grow your kids
TREE Talk Read Engage Encourage

MARYLAND AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
WWW.MDAAP.ORG

AGES 18-24 MONTHS:
TIPS FOR PARENTS
grow your kids
Talk Read Engage Encourage

AGES 18-24 MONTHS:
YOUR CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT:

Motor: Runs and climbs

Play and Learning: Imaginary play like feeding a doll or dressing up

Communication: Expressive language (saying words)

Social Emotional: Seeks independence and gets into power struggles. Socializes with other children. Starts to recognize emotions

Follow your baby’s cues
Have fun, play, and create special time together. Your baby’s development is stimulated by emotionally connecting with YOU!!!
Emotional nutrients to grow

What do children need emotionally to grow?

They need to feel:
• loved and adored by consistent caregivers
• protected when scared
• comforted when upset
• and they need order and routine

They also need seeds for growth:

Talk
Read
Engage
Encourage
TALK
Talk and Communication: “bathe your baby in language”

Name colors, shapes, size: “that’s red”, “that’s a square” “you are so big”

Comment like a radio announcer: Watch your child closely and narrate what your child is doing. This may feel odd to you when you first try it and that’s ok. Say things like “you are having fun putting the puzzle together”, “this truck is red and now you are moving it back and forth”. This type of play is child centered and is a very powerful way for children to learn language.

You can also play instructional games. Make it fun- don’t make it a drill:

Give directions to your child: “please bring me the shoe”, “please give me the cup”

Play show me games: “show me the cat”, “touch your nose”, “find your shirt”. Play these games in and outside of your home. Cheer for your baby and when he or she succeeds, say things like “yes- that’s your nose”

Play tell me games “what is this?” “what sound does a cat make?” (play animal sounds)

Sing songs and finger play together (“itsy bitsy spider”, “this little piggy”) and play rhyming games
READ
Read: Keep books around your home. Make trips to the library. Let your child choose the books. Read the same books over and over.

Name colors, shapes, size like “that shoe is red”, “I see a circle”, “that mouse is small”

Comment: “the boy sees a big brown dog”. Read in an animated voice

Play show me games: “show me the picture of the girl”.

Play tell me games: “What is this picture?”

Read rhymes and songs together

Create a photo album of familiar people and pets and have your child point to pictures or tell you who they are
Activities with your child
18-24 months

**Engage**

Follow your child’s cues

**Motor:** Encourage running, chasing and play hide and seek

**Physical contact:** Hug and kiss and hold and rock your baby (this won’t spoil your baby). This is good for boys and girls

**Play and Learning:** Babies play with joy. Have fun together. Babies learn that objects have **function:** play “let’s talk on the phone” “let’s rock the baby doll” “let’s play with the car” “can you build a tower?”.

Babies **explore objects purposefully** and learn about their physical characteristics (shapes, size, colors, number of objects). Babies use toys and objects to do things for a purpose: Babies love to play with stacking rings, blocks, simple puzzle shapes, musical toys, and pencils, crayons or felt tip markers to scribble- let your child take the lead

**Imaginary play:** Encourage your child to use their imagination (feeding a doll, dressing up)
Engage

Social- Emotional: Independence. Help children to become independent by encouraging them to feed, clean and dress themselves

Power Struggles:
Set limits: First connect- “I know you are angry” and then correct- “but you cannot hit mommy”

Give choices: “do you want to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt?”

Distract and re-direct: “let’s do something fun…”

Reward cooperation: “You tried it! You took a bite! Yaay!”

Socialization: Children first engage in parallel play, playing along side other children. They then engage in interactive play. Create opportunities for play with other children.

Social- Emotional: Help children to learn about emotions. Provide comfort when your baby is upset or scared and stay calm

Name emotions “mommy is angry”

Comment: “you are feeling sad because you have to stop playing”

Show me: “Show me a happy face”

Use a mirror to help your child pretend different emotions
Encourage

Be your baby’s cheerleader!!!

SAY:

“I know you can!!”
“Yes!!”
“I knew you could!!”

Problem solve: If your child gets stuck, ask your child “what do you need to do next?” (don’t jump in to help your child right away- let your child try to problem solve first, then give help)

Praise effort instead of results: “you worked really hard” “you used a lot of colors” versus “that was the most amazing drawing I have ever seen”