

## **Craig Ranch Pediatrics**

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### **15-18 Months Old**

#### **Large Muscle (Gross Motor Activities)**

This is a very exciting time for you and your toddler. Your toddler is beginning to walk well. He will want to walk all of the time. He may have trouble sleeping for the first week after he begins to walk. You may find him walking around in his bed when he should be sleeping. It is all so exciting to him that he finds it hard to take time out to sleep. He loves to pull or push a toy. Now he likes to put objects into a container. Give him his own kitchen cabinet with some plastic stacking cups and bowls, and he will be happy moving them back and forth.

#### **Large Muscle Activities With One-Year-Olds**



- ◆ Try to keep him on a level surface as he learns to walk. After he has practiced enough, let him walk in the yard. He will be surprised when he falls down, but he will quickly learn how to get around the little bumpy spots.
  - ◆ He will want to try stairs. Just stay beside him as he climbs. Work with him on a safe way to come down. A baby gate is an important safety device for those times when you cannot be right there.
  - ◆ Play catch with him.
  - ◆ Take him for a walk, and let him bring his pull toy.
- Ask him to get his coat or shoes when you are going somewhere.
  - He will begin to walk faster when he wants to go in a different direction than you want. He will try to get around you and go his own way. Be friendly but firm in your guidance.
  - Play simple chase games with him. Blow bubbles to chase.

#### **Small Muscle (Fine Motor Activities)**

Your toddler will begin to stack blocks. He will also be able to place two or three pegs in a pegboard before he gets tired of it. He has begun to enjoy scribbling. He will also hold the crayon with his fingers instead of his fist. By the end of this year, he will favor one hand over the other. He has begun to use his finger to point objects. He will be able to do a simple three-piece knobbed puzzle.

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### Small Muscle Activities

- Use beanbags to throw at a target.
- Let him help you fold clothes.
- Play a body parts game where you name a part and he points to it.
- Read books with him holding the book and turning the pages.
- Let him explore with sidewalk chalk.
- Have him push the buttons on a play telephone or on an activity toy.
- Pack sand in a mold.



### Emotional and Cognitive Development

Your toddler is curious about everything. He wants to explore physical objects and also his own feelings. Help him express these feelings. This is part of his emotional growth. If his expressions of his feelings become too aggressive, help him find acceptable ways to express these feelings without hurting others. Toddlers are developing feelings of empathy. *They do not fully realize how much they can hurt others.* Show affection for other members of the family throughout the day and he will begin to imitate you. Praise him for good behaviors and ignore his tantrums. Two to three year olds can have terrible *temper tantrums* when they do not get their way. He may bang his head or lay down on the floor. Make sure the area is safe and there are no small toys around that can hurt him. Ignore the tantrum and do not give in. They will never bang the head to the extent of a head injury. If he has hurt someone by hitting, he needs to be told firmly about it. *Time out* is a good way to discipline them, but their attention span may just be a few minutes.



Along with a sense of empathy, your child is also developing self-regulation. He needs to have space to assert himself, and he needs to be allowed to state his opinion about things. He also needs to be allowed and encouraged to accomplish tasks on his own. He will return to the security of your lap or to get a hug often. He loves you madly, but

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he is becoming his own person. He is also very interested in having a predictable routine. He will know his routine and what is likely to happen next.

By the end of the year, your toddler has a sense of self. He calls himself by his own name. He recognizes himself in the mirror or in a picture. He imitates your actions. He will often play by himself. He believes everything belongs to him. Your toddler is beginning to pick up words. Say the words for objects in your home and outdoors. Look at him as you pronounce words so he can see how you pronounce them. He is a great imitator. Encourage him to use words.



Read to him every day. Begin reading some predictable books so that he can “read” them to himself. Good examples of predictable books are: *Goodnight Moon*, *The Runaway Bunny*, and *Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear*. Also look for simple books about families and grandparents. Play “Hide and Seek” games. Share toys, books, and snacks with him. Hold out your hand for him to share with you. Give him stacking toys and play with them beside him.