at this stage she has few words to describe how she is feeling, so she will largely communicate with you by using sounds (such as laughing or crying), and actions. She now notices other babies around her with great interest and starts to realize that she can form a relationship (albeit very fleeting at this stage!) with them. She will stare, smile, babble away and reach out to another child in her vicinity.

As a parent of an increasingly mobile toddler whose desire to explore her world seems insatiable, your role in enriching her experiences by attributing meaning to them is unique. Try to be a parent first and foremost, and avoid adopting a teacher role as you feel pressured by society to stimulate your child and teach her skills to enable her to cope with the demands of school, and indeed the 21st century. Children are designed to learn through play. Allocating special playtime with your toddler is an investment in your future together.

All the best,

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