



# Welcome Words for your 18 to 24 Month Old

## Toilet Training: Signs of Readiness

While there are exceptions, most children aren't ready to say good-bye to diapers until close to age 3. One study showed that the average age for reliably using the toilet for both bladder and bowel is 28 months. Some children, still within the normal range, don't achieve full control until age 4.

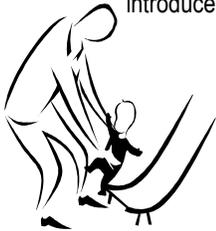
This isn't surprising when you think about all the steps involved. Your child has to learn to recognize the need to get to the bathroom, stop play, undress, toilet, redress, and wash his hands.

You and your child will be happier if you wait to begin toilet learning until he:

- Complains of being wet or soiled and likes to be changed promptly.
- Understands that urine and BM come from his body.
- Wants to imitate adults and be grown up.
- Willingly sits on the toilet or potty chair.

You can help by:

- Commenting in a matter of fact way if you can tell your child is having a bowel movement, "You're having a BM." This statement will help him associate the feeling with the result.
- Ask him to tell you when this happens so you can help him get to the potty. Then, introduce a potty-chair or booster seat.



Many parents find that waiting to begin this process makes life much simpler. There are fewer accidents, and you won't worry about staying near a bathroom when you go out. So be nice to yourself. Relax and wait until your child is ready. **As one parent put it, read your child, not the book.**

## FEARS AND PHOBIAS

Around 18 months, many children seem to develop new fears. Your toddler may become terrified of the loud noise of the vacuum cleaner or sirens. Dogs, or even cats, make other toddlers anxious. Two-year-olds tend to add fears of the dark, trips to the doctor, and people in masks and costumes.

While these fears may seem unfounded to you, it's important to understand that they're real to your toddler. Try not to tease your child, laugh at his fears, or force him to confront them, all of which will probably make them worse. Many of these fears will be outgrown, but in the meantime here are some tips.

- An explanation may help: "Ambulances make a loud noise so people will know to pull over and let them pass. This noise is helpful, so the sick person can get to the hospital faster."
- Holding your child while your partner vacuums may help reduce the fear. He may feel better if he sees (from a distance) that crumbs are picked up, but a book or your foot can't be.
- A flashlight or nightlight and other props, such as a stuffed toy who keeps watch, give children a sense of control over their fears.
- Children's books may help. Ask the librarian about picture books in which children overcome a similar fear.
- If the bathtub is a problem, taking a shower with you may help. Even "no-tears" shampoo can sting, so try a shampoo visor, or let your toddler hold a folded bath cloth over his eyes while you rinse out shampoo. If there's still strong resistance, shampoo once a week and use a wet bath cloth for spot clean ups.

If your child's fear begins to dominate your family's activities, talk to a professional for advice.

Adapted from What to Expect: The Toddler Years (Workman, 1994).

## Toddler Talk

For most children, a major milestone occurs between 18 and 24 months. After building an initial 50-word or so vocabulary, there's an explosion of naming. Toddlers may pick up as many as nine new words in a single day, and begin using mini-sentences, such as "Let's go" or "Read my book."

To make the most of your child's growing language skills:

- Talk slowly and simply, but don't use baby talk. Toddlers understand much more than they can say.
- Extend conversation. If he says, "Dog!" you can say, "The dog is going for a walk."
- Refer to yourself in the first person: "I'm ready to go to the store," instead of "Mommy's ready to go."
- Limit television and videos to an hour or less a day. While there are some good programs for toddlers, children don't need to watch television.
- Respond to statements such as, "Me go to park" by saying, "Yes, you and I are going to the park."
- Model saying "please" and "thank you."
- Read, read, read to your child, and not just at bedtime.
- Sing songs and play games such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake; they encourage taking turns in conversation, which is part of learning language.

Remember your child may be focusing his attention on other areas of development. Verbal skills will develop later. If you are concerned, speak with your child's doctor.

## At 24-Months, I:

- handle, touch and taste everything.
- hit, bite and pull hair.
- run, jump and climb.
- play in water.
- am more cooperative.
- have a short attention span.
- want things "now"!
- enjoy brief, supervised play with a friend.
- love humor.



## Please give me

- dress up clothes and hats.
- toy computers, cash registers, shopping carts, tool chests.
- music and songs.
- large beads or spools to string.
- hand and finger puppets.
- shape-sorters.
- building blocks.
- sand toys for digging.
- climbing toys and time to run at a playground.

## Suggested Reading

The Complete Guide to Choosing Child Care  
by Judith Berezin

Positive Discipline: The First Three Years  
by Jane Nelson, Cheryl Erwin and  
Roslyn Duffy

What to Expect: The Toddler Years  
by Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi E. Murkoff  
& Sandee E. Hathaway

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen  
& Listen So Kids Will Talk  
by Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi E. Murkoff & Sandee  
Hathaway, B.S.N.

## On Fears and Phobias

Annie Stories: A Special Kind of Storytelling  
by Doris Brett

## CHILDCARE FOR TODDLERS

Thinking about starting your toddler in a childcare or pre-school? Or maybe you're considering switching from a small setting to a larger center?

Keep in mind that while 2-year-olds tolerate some group activities -- such as eating together, napping on a schedule, and playing games -- your child still requires almost as much individual time and flexibility as he did a year ago.

Whether you're considering in-home care, family daycare, or a center, here are some reminders:

- Toddlers may feel very powerful one moment, but frightened by their new abilities the next. They need freedom to come and go at their own pace, checking in with a caregiver when they need comfort or to refuel.
- A caregiver for this age should set limits calmly and consistently, showing as well as telling the toddler the safe way to play with toys and how to interact with other children.
- Look for a caregiver who speaks directly to your child and listens carefully to him. His language development will flourish if the caregiver names objects, reads stories, plays with words, and sings songs with him.
- Two-year-olds have short attention spans and need to be able to assert their own identities. At this age, group activities should be optional.
- A good caregiver responds calmly and cheerfully to a toddler's curiosity about his own bodily functions, recognizing this as a precursor to toilet training. If the caregiver thinks he is ready for a major milestone, such as weaning or toilet training, she should first discuss it with you before proceeding.

Sometimes it's clear that you need to make a change in daycare: for instance, if a caregiver who was patient and loving with your infant becomes harsh or rigid with your active toddler. But what if you're not sure a change will be better?

Try to carefully assess your child's current situation. If he's comfortable with his caregiver(s), and you know he's in a safe and loving environment, a change may not be needed. Recent research indicates that continuity of care is very important to young children.

One option is to talk with your daycare provider about your toddler's changing needs. Together, you may be able to find ways to enrich his current setting, such as supplementing in-home care with a part-time toddler playgroup.